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Joseph P. Ganim  
Mayor

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**Testimony in support of SB 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.”*

Representative Stafstrom, Senator Winfield, Ranking Members Kissel and Fishbein and the distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee, my name is Joe Ganim and I am the Mayor of the City of Bridgeport. I am testifying before you today in strong support of SB 1019, or better known as the Clean Slate bill.

Mass incarceration has had real, ongoing consequences in Connecticut, disproportionately hurting Black and brown communities in our state, and burdening hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents with a criminal record. This is a very real experience for thousands of residents of Bridgeport who navigate our systems every year, including those who are newly re-entering our community. Records currently present barriers to employment, housing, occupational licensing, and higher education. A criminal record of lesser and non-violent offenses should not be a lifetime sentence. This legislation is not an award, but rather a lowering of the discrimination and challenges. The Clean Slate offers a second chance for opportunity for returning individuals that cross the threshold of rehabilitation and redemption. The opportunity is for these individuals to become valued and productive for themselves, for their family and our community.

Through my work on the US Conference of Mayor’s Criminal and Social Justice committee, where I serve as Vice Chair for Re-Entry, I have heard firsthand how expungement and pardon practices can greatly benefit our communities hardest hit by mass incarceration. The City of Detroit, under Mayor Duggan, has instituted a pardon program through city hall to help residents with their pardon applications. I am planning to offer similar solutions and services through the Mayor’s Initiative for Re-Entry Affairs in Bridgeport. However, programs like these can only be effective if we strengthen our pardon and expungement laws. SB 1019 is a great start to creating a viable path forward for the thousands of Connecticut residents who have paid their debt to society and deserve a true second chance at life.

Thank you,

Joseph P. Ganim  
Mayor