

Name: Evan Holmes

Title:

Organization or Agency: Incarcerated in CT DOC

Topic: Meeting Date Not Listed

NA

Testimony:

More Time More Torture is a movement that seeks to condemn and contest the draconian practices of disproportionate youth and adolescent sentencing in the state of Connecticut and the U.S. as a whole. A sentence that exceeds 25 years or more is essentially a death sentence. Generally, the intention of the court is not to mete out death; rather, a lengthy term is meant to ensure an individual's rehabilitation and to deter them from future instances of offending. By punishing people with a lifetime of imprisonment, however, these excessive sentences lead to increased harm, not rehabilitation.

Although the American dark ages of "tough on crime" politics and collateral consequences has recently been eclipsed by the new age brilliance of critical thinkers and scientific breakthroughs, outdated and excessive sentencing policies and procedures remain in place. Put differently, the times have changed, but the sentences have not. Which leads to the question: what is the purpose of continued incarceration when an individual has demonstrated the rehabilitation the court initially prescribed, long before their sentence is complete? The only answer is more punishment, more damage, more destruction, and more torture.

Just as the consensus on crime and punishment is drastically changing before our very eyes, so are the parameters and opportunities for rehabilitation. While times past lent little to no recourse for those who were incarcerated and their actual rehabilitation, today, there is ample programming that fosters and accelerates rehabilitation. For example, the Second Chance Pell Program—an initiative supported by both the Obama and Trump administrations—provides financial aid to incarcerated students. In turn, many colleges and universities have initiated programs and opportunities that assist their host states in rehabilitating the prison population through education. These institutions are going so far as to create partnerships that offer degrees and pipelines that lead former prisoners to college campuses to further their education upon release. These efforts have contributed to the lowest recidivism rates ever known to the American justice system. And they should lead to sentencing reform as well.