

The Connecticut General Assembly



Legislative Black & Latino Caucus

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PRESS RELEASE

Connecticut's Legislative Black and Puerto Rican Caucus (B&PRC or the Caucus) join in support and solidarity of the Missionary Baptist Convention of Connecticut's opposition of the 'Three Strikes You're Out' legislation proposed by the Governor and Legislative Leaders.

The Caucus is in support of examining ways to strengthen our criminal statutes to remove violent and persistent offenders from our community, however, any change in the laws should be done with a comprehensive review of the issues affecting our society as it relates to the criminal justice system. Such issues should examine the impact of race and class in all aspects of the system; juvenile justice, preventive and rehabilitative efforts, and economic equity as a few areas that may impact crime in our society.

As reported recently, local communities in Connecticut indicate a reduction in major crimes. As our law enforcement reports their efforts, in conjunction with the support of the community, have had a significant reduction in crimes. The strategies being utilized by our police, courts and corrections departments have been effective in some areas in reducing crime. However, crime will not be eliminated and that is why we must have effective and equitable laws that address the problems.

Three of the four proposals of legislative change that is being promoted appear to address some changes that are needed; however the 'Three Strikes You're Out' concept is not supported by the Black and Puerto Rican Caucus. Although the Caucus is keenly interested in addressing violent and persistent offenders we believe that changes to the current persistent offender law is more appropriate to address this. The Caucus has not had an in-depth discussion with leadership or the Governor's office regarding these proposals. Therefore, without knowing what the specific language will be in these proposals, it is our position that a "Three Strikes You're Out" law should be addressed separately and with more legislative and public input.

The Black and Puerto Rican Caucus is extremely disturbed with the incident in Cheshire, CT last summer as well as its disgust with the untimely death of any individual by violence in our state. We send our sympathy to all of the families that have lost someone in such a manner and wish that further discussions be held to make all of our communities safer is in all of our interests.