

Opening Statement

To begin, I would like to thank Governor Rell for my nomination, the Committee Chairs, Senator MacDonald and Representative Lawlor and all of you for your consideration of such.

I come before you today with an educational background that includes a B.A. in Political Science, a M.A. and Ph.D. in Counseling and a law degree. Admittedly, being on the Board of Pardons and Parole was not my life's dream. Actually, it was more of a slow gravitation towards this area. After a career in both psychology and the field of law, I found myself working on matters that concerned individuals and their reunification within society.

Previously, I was employed as an attorney in both the Office of the Public Defender and the Law Office of Sydney T. Schulman's Inmates Legal Assistance Program (ILAP). In both jobs, my caseloads nearly all consisted of clients who were incarcerated or committed delinquents. Although the clients at ILAP were both male and female, I made a concerted effort to concentrate on the women at York Correctional Institution with matters from divorce and visitations to immigration issues. While working with juveniles as a public defender, I was designated to the Post-Conviction and Re-Entry Unit. I found the common thread between both positions to be a series of failures upon returning to their communities. Thus, the cycle of recidivism would become an issue of concern.

Along the same vein, numerous times I am approached during and/or after teaching a psychology class by students with these same concerns for either themselves or a family member. Not so surprisingly, when this opportunity arose, I felt compelled to join this newly created fulltime parole board to try to combat this issue. As a result, I have had the pleasure of working with some very passionate and experienced individuals. Although the work and responsibility that accompanies it is challenging, I sincerely feel I made the best decision to become a part of this process.

Again, I thank you for your time and consideration of my appointment as a fulltime member of the Board of Pardons and Parole.

Foye A. Smith