



It's Time to Adopt and Publish a Criminal Justice Reform Platform

Dated Thursday, October 25, 2018.

Dear Mr. Lamont,

We, the undersigned organizations and individuals, request you adopt and publish a criminal and juvenile justice platform. The financial costs of the justice system affect every taxpayer in our state, and the human burdens of over-incarceration affect more than 53,000 people in our state every day. Since earning the Democratic nomination for governor, you have published eight campaign platforms covering a variety of issues, including seniors, healthcare, housing, transportation, middle-class tax cuts, the DMV, women and girls, and economic and social inequities. Despite the fact that criminal and juvenile justice intersects with each of these issues and more, none of your campaign's eight platforms include specific proposals for the justice system. While your middle-class tax cut pledge mentions reducing Department of Correction costs through "smart and sensible criminal justice reforms," your website does not enumerate what these "smart and sensible" changes might be.¹ In a race so tightly focused on Connecticut's economy and tax burdens, no candidate has focused on Connecticut's \$623 million a year incarceration problem. Setting aside Connecticut's debt service payments and retirement contributions, the Department of Correction is Connecticut's 5th largest line item in Connecticut's budget.

Mr. Lamont, with twelve days until Connecticut voters will make a critical decision about our state's future, it is time for you to publish your platform for Connecticut's new era of criminal and juvenile justice reform. 13,472 incarcerated people, 3,416 of whom have not been convicted of a crime, are waiting. 39,407 people on probation, who face discrimination in housing and employment due to their criminal record, are waiting. 4,655 people in community supervision programs, who live in our state's largest reentry zones, are waiting. Currently and formerly incarcerated people's family members, friends, coworkers, and counselors are waiting. Faith leaders and business professionals are waiting. And Smart Justice leaders, who have followed you to campaign stops and every debate, called your staff, and repeatedly visited your office, are waiting.

Continued progress on ending mass incarceration in Connecticut will only happen through intentional policy making, strategic planning, and a governor who is willing to work with advocates, key stakeholders, and directly affected communities. There has never been, nor will there ever be, a single-issue governor. On January 9, 2019, if elected, you will assume

¹ Lamont, Ned. "A Property Tax Cut for the Middle Class" NedLamont.com. <https://www.nedlamont.com/news/body/Lamont-Middle-Class-Tax-Cut.pdf> (accessed October 24, 2018)

the responsibilities of ending mass incarceration in Connecticut, ceasing the collateral harms to people living with a criminal record, and ensuring we invest in services and opportunities that will give justice-involved adults and youth a real second chance.

On January 9, 2019, Connecticut's next governor will hold the top executive position of a state that incarcerates people at a higher rate than Russia, Iran, Brazil, and all founding NATO Countries.² Connecticut's next governor will direct the future of a justice system that is among the worst in our country when it comes to disproportionately imprisoning Black and Latinx adults.³ Connecticut's next governor will govern a state with 625 legal and regulatory sanctions and restrictions that limit or prohibit people with a criminal record from accessing employment, occupational licenses, housing, voting, education, and other opportunities.⁴ Connecticut's next governor will inherit a juvenile justice system in need of proper funding for therapeutic facilities and our legislatively established statewide diversion system which includes Juvenile Review Boards. Connecticut's next governor will assume responsibility for overseeing health care services for incarcerated people, and must address a system in which nearly one-quarter of crucial Department of Correction healthcare positions are vacant and mental health care staff positions have been cut by 23%, despite an increased need for services. And the next governor will inherit a state where the majority of voters say it is important to reduce incarceration and support policies to invest in rehabilitation, create clean slates for formerly incarcerated people, and implement alternatives to incarceration.

Connecticut needs a governor who is ready to champion policies to end mass incarceration and eliminate racial disparities in the justice system on day one. Mr. Lamont, it is time for you to take the first step, it is time for you to commit to being a champion for criminal and juvenile justice reform. We ask you to publish your platform now.

Signed by:

ACLU Smart Justice Connecticut

Center for Children's Advocacy

Christian Activities Council

Community Partners in Action

² Wagner, Peter, and Wendy Sawyer. "States of Incarceration: The Global Context 2018." PrisonPolicy.org. <https://www.prisonpolicy.org/global/2018.html> (accessed October 24, 2018)

³ The Sentencing Project. "The Facts: State-by-State Data." Sentencingproject.org. <https://www.sentencingproject.org/the-facts/#rankings?dataset-option=SIR> (accessed October 24, 2018)

⁴ The Council of State Governments. "National Inventory of Collateral Consequences of Conviction." Niccc.csgjusticecenter.org. <https://niccc.csgjusticecenter.org/search/?jurisdiction=11>. (accessed October 24, 2018)

Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut

Connecticut Bail Fund

Connecticut Conference, United Church of Christ

Connecticut Juvenile Justice Alliance

Connecticut Students for a Dream

Connecticut Voices for Children

Connecticut Women's Education and Legal Fund

Connecticut Youth Services Association (serving CT's YSBs)

Hartford Gay & Lesbian Health Collective

James Forman, Jr., Professor, Yale Law School

Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice

Middlesex Coalition for Children

Middletown Racial Justice Coalition

NAACP Connecticut State Conference

NARAL Pro-Choice Connecticut

National Association of Social Workers, Connecticut Chapter

Planned Parenthood Votes! Connecticut

Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership

SEIU 1199NE

The Connecticut Coalition of Reason

The Hartford Area Humanists

The Humanists and Freethinkers of Fairfield County

The Humanist Association of Connecticut

The Rev. Isaac Lawson, Immanuel Congregational Church (UCC), Hartford

The Rev. Kari Nicewander, Immanuel Congregational Church (UCC), Hartford

The Rev. Steve Camp, Faith Congregational Church (UCC), Hartford

The Secular Coalition for Connecticut

True Colors