

Saturday, March 28, 2015

**to** [JUDtestimony@cga.ct.gov](mailto:JUDtestimony@cga.ct.gov)

**Public Testimony of Joseph A. Luciano**  
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**Subject: IN FAVOR OF Senate Bill 1129**

(Connecticut's early prison release program is flawed.)

I SUPPORT AND CONCUR WITH Senator Rob Kane's view that Connecticut's early prison release program is flawed. Senator Kane notes that under the new law, those convicted of

- rape, kidnapping, arson, first-degree manslaughter,
- assault of a pregnant woman, first-degree assault, second-degree strangulation,
- first-degree threatening, having sex with someone under 13,
- assault of a blind or disabled person, or animal cruelty

could get years taken off their jail time, if their behavior in prison is good.

The [case of Arthur Hapgood and the murder of Zaniyah Calloway](#), an unspeakable tragedy, show that Connecticut has an obligation to change a system that rewards and releases dangerous felons.

Governor Malloy's Risk Reduction Earned Credit program allows dangerous felons to walk out of prison early with no regard to their record. It directly threatens public safety, and we need to reform it immediately.

Hapgood received drug treatment, but continued to take drugs while incarcerated. He clearly needed more help, but the system failed to deliver it. Instead, that same system gave him credits for "successful" treatment—credits that allowed him to leave prison earlier than he should have.

Society was put at risk, and the Calloway family paid a heavy price. Hapgood is responsible for the death of a child, but so are the officials who turned a blind eye to his repeated drug use, his failed drug tests, and his growing transgressions in prison.

Governor Malloy has responded to this tragedy not by trying to correct the flaws that allowed this violent criminal to leave prison. Instead, he has dodged the real issue, denied the problem, and claimed we are better now than we were before. The truth is we are no better now than before so long as criminals are allowed to leave prison early without showing any real sign of rehabilitation. We are no better off if criminals know they can play the system, sign up for a class and get out early — even when they break the law.

**I am IN FAVOR OF Senate Bill 1129.**

*Joseph A. Luciano*

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*Independent Advocate for Persons with Disabilities, Universal Design,*

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