



Legislative Testimony
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Written Testimony on House Bill 6796, An Act Concerning Catalytic Converters

Senator Gaston, Representative Boyd, Ranking Members Cicarella and Howard, and distinguished members of the Public Safety Committee:

My name is Jess Zaccagnino, and I am the policy counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut (ACLU-CT). I am writing to testify on House Bill 6796, An Act Concerning Catalytic Converters.

The ACLU-CT believes that in order to reduce the harm that policing is causing communities of color across the state, Connecticut must reduce the role, responsibilities, and presence of systems of policing. Mass incarceration over the past four decades has been driven in large part by increasing the lengths of prison sentences.¹ Among the most vulnerable people who become enmeshed in the criminal legal system are young people under the age of eighteen, who suffer unique harms due to their involvement in the criminal legal system and are more likely to experience even wider racial disparities than exist for adults.²

Ending mass incarceration requires that the General Assembly continue making progress toward reducing the number of people who enter the criminal legal system and reducing the amount of time that people who do not enter the system serve. We are submitting testimony today on House Bill 6796 to caution this Committee on

¹ JEREMY TRAVIS, BRUCE WESTERN & STEVE REDBURN, *THE GROWTH OF INCARCERATION IN THE UNITED STATES*, 70 (2014), available at <https://www.nap.edu/read/18613/chapter/5>.

² Colette Marcellin & Samantha Harvell, *Data Snapshot of Youth Incarceration in Connecticut*, URBAN INST. (May 2020), available at https://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/102176/data-snapshot-of-youth-incarceration-in-connecticut_1.pdf.

Section 1 of the bill. This Committee must ensure that there are safeguards in place to prevent the state from entering into memoranda of understanding with other regional entities that result in *increased* policing and mass incarceration, like elevating criminal charges and increasing police surveillance. The ACLU-CT urges this Committee to amend House Bill 6796 to require that memoranda of understanding do not increase policing and mass incarceration in Connecticut.