

**Testimony**  
Labor Committee Public Hearing  
March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2016 4pm

March 3, 2016

**For the record**

The Honorable Senator Gomes, Co-Chair

The Honorable House Representative Tercyak, Co-Chair  
Labor Committee

**Re: HB: 5237- An Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment.**

Dear Senator Gomes, Representative Tercyak and Labor Committee Members:

Good afternoon. My name is Sandy Lomonico and I thank you for the opportunity to present written testimony in support of the House Bill No. 5237, an Act Concerning Fair Chance Employment. I am currently from Hartford, Connecticut. I am a dual degree student working on a Master's in Public Health and a Master's in Social Work with a concentration in Urban Policy and Community Organizing.

At the age of 19 I became pregnant with my daughter. At the same time my mother was diagnosed with terminal metastatic cancer. After telling my elderly father that I was pregnant, he kicked me out of his house. Without a support system, I found myself homeless, needing to provide for myself and my daughter alone. My desperate and impulsive choices lead me to a felony conviction that would change my life forever. I was not prepared for the unfair treatment that would impact my self-esteem, dignity and integrity that still haunts me today.

I completed my sentence, began attending college in pursue of a dual degree in Nursing and Social Work. I wanted to help others who may have been through similar things as myself while advancing science. Unfortunately my dream of making children who are suffering from cancer smile, feel comfortable and loved, would not come true.

During my time in college, I had a hard time finding full time employment, even after graduation. By this time, I was turned down **by hundreds of employers**. I remember paying over a thousand dollars to complete a Certified Nurse Aide course. After being offered work as a CNA and working for one full week, I was fired. Although I had explained it honestly and fully in person, the company now saw my conviction on paper and changed their mind. They called me a "liability". I quickly realized that this would be a stigma that I would live with for the remainder of my life. There are many that come to this same very harsh reality.

For the last fifteen years I have worked in service relative jobs on a per-diem basis or part time. Many employers told me that they "couldn't hire me because of these my

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record". Others told me I "need to be off probation". Some suggested I "get my record expunged and come back" as if it were that simple.

Being a mother and head of my household, the fact that I still have not been able to find steady employment deeply impacts my life and most of all my daughter's dignity, equity and well-being. She knows the impact of my employment firsthand.

I believe that the Fair Chance Employment Act is a step in the right direction to getting returning citizens of this state to where we need to be in order to be a productive part of society while providing for our children and families.

I encourage you all to support and speak to other elected officials to support the CT Fair Chance Employment Act. It is a matter of hope and fairness and an end of disparity that so many face today.

**This issue is important to me because**

- Me and my 15 year old daughter are directly impacted by me being forced to remain in the service industry and only obtain low income jobs.
- HB 5237 would help people like myself to have a fair chance of being employed in a position that allows for advancement as a foundation towards providing a better future for our children and our families.

Thank you for your time,

*Sandy Lomonico*