

**Testimony of Michelle Chase
to the Joint Committee on Judiciary
In Support of Raised Bill No. 5432
AN ACT CONCERNING SCHOOL-BASED ARRESTS**

March 12, 2012

My name is Michelle Chase and I am a resident of Hartford and the parent of a child who has been involved in the juvenile justice system. **I urge the committee to pass Raised Bill No. 5432, An Act Concerning School-Based Arrests, because I believe that it will help keep children like my son out of the juvenile justice system and in school.**

In my community, it is clear that too many children are arrested at school, even very young children. Many of these children could be disciplined within the school rather than being sent to court. As a member of the Juvenile Justice Committee of AFCAMP, African Caribbean American Parents of Children with Disabilities, I often hear stories of children with disabilities who are arrested at school even though they are not receiving appropriate services for their disabilities.

Arresting children at school harms children and communities since keeping children in school is critical to protecting their futures. Many juvenile justice-involved children never graduate from high school. Throughout their lives, these children may continue to face barriers to productivity from school-based arrests, including denials of student loans, public housing, employment or occupational licenses.

Raised Bill No. 5432 would give communities tools to reduce school-based arrests. It would improve community access to accurate data about the number of school-based arrests, so communities could plan interventions to help these children. It would also require schools and police to create written agreements to detailing the roles and responsibilities of officers stationed at schools. Similar agreements have been used nationally and in Connecticut to reduce inappropriate arrests.

We need to make sure our children are receiving the services that they need to stay out of trouble and stay out of the juvenile justice system. This bill is a step toward figuring out what those services are to help children like my son. Please vote in favor of Raised Bill No. 5432.

Thank you for your time. If you have any questions, you may contact me 860-251-9616.

Sincerely,

Michelle Chase / CCS

Michelle Chase 41 School Street, Hartford, CT 06106