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**BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES**  
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**Testimony of Carleton J. Giles**  
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**Board of Pardons and Paroles**

**H.B. 6439 An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, and Making Appropriations Therefor.**

**Appropriations Committee**

**February 26, 2021**

Good afternoon Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Senator Miner, Representative France, and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. I am Carleton J. Giles, Chairman of the Board of Pardons and Paroles (“Board”) and I’m very grateful for the opportunity to submit testimony in support of House Bill, 6439 *An Act Concerning the State Budget for the Biennium Ending June Thirtieth, 2023, and Making Appropriations Therefor*.

The Board is an independent agency within the Department of Correction (“DOC”) for administrative purposes only. The Board’s budget regularly appears as a line item within the larger DOC budget. Our mission is to *facilitate the successful reintegration of suitable offenders into the community*. In keeping with our mission we believe:

- That public safety is best achieved if criminal justice policy takes both punishment and rehabilitation into account;
- In victims' rights;
- That everyone deserves to be treated with dignity and respect;
- In the potential for positive change;
- In the utilization of evidence-based practices in our decision making;
- In maximizing resources; and
- That community safety is achieved through multi-agency collaboration.

In Fiscal Year 2019/2020, the Board reviewed a total of 3992 cases for parole consideration and 1,820 applications for pardon consideration. Panels of the Board conducted 2,739 hearings for the purposes of granting, rescinding or revoking parole and conducted 621 reviews resulting in

the granting or denying of various types of pardons. The Board implemented a new automated case management system “ePardons” for online pardon applications. The Board also added a Human Resource Specialist to assist with the ever expanding needs of the agency (since has been absorbed by DAS merger); an Interpreter Clerk to assist with translations (Spanish) for all documents, hearings, and public inquiries; and several Parole Officer Trainees to fill vacancies created by retirements and assist in both the parole and pardons divisions.

Overall, the Board currently has 78 established full-time and part-time positions, of which 69 are currently filled. There are four (4) vacant Board Member positions (2 full-time and 2 part-time) subject to being filled by the Governor, as well as five (5) vacant permanent staff positions due to recent retirements. Additionally, the Board is anticipating five (5) positions will be vacated by employees retiring on April 1.

Throughout the pandemic, the Board has continued to carry out its work as an essential agency largely without any interruption to our operations. The Board made the necessary pivot to the virtual world by retrofitting its existing IT infrastructure with the help of DAS/Best to conduct all meetings and proceedings virtually and remotely. As a result, we were able to continue to hold parole hearings for all eligible offenders six months in advance of projected parole eligibility dates. Starting in June of this past year, we were able to continue to hear applicants for pardons via Zoom. We were also able to provide public access by live streaming all our meetings, hearings, and proceedings via our website and YouTube Live.

Additionally, on April 14, 2020, in response to the global pandemic and the public health and civil preparedness emergencies in our state, I signed an order for the transfer of certain parole eligible persons confined in a correctional institution or facility to any public or private nonprofit halfway house, group home or mental health facility or to an approved community or private residence provided that they were within eighteen months of their parole release date; had an acceptable community release plan, appropriate medications and other community support; and posed no health risk to the public as determined by the Department of Correction. The order has resulted in the transfer of more than 400 offenders to parole since last spring.

The Board remains committed to fulfilling all of its responsibilities in the most efficient and fiscally prudent manner possible in order to best serve the citizens of the State of Connecticut. The Governor’s proposed budget will allow the Board to maintain existing operations and carry out our core functions.

Thank you for your continued support and I am happy to provide any additional information the Committee might require, or to answer any questions you might have.