



**TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT JUVENILE JUSTICE ALLIANCE  
FOR THE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

**February 23, 2011**

**Supporting**

**H.B. No. 6433 (RAISED) AN ACT CONCERNING ADULT EDUCATION.**

Senator Stillman, Representative Fleischmann, and members of the Education Committee: This testimony is submitted by Abby Anderson, executive director of the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance (Alliance) Steering Committee. The Alliance is a statewide, non-profit organization that works to reduce the number of children and youth entering the juvenile and criminal justice system, and advocates a safe, effective and fair system for those involved.

**The Alliance supports House Bill 6433 which would end the practice of districts requiring expelled students to withdraw from school before attending Adult Education.**

With some exceptions and conditions, students who are between sixteen and eighteen years of age are generally entitled to an alternative educational opportunity during their period of expulsion. Some school districts that offer adult education as that alternative placement are requiring students to withdraw from school in order to attend the adult education program. Once the students withdraw from school, the districts do not permit them to re-enroll and attend the regular high school program at the end of the expulsion period

This practice creates additional obstacles for high-risk children who need the structure of high school and further alienates these already disconnected youth. Why would they want to return to a school that clearly doesn't want them to return? Many youth in the juvenile justice system have also been expelled by their schools. We know that effective reentry into the school and community are the keys to preventing re-arrest. There is much talk of the "school to prison pipeline." This is a piece of legislation which can help to dismantle that pipeline.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this testimony. Please let me know if you have any questions or would like additional information.

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