

TESTIMONY
TO THE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT OF
HB 5642
AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE
POLICY OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

March 23, 2016

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong, and members of the Judiciary Committee,

My name is Jonathan Cortes and I am a resident of Hartford, Connecticut. I would like to give my input on House Bill 5642.

The Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) was my home from 2004 to 2005. As a fifteen year old, I was sentenced to 15 months at the training school in Middletown. Drugs and gangbanging were just the norm for me and anyone else who grew up or is growing up in the City of Hartford or anyone who is growing up in a poverty stricken neighborhood.

Serving my sentence at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS) has taught me so many things that I still utilize to this day. I have met numerous staff that I stay in contact with to this day. At CJTS I enjoyed my free time, waking up and going to school, attending workshops and evening participating in various activities. I did not have to worry about the struggles that I would encounter daily in my neighborhood.

Closing CJTS would only lead to juveniles being sent to prisons such as Mason Youth Institution (MYI). I, myself have been sent to MYI and I will tell you from my experience that being incarcerated in a tiny cell for 23 hours a day will not do any good for a young man and only make their problems worse.

The Connecticut Juvenile Training School has changed by life. I have learned so much from my stay there and I have met so many helpful staff. Today I sit here a convicted felon. I am proud to announce that I am a successful business owner. As a juvenile who was sentenced to CJTS, I now hire convicted felons, parolees and men who want to change their lives.

I am totally against closing the Connecticut Juvenile Training School. If you think CJTS has not or is not working, I am your proud success story,

Thank you for your time and consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jonathan Cortes

