



# CIVIC TRUST

PUBLIC LOBBYING Co.

† Advocacy for the people †

Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company strives for excellence and effectiveness. Our ultimate mission is to put into practice community ideas and magnify residents' voices in criminal justice, prison and drug policy reform utilizing collective resources already available to rebuild neighborhoods, communities and the state of Connecticut.

Judiciary Committee

March 9, 2011

## In Support of Raised HB 6475 An Act Concerning Mandatory Minimum Sentences

Dear Judiciary Committee Members:

My name is LaResse Harvey and I am the Executive Director of Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company. Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company is a non-profit organization located in Plainville, CT. We work towards increasing civic engagement and advocacy in criminal justice, prison and drug policy reform. Our membership is in support of Raised Bills No. 6539, "An Act Concerning Sentence Modification," and Raised Bill No. 6475, "An Act Concerning Mandatory Minimum Sentences," and ask the Judiciary Committee to pass this timely legislation and keep your vote YES.

Today you will hear testimonies from parents, officials, grassroots and grassroots organization asking you to rid one of the most racially bias, ineffective and costly laws in this state. The problems with mandatory minimum sentences are:

- ❖ **The cost!** It costs over \$40,000 to house a prisoner in CT. **88% of Connecticut's imprisoned citizens have drug Convictions**
- ✚ **Broken Families:** Mandatory sentences have led to considerably longer sentences for non-violent drug crimes disrupting the normal functioning of families. 1 in 6 kids in Hartford have a parent in jail.
- ✚ **It's unfair.** Mandatory minimums disproportionately affect Black and Latino defendants. In Connecticut, Blacks are 12 times more likely to be in prison than whites. Latinos are six times more likely.
- ❖ **Mandatory Minimums shift power away from a Judge & Jury into the prosecuting attorney.** Prosecutors are not elected.
- ❖ **62% of admitted users currently incarcerated DO NOT RECEIVE TREATMENT**
- ✚ **States like North Carolina and New Jersey have already begun to abolish mandatory minimums.**

What we need is to repeal all mandatory minimum laws and allow our elected Judges to impose sentences based on evidence, the defendant's character and/or mitigating circumstances.

In 2005 CT State Government, Office of Legislative Reports stated, "It is widely accepted that mandatory minimum sentencing laws have not achieved their objectives and have resulted in unintended consequences such as sentencing inequities and unduly harsh penalties."

I urge you to vote Raised HB 6475 An Act Concerning Mandatory Minimum Sentences out of committee.

Thank you,  
LaResse Harvey  
Executive Director

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