



CIVIC TRUST

PUBLIC LOBBYING co.

March 7, 2011

**Testimony of LaResse Harvey in support of Raised S.B. 1035:
AN ACT REPEALING THE DEATH PENALTY to the Judiciary Committee**

Hello Judiciary Committee members, Ranking members, and Chairs. Thank you for the opportunity to submit a favorable testimony for Raised Senate Bill 1035 - An Act Repealing the Death Penalty.

Currently I serve as the Executive Director of Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company based in Plainville CT. Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company is a statewide not for profit that advocates for reform of Connecticut's drug policy, prison and criminal justice system.

I submit this testimony today not only as an advocate for reform but also as a parent and grandparent, who believes that despite our criminal justice system best efforts to protect my family and I, mistakes happen. These mistakes coupled with the problem of limited resources to defend people coming from marginalized communities can have drastic results on our local cities and state.

The Judiciary Committee is aware of numerous examples of people being wrongfully convicted in Connecticut. Most recently the case of James Tillman, a man wrongfully convicted of rape and served eighteen years in prison for a crime he did not commit. This committee has worked tirelessly to address inequities in the Criminal Justice System for nearly twenty years and those efforts are valuable to me.

Very rarely are we in a position to see the ultimate unintended consequence of our actions but today we can see them and we all can do something about it. I do not have a family member on death row, nor do I know anyone on death row personally. However there are approximately 200 individuals who have been found NOT GUILTY, that were on death row due to human error and/or coercive interrogation. There are countless others who have been wrongfully murdered by the criminal justice system throughout this country because of the death penalty.

I believe the right to determine if a person lives or dies rest with God. The realities of human error, systemic inequality and limited resources mental or monetary an absolute decision like execution puts us all at risk of continuing many of the unintended consequences we have all fought so hard to end.

I urge you to support Raised Senate Bill 1035 - An Act Repealing the Death Penalty. Thank you for your time.

LaResse Harvey
Civic Trust Public Lobbying Company
PO Box 1695
Hartford, CT 06144
860-777-7814