



**Connecticut Conference
United Church of Christ**

125 Sherman Street
Hartford, CT 06105-2281

**Testimony in Support of Senate Bill 880: An Act Increasing Fairness and
Transparency in the Criminal Justice System
Submitted by, Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate
Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ
March 21, 2019**

Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee,

I am Michele Mudrick, Legislative Advocate for the Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ and I am writing today in support of S.B. 880 An Act Increasing Fairness and Transparency in the Criminal Justice System.

I am writing on behalf of the 233 congregations and more than 67,000 people in our state's churches. In fact, the United Church of Christ (UCC) is the largest Protestant denomination in Connecticut. Nationally, the UCC has more than 5,700 congregations with nearly 1 million members. In 2014 the assembled delegates and ministers of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ (CTUCC) met and voted on a Resolution that calls upon the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ to call for an end to Mass Incarceration for Non-Violent Offenses, to advocate for passage of legislation that promotes alternatives to mass incarceration, and to support racial and economic justice in criminal sentencing and restorative justice principles in all possible circumstances. Also, in 1990 the assembled delegates and ministers of CTUCC met and voted on a Resolution that calls upon CTUCC to work for Equal Justice for Victims and to seek reform of the judicial system through involvements that protect the rights of the accused and the victim.

Prosecutors in Connecticut hold substantial power in the criminal justice system and we are asking the state to publish data so that lawmakers and the public can better evaluate fairness and functionality of the criminal justice system in Connecticut. According to Connecticut prosecutors, the Division of Criminal Justice currently has funding to create a digital case management system and is in the process of completing the system.¹

All of God's children deserve government transparency; it is critical for our democracy. The Division of Criminal Justice, the agency that includes Connecticut's state prosecutors, is generally not considered a public agency under the Connecticut Freedom of Information Act, making it almost impossible to obtain information about its work.² S.B. 880 will help Connecticut residents obtain the transparency and government accountability they deserve.

Massachusetts and Florida passed legislation requiring state prosecutors to release data about their decisions and we believe Connecticut should as well.

Thank you for your work and the opportunity to supply written testimony in support of S.B. 880.

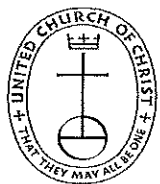
¹ ACLU Connecticut

² ACLU Connecticut



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860.233.5564 • toll free) 866.367.2822 • fax) 860.231.8111 • www.ctucc.org



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125 Sherman Street
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Blessings,
Michele Mudrick
(860) 796-3822
Michelem@ctucc.org



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