

Testimony for Judiciary Public Hearing – March 12, 2008

NO, NO, NO, NO ----to bills SB 641, HB 5035, HB 5876, HB 5915.

No to all mandatory punishments. No to "3 strikes and you're out" legislation. Judges are capable of deciding the appropriate punishment. That is their job, not yours.

I thought we wanted to prevent crimes. Why would someone who has already served time for a felony commit another one? There are many possible reasons -- mental illness, addiction, life conditions, mental inabilities, victim of abuse, anger problems, no employment, no housing, lack of education, insufficient rehabilitation in prison, insufficient re-entry services, etc. Labeling someone a "persistent offender" does not give the whole story.

CT should put its attention and resources into addressing problems BEFORE the FIRST crime is committed. If that doesn't happen, then address problems after the first crime is committed, and definitely after the second felony. Let's not wait for THREE felonies to be committed by the same person.

In addition, the 3-felony person has already served his/her time for each of the two previous crimes. Those are finished. He should be sentenced appropriately for the 3rd crime. The 3rd crime may be something completely different from the other two. Some of the crimes listed in the bills are not life-sentence crimes. The judge should decide.

And someone should decide what is needed to prevent criminal behavior. Length of sentence isn't enough. As a tax payer and a person concerned with public safety, as well as with assistance for people in need, I want my money spent on real crime prevention, not on locking someone up for life who did not commit a life-sentence crime and who did not get the right attention when it was needed.



Sally Joughin
14 Everit Street
New Haven CT 06511

member of People Against Injustice