

**Testimony of Lauren Gerhard, Undergraduate Public Policy Intern
Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence
Appendix H: *Proposed Recommendations to Reform the Child Pornography Statutes***

Connecticut Sentencing Commission
Friday, December 7th, 2018

To the members of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission,

My name is Lauren Gerhard; I live in Manchester, CT; and I am an Undergraduate Public Policy Intern at Connecticut Alliance to End Sexual Violence this year. When I first read the notice of public hearing a few days ago, I was immediately struck by Appendix H: *Proposed Recommendations to Reform the Child Pornography Statutes*. This change would allow for a sentence length below the minimum mandatory on all crimes of possession if deemed as having "good cause." There has been no data provided as causation for this proposed change; and therefore, I am unable to fully contemplate its practical necessity, or lack thereof. With the limited information I am able to consider, as I understand it, **I am in opposition to Appendix H.**

The need for judicial guidance and accountability when dealing with crimes of a sexual nature has been proven. Child pornography is not a victimless crime, and it cannot under any circumstances be treated as such. I do believe judicial discretion can be beneficial in certain cases but not those in which it could leave another already vulnerable population - as we are discussing children here - more vulnerable.

As I am not able to support Appendix H, I believe it only fair to offer a counter idea. Though I find that the first and second degree statutes would in this regard be best left alone, I would not oppose the addition of "good cause" for only the third degree or oppose reasonable additions to the already existing list of affirmative defenses. In my mind, one of these two options would be the most effective way to allow room for judicial discretion within unique cases that may not warrant the entirety of a minimum mandatory sentence while also upholding fair and consistent consequences as we seek to support victims of these crimes.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

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