



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

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**Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director
Committee on Children - Public Hearing March 6, 2018
Raised Bill 311, An Act Updating the Definition of Sex Trafficking**

The Office of Chief Public Defender supports the concept of *Raised Bill 311, An Act Updating the Definition of Sex Trafficking*, which would clarify that a trafficking offense is based upon the exchange of “anything of value” and not just a monetary “fee.” Under current law, payment via such items as narcotics, food and shelter might not allow a person involved in trafficking to be subject to arrest.

To safeguard against unintended consequences that might impact innocent persons, this office urges the Committee to add the word “**knowingly**” at the end of line 1 before Subsection (1) in Section (a). This will ensure that innocent persons who may be indirectly involved in the commission of a trafficking offense are held liable only if they are cognizant that they are participating in sex trafficking. An example of this situation would be a taxi driver who drives a potential trafficking victim to a hotel who is unaware of the offense that may be committed.

This suggestion reflects the language endorsed on February 15, 2018 by the Connecticut Trafficking in Persons Council, which this office is a member of. Therefore, the Office of Chief Public Defender would support a joint favorable substitute with this additional recommended change.