

**GHIAA URGENT CALL TO ACTION: CALL FOR PUBLIC TESTIMONY ON YOUTH JUSTICE
Public Hearing Monday, March 14th at 10AM**

Dear GHIAA Leaders:

As you know, we have been preparing to defeat bills raised this legislative session that “crack down” on youth as a result of the rise in crime misinformation campaign happening across our state. **The time to ACT is NOW.**

It is important that we provide written and oral testimony for a public hearing scheduled Monday, March 14th at 10am. All the information you need is enclosed. Also, if you haven’t yet watched the Rise in Crime video GHIAA produced there is a [30 minute version](https://vimeo.com/684737671/2b9558b9a1) and a [9 minute version](https://vimeo.com/686784926).

**Here is background on what is going on:**

In the last 24 hours many bills were raised in the judiciary committee that aim, in various ways, to get tough on youth. There are 7-8 bills that are very concerning that contain elements of juvenile justice reform that will lead to greater numbers of youth, especially black and brown youth, being detained, coming under surveillance, and a host of other things. Additionally, there is a bill that is basically a “stand your ground bill” that protects folks who shoot at people attempting to steal their vehicles.

Finally, there is an attempt in one bill to dismantle Connecticut’s nationally recognized Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee which is nationally recognized as following best practices when it comes to youth justice.

The bottom line is that these bills are the result of the manufactured crime crisis happening in our state and we need to respond.

**HERE’S HOW TO ACT NOW:**

The Judiciary Committee will hold a public hearing on **Monday, March 14, 2022**at **10:00 am** via **Zoom.**

**Submit Written Testimony**

You can submit written testimony up until the time of the hearing for the best chance at legislator review. Email all testimony to this email address: Judtestimony@cga.ct.gov in Word or PDF format.

**Testify on-line:**

Registration for virtual testimony will close on Sunday, March 13, 2022 at 3:00 P.M

**Make sure you register by this deadline.**

 You must register using the[**On-line Testimony Registration Form**](https://r20.rs6.net/tn.jsp?f=001TxsN6PQmWUUwGwnRadBcEEA_IUAWgioGl7WSGLifcOQUaVUjJ0uNhgDwoF0c1w4TsmoZ7M-_PC9MXUJV355tEuD8eKSujb3h68Omsu6-lkceuEhwI3QWLubi6DZyyv9WM9AsIJGcwU19xWQX2L4bDIemFmhzOBymigkqHNMt0t0VlI6V7onDY9paFh2zgdDj&c=r0L2Ry3mfauG8CLys6_wD1eeR4GCJfqrHJ82CaBxT_KRIO847irgNg==&ch=iF6d4T-BYNWHd5FVd8QSr50Yz43niBfM-OMp5qYV1W0Kg8eHCpLKdA==)

* Once you submit the form, you’ll receive a pending approval notice to the email address you included in the form. Make sure to keep the information in this notice handy.
* A personalized link to join the public hearing Zoom will be sent to the email you provide.
* Within 24 hours, after you have registered to testify, you will receive an email confirming that you have signed up for the hearing. If you need to cancel, there is the “cancel” link in the bottom left corner.
* **Registration will close on** Sunday, March 13, 2022 at 3:00 P.M

For a breakdown of each bill being reviewed at this hearing please visit [this document](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1Cniy4CPYGB7r8yfSLD2ELjcQqGvvqABGtFR2B6UY7-Y/edit) prepared and being regularly updated by The CT Justice Alliance.

Don’t forget we also have many resources on our website at [www.cljct.org/youth-justice/](http://www.cljct.org/youth-justice/)

**WRITTEN TESTIMONY TEMPLATE FOR GHIAA LEADERS**

1. Follow the format below – compose your letter in Microsoft word.
2. When it is complete, email it to JUDtestimony@cga.ct.gov as a word or pdf attachment. It needs to include your name and home address at the end of the letter.
3. GHIAA staff is available now and over the weekend to review your testimony or answer questions. Please email cmackey@cljct.org and Jfonsecatapia@cljct.org for immediate help at any point between now and 3pm Sunday.
4. We will add example testimony letters [here](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1bRGNUp5IIJ5YF3pt4n_7BDk81ThnVCOI?usp=sharing) as we get them. Please be sure to not copy and paste as individual letters are most effective.

SAMPLE TESTIMONY FORMAT

Today’s Date

**PICK ONE SALUTATION:**

To Members of the Judiciary Committee:

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

To the Honorable Chairs Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

**Body of the letter (you can copy and paste this section)**

I am writing in **support of**:

* S.B. No. 387: AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE POLICY AND OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE.

