

February 13, 2024

TESTIMONY OF THE OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFENDER (OPD) REGARDING:

House Bill No. 7452

**ENTITLED, AN ACT RELATING TO STATE AFFAIRS AND GOVERNMENT –
CORRECTIONS DEPARTMENT.**

Chairman Craven and Members of the House Judiciary Committee:

The OPD supports HB7452, which seeks to repeal provisions assessing costs for women in the community corrections program for women offenders and would also repeal the crime of loitering for prostitution. This proposed legislation represents a significant step towards gender equity, criminal justice reform, and the fair treatment of individuals involved in the criminal legal system.

HB7452 recognizes the unique challenges faced by women in the criminal justice system and aims to address them by repealing provisions that impose disproportionate financial burdens on women in the community corrections program. The imposition of costs for women offenders is not only financially burdensome but can also perpetuate cycles of poverty and inequality, hindering the ability of these individuals to successfully reintegrate into society. This legislation aligns with broader efforts to create a criminal justice system that is responsive to the specific needs and challenges faced by women offenders.

Furthermore, HB7452 seeks to repeal the crime of loitering for prostitution, recognizing the need to approach issues related to sex work with a more compassionate and nuanced perspective. Criminalizing loitering for prostitution disproportionately impacts vulnerable populations and can result in unnecessary legal consequences for individuals who may be victims of exploitation or facing economic hardships. Repealing the crime of loitering for prostitution acknowledges the complexities surrounding sex work and advocates for a more humane approach to addressing the needs of individuals involved. This aligns with a broader movement towards treating individuals involved in sex work with dignity and focusing on harm reduction and support rather than punitive measures.

In conclusion, the OPD urges the House Judiciary Committee to recommend HB7452 for passage.

Sincerely,

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