

Written Testimony Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Committee on Judiciary **in support of Raised Senate Bill No. 1019: An Act Concerning The Board Of Pardons And Paroles, Erasure Of Criminal Records For Certain Misdemeanor And Felony Offenses, Prohibiting Discrimination Based On Erased Criminal History Record Information And Concerning the Recommendations of the Connecticut Sentencing Commission with Respect to Misdemeanor Sentences**

To the Honorable Senator Winfield, the Honorable Representative Stafstrom, and distinguished members of the Joint Committee on Judiciary:

My name is Jim Adams and I have lived in the suburban/rural town of Bolton, Connecticut for 30 years. I have also been a member of the Unitarian Universalist Society: East in Manchester for 30 years. I enthusiastically support the Clean Slate Bill No. 1019. When people in our state are found guilty of misdemeanors and/or lower level felonies, they should be provided with a reliable means of completing their sentence and returning to society, but the current system actually discourages that. They essentially end up getting a life sentence, because their so called "record" never goes away, severely impacts their ability to find work, further their education, and even get housing. Even if they stay crime free, they continue to be burdened with this lifelong stigma. And if they have a family, the impact on them can be quite significant as well.

Also, the impact of the current system on people of color is especially troubling to me. Systemic racism has burdened black and brown communities for centuries in this country, resulting in inequities in wealth, education, employment opportunities, health, and incarceration rates. As a society, we need to start finding ways to help reverse these past injustices, and Clean Slate makes so much sense in this regard. For those who are willing to turn their lives around, and prove it by staying out of trouble for many years, we need to do what we can to support them and welcome them into a more just society.

Again, I fully support the passage of SB 1019, Clean Slate.

Thanks,
Jim Adams
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