



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-6004

**Testimony in Support of Governor's Senate Bill 18:
An Act Concerning a Second Chance Society
Submitted by: Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ
March 18, 2016**

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ, and I am writing today in support of the Governor's Senate Bill No. 18: An Act Concerning a Second Chance Society to implement the Governor's Budget Recommendations.

I am writing on behalf of the 235 congregations and more than 67,500 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members. In 2014, the assembled delegates and ministers of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ met and voted on a Resolution which calls upon the Connecticut Conference to End Mass Incarceration for Non-Violent Offenses. This calls for members of the Conference churches to oppose existing law which currently sends large numbers of people to prison for long sentences as a result of non-violent drug offenses, and to support new legislation which promotes alternatives.

The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ supports the need to change our Criminal Justice System to invest in permanent reform instead of permanent punishment. We support raising the age of the juvenile system's jurisdiction through age 18 on July 1, 2017, through age 19 on July 1, 2018 and through age 20 on July 1, 2019. Studies show that young adult brains are not fully developed until age 25 so when young people make bad decisions, the trajectory of their lives can change permanently. We support allowing low-risk offenders aged, 18, 19 and 20 to be tried as young adults within the juvenile justice system rather than the adult system.¹

We support having a Youthful Offender status apply to 18 through 20 year olds from the moment of arrest so it would prevent a young, low-risk offender from having their name widely distributed at the moment of arrest and face a lifelong stigma as a result. If a young adult makes a mistake, he or she should not be paying for that mistake for a lifetime.²

We are glad to see this bill takes a smarter approach to Bail Bonds because many adults are in jail, pre-trial, because they can't come up with even a few hundred dollars in bail and those held for longer periods are showing higher re-arrest rates. Spending time in jail, even one day, can endanger someone's job, housing, and family connections, even if he or she is innocent. We are proud that Senate Bill 18 would prohibit a judge from setting money bail for anyone charged with a misdemeanor unless the judge determines the accused poses an immediate threat to the health or wellbeing of another person.³

¹ Governor Malloy Second Chance 2.0 Fact Sheet

² Governor Malloy's Second Chance 2.0 Fact Sheet

³ Governor Malloy's Second Chance 2.0 Fact Sheet



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All of God's people deserve a Second Chance. The Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ supports the Governor's Senate Bill No 18: An Act Concerning a Second Chance Society. Thank you for your work and for the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of the Governor's Senate Bill 18.

Many blessings,
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