



CONNECTICUT
LEGAL
RIGHTS
PROJECT, INC.

WRITTEN STATEMENT OF KATHLEEN FLAHERTY, ESQ.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, CT LEGAL RIGHTS PROJECT, INC.
LABOR AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES COMMITTEE PUBLIC HEARING
FEBRUARY 26, 2019

In support of HB 6921, AN ACT CONCERNING DISCRIMINATION BASED
ON A PERSON'S CRIMINAL HISTORY.

Senator Kushner, Representative Porter and distinguished members of the Labor & Public Employees Committee:

Good afternoon. My name is Kathy Flaherty and I'm the Executive Director of Connecticut Legal Rights Project (CLRP), a statewide non-profit agency that provides legal services to low income adults with serious mental health conditions. CLRP was established in 1990 pursuant to a Consent Order which mandated that the state provide funding for CLRP to protect the civil rights of DMHAS clients who are hospitalized, as well as those clients who are living in the community. I'm also the Co-Chair of the Keep the Promise Coalition (KTP). KTP is a coalition of advocates (people living with mental health conditions, family members, mental health professionals and interested community members) with a vision of a state in which people with mental health conditions are able to live successfully in the community because they have access to housing and other community-based supports and services that are recovery oriented, person-driven and holistic in their approach to wellness. Lastly, I'm a member of the steering committee of the Connecticut Cross Disability Lifespan Alliance, an alliance of people of all ages with all disabilities who pursue a unified agenda.

People with disabilities already experience discrimination in employment. When someone's disability has resulted in their interacting with the criminal legal

system, they may end up with a criminal record that presents an additional obstacle to getting a job. It is well-known that the criminal legal system has a disparate impact on people of color. For this state to accomplish its goal of being a second chance society, and offer people returning to the community after incarceration a fair chance to get their lives back on track, we must remove barriers that result from discrimination.