



State of Connecticut

DIVISION OF PUBLIC DEFENDER SERVICES

Office of Chief Public Defender
55 Farmington Avenue, 8th Floor
Hartford, Connecticut 06105
(860) 509-6405 Telephone
(860) 509-6495 Fax

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan
Legal Counsel, Director
deborah.d.sullivan@pds.ct.gov

Testimony of Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Director Office of Chief Public Defender

JUDICIARY COMMITTEE - MARCH 26, 2025

Raised Bill 1435

AN ACT CONCERNING MOTHERS

WHO ARE INCARCERATED BREASTFEEDING THEIR INFANT

The Office of Chief Public Defender (OCPD) supports Raised S.B. 1435, An Act Concerning Mothers Who Are Incarcerated Breastfeeding Their Infant. The bill would require the Commission of the Department of Correction to develop and implement a policy permitting an inmate the ability and right to breastfeed their child. Permitting lactation and breastfeeding while incarcerated benefits both the infant and the biological parent. "Breastfeeding has well-established physical and psychological benefits for newborns and birth parents and enhances long-term bonding." ¹

In addition, permitting a biological parent to breastfeed while incarcerated will promote equity. "There are well-documented disparities in breastfeeding rates in the U.S., with lower rates among Black individuals and individuals with low incomes, reflecting systemic racism and implicit bias in promoting and supporting lactation (*American Academy of Pediatrics, 2022*). These groups also have disproportionately higher incarceration rates, and lack of ability to breastfeed in correctional settings may contribute to these broader disparities in breastfeeding rates. Supporting lactation in correctional settings can thus promote equity in maternal-child health. . . ." ²

It is clear that breastfeeding not only benefits the mother but also the child while substantially assisting the bonding process between the two. OCPD thanks the Committee for raising this bill and requests that it act **favorably** on it. Thank you.

¹ *Position Statement - Breastfeeding in Correction Settings*, National Commission on Correctional Healthcare, at page 2, adopted November 2017; revised March 2023.

² *Position Statement - Breastfeeding in Correction Settings*, National Commission on Correctional Healthcare, at page 2, adopted November 2017; revised March 2023.