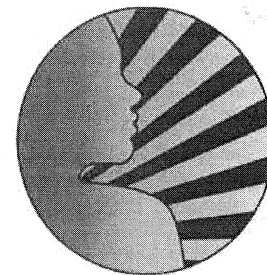


# *the* CAMPAIGN *for the* FAIR SENTENCING *of* YOUTH



Connecticut Sentencing Commission  
Juvenile Sentencing Proposal

November 27, 2012

Dear Members of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission:

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth submits this testimony in support of legislation to provide a “second look” at long sentences imposed on youth. The Campaign is a national coalition of advocates, lawyers, doctors, families, academics, and murder victim family members all working to end the practice of sentencing youth to life without the possibility of parole.

We urge the Connecticut Sentencing Commission to recommend legislation to allow a person sentenced to a lengthy term of imprisonment for a crime committed under the age of eighteen to seek release under parole supervision after serving a portion of the sentence. Such a recommendation from the Commission is an important step towards ensuring that all youth are held accountable for their actions in an age-appropriate manner. As the Commission considers possible “second look” provisions, we urge members to consider well-established scientific evidence that proves the fundamental differences between youth and adults. Recent research shows that children do not have adult levels of judgment, impulse control, or ability to assess risks, and we know that they are more susceptible than adults to negative influences and outside pressures, including peer pressure. These relevant factors, including the unique potential that youth have for change and rehabilitation, demonstrate the importance of holding youth convicted of serious crimes meaningful and frequent sentencing reviews after they have served time in prison.

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth supports providing youth serving lengthy adult sentences meaningful, frequent opportunities for parole. “Second look” provisions do not allow for the premature release of inmates serving time in prison for serious offenses. Instead, they promote accountability and ensure that youth who have been rehabilitated after spending many years behind bars are not unnecessarily incarcerated in Connecticut prisons.

We appreciate the Commission’s attention on this important issue.

Sincerely,

  
Jody Kent Lavy

Director & National Coordinator