



## **Testimony on House Bill 6219**

Submitted by Joe Horvath, Assistant Policy Director

February 16, 2017

Good afternoon. I would first like to thank the committee for hearing me. My name is Joe Horvath. I am the assistant policy director at the Yankee Institute for Public Policy, and I am here to testify in support of House Bill 6219, An Act Concerning Community Reentry by Persons Who Were Incarcerated.

The start of a prison sentence should not be the end of someone's life. Connecticut prides itself on its "Second Chance Society" principles, and for good reason. We have taken steps towards decriminalization and providing opportunities to enhance re-entry. If drafted to benefit the formerly incarcerated without overburdening the state or employers, or risking public safety, I see no reason not to enhance opportunities for ex-offenders.

One potential solution is occupational licensing reform. Occupational licenses are basically a job tax, raising barriers between workers and jobs. Those with criminal histories face not only the normal barriers, but also additional ones based on their recent incarceration or convictions.

In addition to convictions and crime rate reductions, rehabilitation and successful reintroduction should be how we measure success in our criminal justice system. In concept, this bill's goal is worthy, and the Yankee Institute would be happy to participate in efforts to help the recently incarcerated return to a normal life.