

**Subject:** AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY REENTRY BY PERSONS WHO WERE INCARCERATED

I write in support of the intention of Proposed Bill No. 6219: AN ACT CONCERNING COMMUNITY REENTRY BY PERSONS WHO WERE INCARCERATED.

I have been a volunteer tutor with the EMERGE CT program in New Haven for almost four years. I have seen the tremendous value a well conceived program combined with practical employment can add as incarcerated persons reenter our communities.

What we've seen at EMERGE CT is that a) people must have work if they are to function at all after release, but that b) without a supportive program, work is not enough. EMERGE CT employs people, generally in the construction and property maintenance areas, so they learn work skills, and the responsibility expected of employees. Beyond that, generally two days a week are devoted to a variety of programmatic engagement, including real talk, parenting, financial management and literacy tutoring.

By combining work and program, EMERGE CT has achieved a 14% 2 year recidivism rate. Compare that with the 47% rate generally experienced in CT. Further, 63% of the participants exit to employment or to further education. 76% are still working after a year.

I have also seen that the cost of helping people get back on their feet is far less than the cost of re-incarceration. \$7,315 per person in the EMERGE CT program vs. some \$50,000 a year in prison. Not to mention the contribution to family well-being that comes from having parents home and employed, or the value to the State of having them gainfully at work.

So I hope this bill is passed, and that it is drafted so its tax incentives are available to employers like EMERGE CT.

A life is a terrible thing to waste. We know what works. Let's do it.

Ralph Jones