

To: the Judicial Committee

Dear Legislators:

I am writing to urge you to support SB 459 an act concerning the enhanced penalty for the sale or possession of drugs near schools, day care centers and public housing projects

Thank you for taking this written testimony, in place of a personal presentation; due to a scheduling conflict, I'm unable to attend today's hearing myself.

My name is Mary Marcuccio, and I am the Founder, Spokesperson, and President of *Parents 4 A Change*. My non-profit group is dedicated to providing resources and support to parents in crisis with a child (adolescence., teen, early 20s) that's addicted to opiates (pain pills such as percocet, vicodin, oxycontin, or heroin). I, myself, have a drug-addicted son, now in his early 20s, so I speak from experience on the issue of drug addiction and its collateral damage.

I'm writing to you in support of *SB 459: An Act Concerning the Enhanced Penalty for the Sale or Possession of Drugs Near Schools, Daycare Centers and Public Housing Projects*. I believe, and it's the position of P4AC, that there needs to be a change in the current laws concerning the "Drug Free Zone."

Although I am the FIRST supporter of laws and punishment justice, I feel that the law as it sits *right now* has not accomplished its intended goal -- which, in part, is to make vulnerable populations safer from drug activity. I believe that, instead, the law has effectively cast a very big "net" and is pulling in people (kids and adults alike) that do not fit the profile of the intended defendant. Further, I'm *terribly* dismayed to learn that more minorities than whites are being caught in this "net," by virtue of the fact that -- quite simply -- geography often gives them more "nets" to be caught *in!*...I take great issue with what appears to me to be racial disparity on this topic.

I am in NO way "soft on crime," and I hope not to give the appearance of such. I believe firmly in an appropriate punishment to the corresponding crime. However, in this case, I believe that the law is ineffective and has failed its intended purpose. I, and P4AC, fully support **having** a "Drug Free Zone" law, in fact -- that it's necessary. However, I would like to see the zone reduced to something more effective (i.e., 200 ft.). Further, I believe that such a change would be of great financial benefit to the State, in terms of prosecution and incarceration.

P4AC and I fully support this bill, and we *truly* appreciate any support that YOU can give to this issue.

THANK YOU,

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