

**SENATOR SAUD ANWAR**  
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**State of Connecticut**  
**SENATE**  
*Third District*

*Chair*  
Public Health Committee  
*Vice Chair*  
Insurance & Real Estate Committee  
*Member*  
Appropriations Committee  
Children Committee  
Environment Committee

To Judiciary Chairs Senator Gary Winfield and Representative Steven Stafstrom, Vice Chairs Senator Mae Flexer and Representative Michael Quinn, Ranking Members Senator John Kissel and Representative Craig Fishbein, and honorable members of the Judiciary Committee, I write to you today to provide testimony in support of House Joint Resolution 34, "Resolution Concerning Certain Witchcraft Convictions In Colonial Connecticut."

Before there was Salem, there were witch hunts in Connecticut. It is never too late to apologize for things that you have done wrong, and this resolution is exactly that. In the 1600s, Connecticut towns and residents accused dozens of women and some men of witchcraft, with at least 34 being indicted for such a crime, 12 being convicted and 11 executed. The first execution for alleged execution happened in Connecticut. This occurred despite, hundreds of years later, our knowledge that these accusations and trials took place under complete falsehood. As the resolution states, legal proceedings in the 1600s would not meet modern standards of proof, involved miscarriages of justice and were influenced by fear, superstition and community panic.

Despite these events taking place hundreds of years ago in colonial Connecticut, we as a legislative body and as a state have the responsibility and ability to address past wrongs. Dozens of women and some men were often forced to flee or banished from their homes, suffered destroyed reputations, and were effectively excommunicated from their communities. These wrongful accusations and convictions led to eleven executions of innocent people. A response such as this resolution helps to reaffirm the seriousness of these wrongs in an effort to right them.

Here in Connecticut, hundreds of years and many generations later, we still have residents who are the families and descendants of many of those who were wrongly accused, indicted and in some cases convicted. Centuries have passed, but they know the state they live in were responsible for slandering and in some cases killing their ancestors. I have also had conversations with a family of descendants of those who were involved in the wrongful prosecution of these innocent men and women, and they are also grieving and hurting with this knowledge. This resolution would result in meaningful closure for many of the descendants of those involved in witchcraft trials.

To be proud of Connecticut is to recognize its history, good and bad. We cannot be proud of the wrongful, harmful witchcraft trials that took place in the 1600s. But this resolution seeks to recognize that history under its known wrongful context and realign the state's commitment to understanding and overcoming it. It is with that knowledge that I give it my strong support.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Saud Anwar", with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Respectfully,  
State Senator, 3<sup>rd</sup> District