



Testimony of

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IN SUPPORT OF JUDICIAL BRANCH BUDGET

Appropriations Committee

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Good afternoon. First, let me begin by saying thank you to Senator Bye, Representative Walker and the members of the Appropriations Committee for the opportunity to speak to you.

My name is Carmen Roda. I am an Adult Probation Officer with the State of Connecticut Judicial Branch. I am assigned to the Bridgeport Office and currently supervising a Domestic Violence Case load. I have been employed by the Judicial Branch for over 14 years with a total of over 24 years of service with the State. I am also the President of the Judicial Professional Employees Union. We are an AFT affiliate. We represent nearly 1300 Judicial Branch employees. 700 of which are Adult & Juvenile Probation Officers.

It is the mission of the Court Support Services Division (CSSD) to reduce the number of people who reoffend all the while keeping offenders accountable for their actions. A reduction in the Judicial Branch's budget will negatively impact our workforce specifically Adult and Juvenile Probation, Family Services (cranial and civil courts), Bail and other clinical staff. As well as our private partners programs, the offenders we supervise and the citizens of the State of Connecticut

CSSD has experienced an unprecedented reduction in recidivism under **Adult Probation**: Since 2007, 24-month rearrest rates have declined from 47% to under 40% in 2015. Each percentage point reduction equates to approximately 235 fewer probationers rearrested annually. Put another way, there are over 1,600 fewer rearrests of probationers in 2015 than there were in 2007 and in the Juvenile Probation setting. Since 2007, 24-month rearrest rates have declined from 66% to 57% in 2015. Each percentage point reduction equates to approximately 20 fewer juvenile probationers rearrested annually. In other words, there are about 180 fewer rearrests of juvenile probationers in 2015 than there were in 2007.

This is directly attributed to manageable caseload which allows all disciplines to apply evidenced based approaches in changing criminal behavior. Any rise in re-arrest rates would result in more admissions to DOC, CJTS, and Detention. These manageable caseloads also set the stage to hold offenders accountable and protecting victims. Cuts would compromise public safety in this regard.

For example, any reduction in adult probation staffing would result in:

- Intensive Pretrial Supervision (IPS). Suspending IPS supervision will have a direct adverse impact on the Department of Correction pretrial population. There are currently 526 defendant's with a Court imposed condition of IPS
- Domestic Violence supervision caseloads
- Mental Health supervision caseloads

- Youth supervision caseloads (UNITY)
- Gender specific supervision caseloads (WOCM)

Any reduction to Bail would result in:

- Delays in Bail staff being prepared for the Arraignment Process resulting in individuals being held in court holding facilities longer
- Reduced level of supervision for defendants released on conditions by the Court potentially impacting public safety
- Delays in processing Diversionary Program Applications resulting in more / longer continuance dates for individuals requesting admission into a Diversionary Program.
- Reducing or suspending the JRI Program will have a direct adverse impact on the Department of Correction and the defendants with whom the JRI staff assist in posting bond resulting in many more individuals being held on bond while their case is pending.
- In 2015, JRI staff interviewed 20,135 defendants held on bond of which 7,235 were subsequently released through bond screens or alternative release placements.
- In 2015 Bail staff interviewed 38,419 defendants of whom 16,065 were conducted during evening (majority), holiday and weekend shifts. Based upon those interviews, 5,238 were released on non-financial bonds. Reducing or suspending the night shift coverage will result in:
 - Individuals being held in local or state police lock-ups overnight or over a weekend, who would have otherwise been released.
 - Increased number of individuals in court holding facilities prior to arraignment resulting in additional safety concerns and court processing inefficiencies.
 - Adverse effect on the Department of Correction pretrial population as individuals who would have otherwise been released may remain held on bond.

Cuts to Programs:

- The unprecedented outcomes presently realized by the AIC's in CT, relative to recidivism reduction, will be compromised by: inevitable delay in intake and assessment, delay in enrollment in services (wait lists) and an interruption in client's ability to complete duration of intervention. All three of these key ingredients are supported in the study submitted by CT's Results First initiative and national literature. Increase in re-arrest rates directly result in substantially higher admissions to DOC. The AIC's current caseload is overwhelmingly pre-trial clients that would otherwise be held on bond.
- Closure of adult and juvenile residential programs would result in more pre-trial clients detained by DOC or in the Judicial Branch's detention centers.
- At-risk youth and young adults would have fewer non secured (locked) residential options.
- Program cuts result in layoffs in the private sector.
- Program cuts directly impact the quality assurance and clinical supervision processes which are explicitly linked to successful outcomes.

As public safety professionals we are asking for your help protect the Judicial Branch's Budget while we continue to protect the citizens of Connecticut.

Again, thank you for your time and for this opportunity. I would be happy to answer any questions you may have.