



330 Main Street, Hartford, Connecticut 06106  
860-523-9146 | [www.acluct.org](http://www.acluct.org)

---

## **Written Testimony In Opposition to Senate Bill 427, An Act Concerning Children in the Juvenile Justice System and Guardianship Appointment**

Senator Coleman, Representative Tong and members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is David McGuire. As the Legislative and Policy Director for the ACLU of Connecticut, I am submitting this testimony in support of Senate Bill 427, An Act Concerning Children in the Juvenile Justice System and Guardianship Appointment. This bill is a natural extension of Governor Malloy's 2016 Second Chance 2.0 legislative package and will help rehabilitate children while protecting the rights.

Currently, juveniles, unlike adults, do not receive credit for the time they spend detained pre-disposition. This results in many juveniles spending more than the maximum sentence of 18 months in detention, as time spent in a detention facility pre-trial or pre-disposition is not credited towards their sentence. Detaining a child in a locked facility implicates the same constitutionally protected liberty interest as an adult being detained in a locked facility. This proposal will ensure fairness and parity across our judicial system by providing juveniles with credit for time served.

Not giving children credit for time served is not only unfair to juveniles, but it is also unproductive. Studies have proven that longer stretches of detention have negative impacts on young people. Young people have better outcomes when they are detained for short periods with targeted programming. A Virginia Poverty Law Center study found that the longer the length of a juvenile's initial incarceration, the greater the number of subsequent offenses. Making sure that young people don't spend extra time in detention will yield better results.

Another key provision of this bill provides for the automatic erasure of juvenile records. This is consistent with the principles of juvenile justice and will ensure that young offenders can reintegrate into their communities without stigma or negative consequences later in life.

This bill is consistent with the principle that young people are still developing and should be given opportunities for treatment and rehabilitation without the lasting consequences of a permanent record. For these reasons we encourage you to support Senate bill 427.