



# STATE OF CONNECTICUT

## STATE ETHICS COMMISSION

ADVISORY OPINION NO. 89-18

### Parole Officer's Simultaneous Employment as a Private Detective

The Department of Corrections has requested an advisory opinion on the question of whether it would be a conflict of interests for a licensed private detective to hold the position of parole officer (Correctional Rehabilitation Services Officer II).

As a parole officer one is responsible for performing individual and group counseling and casework for offenders in either an institutional or community setting. The parole officer's work includes a wide range of duties aimed at rehabilitating criminals and assisting their readjustment to society.

Private detectives are licensed and regulated under Conn. Gen. Stat. Chapter 534. No provision of that Chapter would appear to prevent an individual serving as a parole officer from being licensed and employed as a private detective.


Under the Code of Ethics for Public Officials, Conn. Gen. Stat. Chapter 10, Part I, a state employee may not accept outside employment which will impair independence of judgment as to official duties or induce disclosure of confidential information, nor may the employee use his or her public position, or confidential information acquired in that position, to obtain financial gain. Conn. Gen. Stat. §§1-84(b) and (c). A state employee may, however, accept outside employment that relates to or utilizes expertise gained in state service, as long as this can be accomplished without intentional or unintentional violations of the Code.

In requesting this opinion, the Department of Corrections has expressed concern that there exists a possible conflict of interests between the two positions in question. The Department notes that as a parole officer a private detective would have access to inmates, court files, police reports, etc. The Department's Chief of Parole Services, Hans T.

Fjellman, states that "...the possibility of overlaps and obtaining information for...private endeavors is immense."

The Ethics Commission concurs with the Department of Corrections in this matter. The possibility that a parole officer's access or authority would be used, whether intentionally or inadvertently, to obtain information for his or her private detective work in violation of §1-84(c) is too great to allow. The risk of impairment of independence of judgment and disclosure of confidential information in violation of §1-84(b) is similarly too great to permit. Given the distinct possibility of violation of §§1-84(b) and (c) of the Code of Ethics, it is the Commission's opinion that a Correctional Rehabilitation Services Officer II in the Department of Corrections should not simultaneously work as a private detective on any criminal or criminally related matters.

By order of the Commission,



William A. Elrick  
Chairperson

Dated 7-17-89