

GGA Agency Hearing Follow-up:

1. (Office of the Correction Ombudsman)- Can you provide some clarity on where the jurisdiction is divided between Pardons and Parole and the Office of the Correction Ombudsman regarding halfway houses?

Thank you for the question. The jurisdictional divide is best understood by distinguishing between decision-making authority over release and supervision, and oversight of conditions and operations. The Board of Pardons and Paroles, pursuant to Conn. Gen. Stat. §§ 54-124a et seq., has exclusive authority to grant or deny parole, set and modify conditions of release, and revoke parole when appropriate. Those are quasi-judicial determinations that fall squarely within the Board's statutory mandate.

At the same time, many individuals placed in halfway houses or residential reentry programs remain under the supervision of the Department of Corrections through its Office of Parole and Community Release. That office is an operational arm of DOC. Under Conn. Gen. Stat. § 18-81qq, the Office of the Correction Ombuds has authority to receive and investigate complaints from individuals in DOC custody or under DOC supervision, monitor conditions, access facilities and records, and issue findings and recommendations regarding compliance with law, administrative directives, and constitutional standards.

Accordingly, where a halfway house placement is operated or funded through DOC and the individual remains under DOC supervision, our office maintains oversight authority with respect to safety, conditions, treatment, and DOC's contract monitoring and supervision practices. In short, the Board governs the liberty decision – whether parole is granted, the conditions imposed, and revocation. The Ombuds does not review or override those determinations. However, to the extent the individual remains under DOC supervision, including supervision carried out through the Office of Parole and Community Release or in a DOC-contracted halfway house, our office has authority under § 18-81qq to review conditions, investigate complaints, and make recommendations concerning DOC's operations and oversight in those placements.