



TESTIMONY OF THE CENTER FOR CHILDREN'S ADVOCACY:
In Support of
H.B. No. 6921 AN ACT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION BASED ON A PERSON'S
CRIMINAL HISTORY

February 26, 2019
Labor & Public Employees Committee

Good afternoon Senator Kushner Representative Porter, Vice Chair Abrams and members of the Committee. This testimony is submitted on behalf of the Center for Children's Advocacy (CCA), a non-profit organization affiliated with University of Connecticut School of Law concerning **HB 6921: H.B. No. 6921 An Act Concerning Discrimination Based On A Person's Criminal History** which we **strongly support, with a recommendation to incorporate similar protections for youth with a juvenile history.**

CCA provides holistic legal services to Connecticut's poorest and most vulnerable children through both individual representation and systemic advocacy. Through our Juvenile Justice, Educational Success, and Racial Justice Projects, CCA provides individual representation to youth at risk of or already in the juvenile justice system and collaborates with public defenders, probation officers, and other service providers to improve overall outcomes by protecting children's educational legal rights. Through our Racial Justice Project, we run Racial and Ethnic Disparities (RED) Reduction Projects in Hartford, Bridgeport, New Haven, and Waterbury, where we work with local stakeholders to develop strategies to reduce the disproportionate representation of youth of color in our juvenile justice system. CCA also plays a role in shaping juvenile justice policy through our membership on the Juvenile Justice Policy & Oversight Committee (JJPOC) and its various subcommittees.

CCA endorses HB 6921, as it will help to lift the barriers people with a criminal history experience, particularly upon their return from incarceration. It is no secret that one's criminal history serves to bar them from affordable housing options, gainful employment and access to higher education. By preventing discrimination based on one's criminal history, this Act will open more doors for these individuals. **Such protections will ensure that people with a criminal history can secure a more stable life for themselves, to the benefit of their immediate family and the larger community as a whole.**

In addition to the endorsing this Act, CCA urges the Committee to include protections for juveniles in the final version of this bill. Even though juvenile records are confidential in the state of Connecticut, information on a young person's court history may still be in advertently or sometimes knowingly revealed, leading to similar discrimination. **By amending this Act to include similar blanket protections for youth with a juvenile history from discrimination, the interests of our youngest population will benefit as well.**

CCA wholly endorses HB 6921 as crucial to protecting the future of Connecticut's population with a criminal history, and therein, the larger population as a whole, but also urges the Committee to incorporate into it similar protections for juveniles.

Thank you for your time and consideration. Please do not hesitate to contact our office with questions or concerns.

Respectfully submitted,

/s/

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