Good evening, Senator Formica, Senator Lavielle, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, and members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Jeff Grant and I serve as Co-Founder and Minister of Progressive Prison Ministries, Inc. (Greenwich, CT), a nonprofit founded in 2012; our mission is to serve individuals and families with white collar and nonviolent incarceration issues. From 2009 - 2019, I served on the Board of Directors and then as Executive Director of Family ReEntry, Inc. (Bridgeport, CT); founded in 1984, Family ReEntry’s mission is to develop, implement, and share innovative and cost-effective solutions to the unprecedented numbers of people involved in the criminal justice system. I have also served on the Board of Directors of Community Partners in Action (Hartford, CT), on the Board of Advisors of ReEntry Survivors and the P.R.I.D.E. Program (Bridgeport, CT) and on the Editorial Board of the book, *The Justice Imperative: How Hyper-Incarceration has Hijacked the American Dream* (Southport, CT).

I would like to take this opportunity to applaud the commitment that this administration has undertaken to follow and expand upon the bold steps that the prior administration took to reduce the numbers of people in prison through criminal justice reform and Second Chance Society legislation.

I served almost fourteen months in a federal prison for a white-collar crime I committed in 2001 after an over ten (10+) year addiction to prescription opioids. I am now over sixteen (16+) years clean and sober. I kicked the habit in the State of Connecticut after committing my crimes, attended recovery meetings in this state until I went to prison, attended court-mandated drug and alcohol counseling upon my return and have lived and remained sober in Connecticut for the over eleven (11+) years since my return from prison. Without support from my wife, the faith community, opportunities to serve this state's criminal justice nonprofits when I came back from prison, and the larger Connecticut social services safety net, it is unlikely that I would be standing before you today as a tax-paying citizen, non-profit leader and advocate for enlightened criminal justice.

With more individuals addicted to, and incarcerated for crimes related to, opioid addiction, it is all the more urgent that we increase adopt legislation directly responsive thereto. Please note:

1. Research shows that forty-four (44%) percent of fatal overdoses in Connecticut occurred among individuals who had a history of having been detained by the Department of
Correction [i]. It is easy to see that effective treatment in correctional facilities for alcohol and drug addiction, and specifically opioid use disorder, can have a dramatic effect on reducing these overdoses.

2. Progressive treatment for opioid use disorder is good fiscal policy. Compare the cost of incarceration by inmate in CT (in 2015, $62,159 per year) against the cost of comprehensive Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) (as little as $4,000 per year) [ii].

3. A 2005 national opinion survey likewise indicates that the general public also favors rehabilitative services for offenders, as opposed to a punishment-only approach by an almost 8 to 1 margin [iii].

As the number of people with addiction to opioids continues to swell, it would behoove the legislature to focus on solutions for those in state custody. Everyone will be the beneficiary from these investments that will help restore healthy families, increase public safety, rebuild our communities and continue to reduce our prison population.

Thank you for your attention to this important issue. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Rev. Jeff Grant, J.D., M.Div.

