



Dannel P. Malloy
GOVERNOR
STATE OF CONNECTICUT

November 18, 2015

Ben Barnes, JJPOC Co-Chair
Secretary
Office of Policy and Management
450 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Representative Toni Walker, JJPOC Co-Chair
Connecticut General Assembly
Legislative Office Building, Room 2700
300 Capitol Avenue
Hartford, CT 06106

Re: Policy Input and Guidance from the Connecticut Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee

Dear Secretary Barnes and Representative Walker:

Nearly two weeks ago, at the University of Connecticut School of Law, I proposed that we begin a statewide conversation about juvenile justice reform; specifically, the way we treat young adult offenders in the State of Connecticut. I said that I intend to seek the input of stakeholders ahead of the 2016 legislative session. The Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (JJPOC) plays a critical role in advising my administration, the General Assembly and the residents of Connecticut on policies related to juvenile justice and your members are crucial stakeholders in this process.

Connecticut's original "Raise the Age" initiative, crafted and implemented with the help of your committee, has yielded significant positive results in Connecticut. We now have the lowest number of juveniles sitting in pre-trial detention in our state's history. We have the lowest population ever at the Connecticut Juvenile Training School (CJTS). And, the number of inmates under the age of 18 at Manson Youth Institute is at its lowest as well, down 75 percent since 2009. The best evidence of the success of Raise the Age is the effect that it has had on the outcomes for young adults as they age out of our juvenile system. The number of inmates in a correctional facility between the ages of 18 and 21 is at its lowest in more than a quarter-century, down 51 percent over the last six years and still dropping. Thanks to Raise the Age, fewer of our young people are entering the juvenile and adult criminal justice systems than ever before. It is time that we take further, evidence-based steps to build on those demonstrated successes.

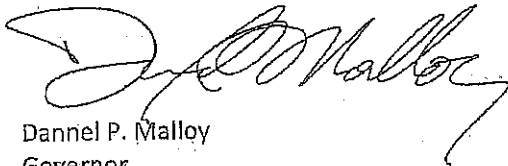
In my speech, I suggested that we begin a statewide conversation about raising the age of eligibility for our juvenile justice system up to age 21. Also, I suggested that we consider a new approach to the way we treat low-risk young adults under the age of 25 in our system. With new evidence suggesting that young brains have not reached maturation until age 25, it is time for us to consider a system with certain new protections for those young individuals in need of a second chance.

I write today to ask your advice and input on how we move forward and continue the work that many of you began in 2007 or earlier. I believe it is our responsibility to explore and develop this new approach. Changing our approach is smart, pragmatic and the morally right thing to do. For these reasons, I ask

that the JJPOC begin a discussion of the issues I have raised; specifically, how can we implement these changes and what will the impact of these changes be on our existing institutions? Connecticut has received offers of support from policy experts and academic leaders around the country. I suggest that you tap into that expertise to inform your consideration. I also invite you to keep me apprised of your work and I expect future conversations between my office and the members of this committee as your work progresses.

I look forward to working with the JJPOC as we develop the next phase of our Second Chance Society criminal justice reform agenda for the upcoming legislative session. Please do not hesitate to be in touch with me and my office throughout this process. Thank you for your leadership in the area of juvenile justice and for all of the work that you will do in the future. I look forward to our conversation on this topic in the coming months.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "D. Malloy", written in a cursive style.

Dannel P. Malloy
Governor