 I am writing **in opposition to** thefollowing bills:

* S.B. No. 365: AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORMS
* S.B. No. 388: AN ACT CONCERNING THE DEFENSE OF A PERSON OR A PERSON'S DWELLING, PLACE OF WORK OR MOTOR VEHICLE.
* H.B. No. 5418: AN ACT REVISING JUVENILE AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE STATUTES AND INSURANCE STATUTES CONCERNING THEFT OF A MOTOR VEHICLE
* S.B. No. 392: AN ACT CONCERNING STATEMENTS MADE BY JUVENILES.
* H.B. No. 5417:  AN ACT CONCERNING JUVENILE JUSTICE AND SERVICES AND FIREARMS BACKGROUND CHECKS.
* S.B. No. 386: AN ACT CONCERNING A STUDY OF THE JUVENILE DELINQUENCY LAWS OF THIS STATE.

**Then:**

1. Introduce yourself, connection to your institution and the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA)
2. Why is this issue important to you (2-3 sentences)
3. Why you do not support these bills:

Choose from these talking points. You can also get more talking points by [clicking here](https://files.ctctusercontent.com/da6bdfcc001/69e82f1f-290d-49d3-9813-fb22561cecc8.pdf?rdr=true) and access to many [fact sheets](https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Y0SN_XHj1I3F4VvF-rJTScEEPbp32ox4) here.

1. The Juvenile Justice System in Connecticut has been largely successful. It follows best practices. Legislative changes are made based on facts and data. Legislation derived from the Juvenile Justice Policy and Oversight Committee (which is why we support SB 387) is open to discussion and voting by members including state legislators, prosecutors, public defenders, state agencies, judges, police, state advocates, victim advocates, community-based organizations, adults and youth. Connecticut has been a model in the country on how to successfully and safely reduce the juvenile justice system and expand diversion and services for youth. **The legislation I oppose today is a departure from these practices.**

1. The legislation we oppose is a knee jerk response to a misinformation campaign about a rise in crime in CT being committed by youth that is unfounded.

1. Now is the time to invest in issues that really matter to youth – mental health treatment, affordable housing, public education, job training, healthcare, and not to roll back important advances in youth justice through this legislation.

1. In the bills I oppose today there are detrimental policy proposals that would do harm to our youth and set us back. In some of the  proposals, there are some items worth considering, but the helpful pieces of these legislative proposals should come through the Juvenile Justice and Policy Oversight Committee.  Some examples include; (Pick a couple)

1. Increase flexibility when determining whether to detain a child: This is directly linked to politicians proposing to extend the detention time longer than 6 hours. - what happens in this time period? What's the time limit? Kids and families shouldn't have to wait for slow systems
2. Increase the sharing of information concerning juvenile cases by law enforcement agencies- This is harmful and aims to expand databases and surveillance of Black and Brown communities. Databases have been used to identify and deport undocumented immigrants.
3. Allow for global positioning monitoring of juveniles under certain circumstances: This practice is not good- it is expensive, ineffective, doesn't track in real time, doesn't get to the root issue. Money can be used to address the root issues and shouldn't be wasted on GPS.
4. Allow for automatic transfer to regular criminal docket for fourteen year old if charged with certain violent crimes: This is harmful because currently, you can't charge a 14 year old as an adult. We don't believe a child that young should be in the adult system, as they are not built or equipped to serve children, and this is essentially rolling back the Raise the Age legislation that was passed in 2015-2016 (which has diverted many kids from the system and has nothing to do with the current climate of youth crime).  It’s  important to know that if they did charge 14 year old as adults they'd be sent to Manson Youth Institute which DOJ released findings in December that found they were in violation of civil and disability rights in terms of their conditions and services for young people
5. Establish a committee to evaluate the criminal justice system for juveniles and adults. This wants to remove the JJPOC- this is wrong and should not be done. this committee doesn't have impacted people on it, various advocacy groups, etc. The JJPOC can and should do the job that's proposed for this group.

**Closing statement: Tweak to be in your own words.**

Today I oppose these legislative proposals, with the exception of SB 387 which comes out of the Juvenile Justice and Oversight Committee, through which all of these proposals should be vetted.

The other bills are rooted in a misinformation campaign and lack sound analysis and will lead to more of our youth becoming system involved.

Our GHIAA congregations stand ready to defeat policies that are rooted in racist rhetoric and faulty data. To learn more watch this 7 minute video on GHIAA’s position: <https://vimeo.com/686784926>

Sincerely,

Your Name and Title

Home Address