

22 Montclair Drive
West Hartford, CT 06107
March 8, 2021

The Joint Committee on Judiciary
Connecticut State Legislature
Hartford, CT 06103

RE: 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:

I am a resident of West Hartford, Connecticut and a member of Hartford Monthly Meeting (Quakers) located in West Hartford. I am also a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance and a career counselor.

I am writing in support of Raised Senate Bill No. 1019 which is coming before the Joint Committee on Judiciary. As a Caucasian, living in the suburbs of Hartford, I firmly, and without hesitation, support a strong Clean Slate bill. For too long, in Connecticut, individuals who have committed crimes categorized as misdemeanors or Class C, D and E felonies (convictions for 10 years or less), excluding convictions for sex crimes and family violence, have been penalized for their entire lives for their criminal acts. As a Quaker, I believe that there is that of God in every person and, when given a chance, that Divine spark in people inspires them to seek to better themselves and act positively for the benefit of their family and community.

As a career counselor for 40 years in Connecticut, who counsels adults and helps them identify their career/job goals and then helps them take the steps to achieve those goals, I (and my fellow career counselors) have worked with individuals who have a criminal record. We have personally witnessed the pain of adults with criminal records who are anxious to move forward with their lives but are blocked from doing so. They want to get a decent job and support their families. However, because of their record, even many years after they have been released from prison, these individuals are unable to pursue the career of their choice. In many cases, their criminal record keeps them out of schooling they might want to pursue or makes it impossible for them to get hired to work in the career field of their preference. Holding people back, because of past history, when they haven't committed any additional crimes and they want to be a positive, contributing member of our society is wrong.

Thus, I support Senate Bill No. 1019 and urge you to vote to support this bill. Let's remove the stigma from these individuals and allow them to move forward in their lives in ways that support their families and our communities.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Eleta A. Jones

Eleta A. Jones, Ph.D., LPC