



February 15, 2016

**RB No 75: An Act Concerning Detained Youth**

Dear Senator Bartolomeo, Representative Urban, and Members of the Committee on Children:

The Connecticut Psychological Association ***strongly supports*** **RB No 75: An Act Concerning Detained Youth**, which seeks to address conditions of confinement and reduce the potential long-term negative impact of confinement on the mental, emotional and behavioral health of confined youth.

The detention environment serves an important role during a crucial developmental period. Detention settings provide opportunities to help struggling children by promoting adaptive behavior through positive reinforcement, rather than merely punishing them for their misdeeds and further reinforcing negative behavior. These opportunities for success and positive reinforcement afford essential tools for transitioning back into the community.

The implementation of evidence-based standards in an accredited setting is an important step towards reaching the goals of reducing the potential negative impact of long-term confinement. These standards are positive steps towards potentially fostering emotional growth and adaptive coping skills, rather than creating or furthering emotional harm and setting children up for failure upon release from detention.