

-YALE COLLEGE- DEMOCRATS

Testimony of Daniel Vernick
Legislative Captain, Yale College Democrats

February 2016
345 Temple St., Suite H21
New Haven, CT 06511

In favor: S.B. 18- An Act Concerning a Second Chance Society

Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Students across Connecticut are coming together to stand up for justice and a more prosperous society.

One crime could derail a potentially successful career and life; it is devastating to future job prospects and could be a gateway toward a life within the criminal justice system. That puts a burden on Connecticut taxpayers. Thus the bill will save a substantial amount of money and place economic growth over costly incarceration. In a time of tight budget constraints, pushing youth toward the criminal justice system is unproductive and damaging to society.

The brain does not fully develop until the twenties. Permanently having a crime on one's record could fundamentally damage the rest of a life. America has always been rooted in second chances, allowing everyone the opportunity to remake themselves and become a better person. This issue is also about racial justice; black youth are six times more likely than their white counterparts to go to jail, and thus the bill will be a step toward a more racially just society.

Your vote will fundamentally determine what we value as a society; Connecticut should be a place where a teenager who made a mistake is able to get another opportunity. This bill is about justice, morality, and humanity. Connecticut should be accepting, just, and forward-looking rather than reinforcing a cycle of incarceration.

Connecticut students believe that An Act Concerning a Second Chance Society is an important step toward a more equal and prosperous society.