



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 Bills No. 6539 An Act Concerning Sentence Modification

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 HB. 6539, "An Act Concerning Sentence Modification 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 grasstops organization asking you to rid one of the most racially bias, ineffective and costly laws in this state.

In 1957 a report given by a prison study committee headed by Justice P.B. O'Sullivan recommended a sentence review by three judges of the Superior Court to increase or decrease a person's sentence, because of the discrepancy in sentences. (*Office of Legislator Research Report*)

Supporting HB 6539 An Act Concerning Sentence Modification will allow anyone regardless of time spent in prison to apply for a modification; People sentenced under a **PLEA BARGAIN TO APPLY**; and Any preexisting records, documents, and evidence can be used to review a case.

In Connecticut, Blacks are 12 times more likely to be in prison than whites. Latinos are six times more likely.

As a result approximately 80% of Connecticut's Prison population are Blacks and Latinos, most who have taken a plea bargain. As a result under the current law these individuals often are denied modifications and receive longer sentences than White imprisoned individuals.

I urge you to support Raised HB. 6539: An Act Concerning Sentence Modification.

Thank you,
LaResse Harvey, BSW
Executive Director
Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company