

Helen McCown

Written Testimony in Support of HB 5221

Good afternoon Senator Coleman, Representative Fox, and other Judiciary Committee members. My name is Helen McCown, mother of Larry McCown, inmate #238820. I am writing in support of House Bill #5221, concerning the recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission, regarding lengthy sentences for crimes committed by juveniles. Larry had just turned seventeen, when he was visiting in New Haven for his birthday, in November 1994, attending school in Buffalo, New York, had only been there a day or two, when a crime took place, he was a rear passenger in a car and the front passenger shot out of the where a group a group of young people were standing. We had previously lived in New Haven. My late husband and I brought my son back upstate after ignorantly taking him to the police station without an attorney, he was interrogated without our presence and waived his miranda rights which he did not understand. We were told by the detective, they believed his story, for the other guys were well known by the police. Larry was the youngest of the other two guys which were in their early twenties, he was given more time than they and a longer sentence of sixty five years without parole. He was accused, convicted and sentenced as an accessory to murder and three other counts. Larry did not take a plea, he wanted to go to trial in hopes that justice would be served, that did not happen. Larry is sympathetic for the loss of the victims family and our familys prayers and sympathy are with the family as well. Our family is victim to the loss of his dad, my late husband, from an attempted robbery while coming from work in upstate New York in 1997. No one has been arrested or charged to this day. We would want for the assailant(s) to be given a second chance in life, if shown a productive life since the time of the attack. His dad traveled tirelessly back and forth to help his son. He formerly worked for Pratt and Whitney, had operated his own business in New Haven, before moving upstate, and was a good and loving family man. Larry was incarcerated at the time of his fathers murder.

At a young age, Larry and as is many youth, are not able to make sound decisions and the right choices all the time. They do not even realize or understand what the consequences are or, will be. Since his incarceration, from the start he diligently worked on and received his high school diploma. He has received many certificates from the programs he has taken advantage of to help him be a better man in society. He has taken business courses as well and is currently enrolled in another college for Human Resource Management. Larrys goals if given a second chance in life is to become a humanitarian, work with youth as a mentor, invest in real

estate, work in human resources and become an entrepreneur. Per his Offender Accountability Plan his P.E.P nor the alternatives to violence programs had been identified and not recommended for him. It has been stated in an Inmate Performance Evaluation, that he always handle himself in a professional manner. A supervisor, has written in the period of 2007-2008 that he was a good and reliable worker, that he gets along with his peers and superior alike and is an asset to the food service operation. He also recommended any good time consideration he may be eligible for.

I pray that those that are opposed to this bill not being passed will take into consideration, that no harsh punishments to youth or anything done will bring any loved one back, or any that survived attacks with scars or wounds. The hurt and loss will always be there, mine is November 20, 1994 for the familys loss in my sons case and July 19, 1997 for the loss of my husband, and children's dad. But to think about if it was your loved one involved in a crime, how you would want the outcome to be. I pray that those that can help make House Bill #5221 become a reality will. I have traveled faithfully for many years to see my son behind bars. Through good weather and bad weather, sometimes only to get here and there are no visits. Driving seven hours, and public transportation sometimes ten or eleven hours. I am getting older now, and have health issues. I have two daughters younger than Larry, he is thirty six years old. It would be nice to have him here to be reunited with his only son, whom he helped mentor, and has attended college for two years.

Thank you, Thank you, Thank you, for listening and have a wonderful rest of the day.

Respectfully submitted