

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman, and members of the Judiciary committee. My name is Daniel Lee Cornelious Jr. I am a resident of the town of Norwich, and a student at the University of Connecticut-Storrs. As a former legislative intern under Rep. Adinolfi during the 2005 legislative session, being in this room brings up a sense of nostalgia. I would like to take this opportunity to commend you for the hard work and dedication you put forth.

I am here today to testify in opposition to H.B. 7219: AN ACT CONCERNING THE TRIAL OF DRUG DEPENDENT PERSONS. This bill, as you may well know, would establish a mandatory minimum sentence of no less than five years and up to a maximum of life imprisonment, for the sale of drugs by a non-drug-dependent person. The iatrogenic consequences associated with this measure far greatly exceed any benefits the committee may believe might be gained.

First, the economics associated with retail-level drug distribution must be understood, to understand the social implications of this bill. Retailers of illegal drugs face many of the same economic concerns as retailers of legal commodities. Their objectives are to sell as high a volume as possible at a price as high as the market will allow. Under this very assertion, it is highly unlikely that a profitable drug retailer would engage in behavior which would undermine profit. With the existence of this constraint, it is highly unlikely that drug retailers would engage in addictive behaviors. They simply would not make any money. Substantial research has been conducted in the field of sociology, and social research has shown, that one of the first informal rules in illegal drug distribution, is to not use one's own product. This being shown, the only plausible outcome of this bill, would be a substantial increase in our prison population, therefore passing the burden onto the CT taxpayer.

Second, the term drug-dependency is an ambiguous, and fluid term. How does one determine the psychological dependency of an individual? Psychological dependency, by its very nature does not produce physical signs of withdrawal. Definitions of physical dependency, characterized by the production of physical withdrawal symptoms are fluid and are difficult to assess medically without prolonged observation. Furthermore, not all drugs produce dependent behavior. Cocaine, and LSD, both two drugs which are mentioned in this bill, due to their pharmacological capacity do not produce any physical signs of dependence or addiction. Again, because of this condition, a surge in CT's prison population is to be expected. Furthermore, because of the racial disparities evident in the CT judicial system, it is expected that this measure would have a detrimental impact on urban communities, particularly persons of color.

There is not the time today to analyze all the iatrogenic consequences associated with this measure, particularly of the harmful effects of mandatory minimum sentencing laws. The economics of retail drug distribution, and the fluid definition of, and the difficulty to assess one's drug dependency, make it highly unlikely that any benefits would be gained from this bill. Thank you for your time.