

Judiciary Committee JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No.: HB-7133

Title: AN ACT CONCERNING PAROLE ELIGIBILITY.

Vote Date: 4/8/2025

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/26/2025

File No.: 768

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This legislation aims to address an issue concerning parole eligibility by allowing the Board of Pardons and Paroles (BoPP) to consider parole for a person who committed a crime while they were under 21 years old, received a lengthy sentence, and has served a specified minimum portion of that sentence, regardless of when the crime was committed. It also amends previous legislation (PA 23-169) to remove the October 1, 2005, sentencing date.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Judicial Branch, External Affairs: The Judicial Branch submitted testimony noting that this legislation will require significantly more resources than what is currently available.

Christina Ghio, Esq., Office of the Child Advocate: Christina Ghio submitted testimony in support of this legislation because she believes it is time for policymakers to recognize the diminished culpability of adolescent offenders in making decisions that may result in incarceration.

Deborah Del Prete Sullivan, Legal Counsel, Office of the Chief Public Defender: Deborah Del Prete Sullivan submitted testimony in support of this legislation because the Supreme Court of the United States has found that juvenile offenders are less culpable for their crimes and more capable of rehabilitation if their youth is considered, *Miller v. Alabama* (2012).

Natasha Pierre Esq., State Victim Advocate, Office of the Victim Advocate: Natasha Pierre submitted testimony in opposition of this legislation because the ever-changing

sentencing landscape in criminal cases has had and will continue to have detrimental impact on the victims of crime.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU CT: Jess Zaccagnino submitted testimony in support of this legislation because it seeks to expand civil protections and reduce incarceration among the youth population. They believe that since the human brain does not fully develop before the age of 25, this must be accounted for when sentencing individuals.

Shelby Henderson, Tow Youth Justice Institute: Shelby Henderson submitted testimony in support of this legislation because it acknowledges that humans, especially young adults, are capable of significant growth, rehabilitation and positive change and believes that this must be accounted for when sentencing a young adult.

Amber Kelly, PhD, MSW, LCSW, Quinnipiac University: Amber Kelly submitted testimony in support of this legislation because it eliminates outdated and non-evidence-based restrictions on parole eligibility based on the date of sentencing or date of offense. It will bring Connecticut's laws in alignment with modern understandings of justice and rehabilitation.

Other Testimony: Due to the quantity of testimony received for this bill, it is not possible to give a summary of each individual submission. Of the remaining testimonies in support, the following was expressed:

122 pieces of testimony were submitted in general support of this legislation.

37 pieces of testimony were submitted in support of this legislation, citing success of the HONOR program at the Cheshire Correctional Institute.

35 pieces of testimony were submitted in support of this legislation, citing personally specific experiences.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Sam Williams: Sam Williams opposes this legislation because he believes that it will lead to more cases like Christopher Rosa.

Other Testimony: Due to the quantity of testimony received for this bill, it is not possible to give a summary of each individual submission. Of the remaining testimonies in opposition, the following was expressed:

3 pieces of testimony were submitted in general opposition.

Reported by: Griffin Olshan

Date: April 23, 2025