



NATASHA M. PIERRE, ESQ.
State Victim Advocate

VIA EMAIL

December 21, 2021

Joseph J. Del Ciampo, Esq.
Director of Legal Services
Connecticut Judicial Branch

RE: RC ID# 2021-011

Dear Attorney Del Ciampo,

I am writing to provide comments on behalf of the Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) regarding the proposed changes to the rules addressing the non-judicial handling of juvenile matters, Sections 27-1A and 27-4a.

The Office of the Victim Advocate opposes the efforts to divert criminal matters from the judicial system when there are crime victims involved. Removing these cases from the courts eliminates the ability of crime victims to practice their constitutional rights. It also eliminates crime victims' access to OVA's legal and advocacy representation and the Office of Victim Services court based victim advocates. OVA opposes all efforts to eliminate or circumvent crime victims' rights.

Further, similar recommendations have failed legislatively. There is absolutely no consensus from the crime victim community or the organizations that work directly with crime victims on this proposal. Proponents of the diversionary theory claim that the "restorative justice" process will address crime victims' concerns, however they have repeatedly failed to produce any evidence that the diversionary plans would honor the rights of Connecticut crime victims or benefit them any way whatsoever. Until these matters are addressed properly, criminal matters involving crime victims should continue to be handled via the judiciary process.

Very truly yours,

Natasha M. Pierre, JD, MSW

cc: Judge Dawn Westbrook