



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

Public Hearing Testimony

Judiciary Committee

March 23, 2016



S.B. No. 18 - AN ACT CONCERNING A SECOND CHANCE SOCIETY

The Department of Children and Families (DCF) supports S.B. No. 18, An Act Concerning a Second Chance Society. This bill includes some major juvenile justice initiatives, including raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction through age 18 on July 1, 2017, through age 19 on July 1, 2018 and through age 20 on July 1, 2019.

This bill builds upon the successful implementation of the original "Raise the Age" legislation which raised the age of juvenile jurisdiction from 16 to 18 in Connecticut. This concept was first proposed over ten years ago and was fully implemented in 2012. Not only was this legislation implemented at a cost far under its fiscal projections, but we are also seeing significantly fewer youth involved in the juvenile justice system and decreased crime rates at all age cohorts (juvenile and adult)¹. As you can see from the attached chart, despite raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction to age 18 over the past five years, the census at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) went from a high of 151 boys two years ago, to 44 as of March 1, 2016.

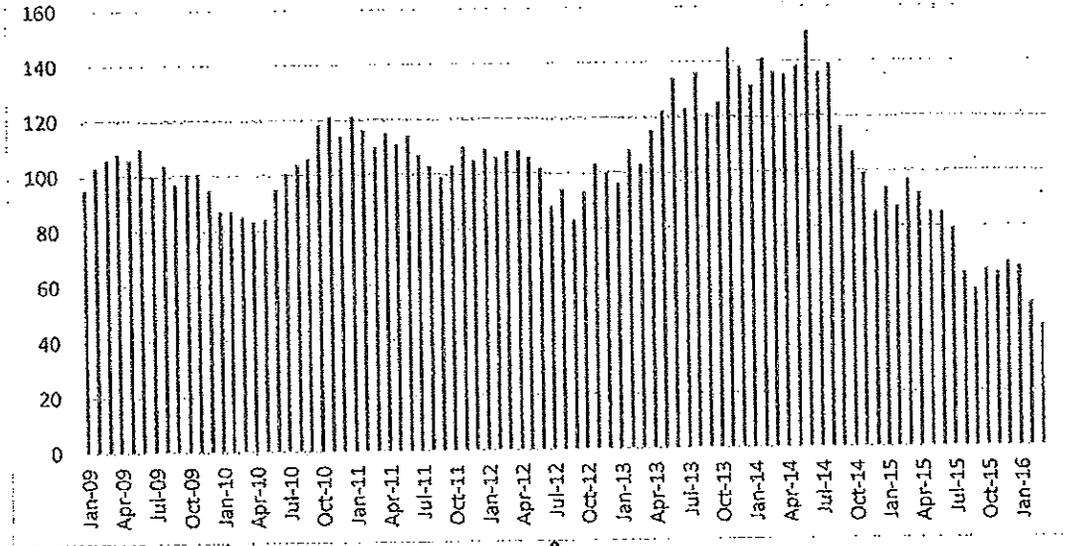
It is appropriate to revise certain aspects of our criminal justice system to recognize what we now know about adolescent brain development. Allowing certain low-risk offenders, ages 18 to 20, to be tried in the juvenile justice system rather than the adult criminal justice system will allow many young people who have committed criminal offenses to be treated as delinquents, thereby allowing them to become productive members of society without the stigma of an adult criminal record.

The proposed phased-in implementation schedule for raising the age of juvenile jurisdiction will allow DCF, the Department of Correction and the Judicial Branch to successfully implement this policy change. With a significant decline in the number of youth in the juvenile justice system in recent years, we believe that a foundation is in place that will allow for this type of expansion.

Thank you for your consideration of the Department's views on this bill.

¹ Connecticut Office of Policy and Management, Criminal Justice Policy Division; "Effects of Raising the Age in the Juvenile Justice System," December 7, 2015, http://www.ct.gov/opm/lib/opm/cjppd/cjcpac/20151209_raiseheage_ppt.pdf

CJTS Monthly Census



↑
Raise the Age
16 year olds
January 1, 2010

↑
Raise the Age
17 year olds
July 1, 2012

* Monthly Census, 1st day of each month.