

BEYOND THE BARS:

THE VOICES OF CHILDREN WITH INCARCERATED PARENTS

ISSUE 4: FAMILY IMPACT

MYTH OR TRUTH?

In Connecticut, bail is set based on the severity of a person's criminal charges.

TRUTH!

In In Connecticut, if a person charged with crime has enough money to post bail, they can remain free until their trial. However, poor persons charged with even “low-level, nonviolent crimes—often sit in jail until their trial date.”¹

Key Question: How does that Impact Children?

- Most people charged with criminal offenses are poor
- Nationwide, 80% of people need public defenders
- 52% of state prisoners and 63% of federal prisoners have minor children
- Over 75% of incarcerated parents who lived with children, had been single parents at the time of arrest.
- Most parents in state prisons provided primary financial support for their children
- Children experience:
 - o Loss of financial support and government benefits
 - o Loss of academic support.
 - o Difficulty with transportation
 - o Loss of moral and personal support (Parent listening to child's problems)
 - o Stress and emotional trauma such as:
 - Anxiety
 - Depression
 - Shame³

ISSUE 3: SCHOOLS

EDUCATORS AND POLICYMAKERS

Type of Support ³	Percent
Financial support	87.0
Listening or helping with personal problems	86.4
Helping at least once a week with homework/projects	86.4
Talking with teachers, coaches, etc.	81.4
Transportation at least once a week	79.6
Watching the child at least once a week	74.1
Government assistance	59.3
Care at least once a week for medical or special needs	25.0

Prior to imprisonment, a “substantial number of incarcerated parents provided most of their child’s daily care.” Forcing these parents to sit in jail until their trial harms their children.

Is there a better way?

- Replace the cash-bail system “with a system that utilizes a pre-trial risk assessment tool that assigns individuals into low, moderate, and high risk categories” (Powers 2016)
 - This method promotes fairness by evaluating charged persons based on their likelihood to offend again, rather than their income.
- “Eliminate monetary bail for defendants charged with low-level, nonviolent crimes” which will “enhance cost-efficiency and justice.”¹

¹Krisai, L. Powers, T. (2016) “Reforming Connecticut’s Pre-Trial System.”

²Christian, S. (2008). “Children of Incarcerated Parents.”

³Conway, J.M., Provencher, A.J., Yeager A.K. (2016). “Impact of Caregiver Arrest in Minor Children: Implications for Use of Family Impact Statements in U.S. Courts.”



The **Connecticut Children with Incarcerated Parents (CIP) Initiative** improves the quality of supports for children with incarcerated parents by informing public policy and practice. These briefs highlight some of our key issues.