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Testimony to the Connecticut General Assembly's Judiciary Committee
In support of Senate Bill No. 1019
3/9/2021

Co-Chairs Sen. Winfield & Rep. Stafstrom; Ranking Members Sen. Kissel & Rep. Fishbein; and esteemed Members of the Judiciary Committee, I am writing **in support of S.B. 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.**

My name is Tanis Klingler, and I am a resident of Bridgeport, CT. **I support S.B. 1019** for the automatic erasure of criminal records.

This legislative session has incredible opportunities for our state to do better for its residents and take care of our people in meaningful ways. A criminal record should not be a lifetime sentence! The solution is Clean Slate (SB 1019), which would automatically expunge certain criminal records of people who have served their time, returned to our communities, and remained crime-free for a period of time. The criminal punishment system in its current operation leads to punishment continuing beyond the legal sentencing, which limits access to employment, housing, and basic necessities. I believe in people, and I believe that we all deserve dignity in our ability to make amends and care for ourselves and our family. S.B. 1019 enables people a REAL chance to re-engage in the community and contribute.

Five states have already passed Clean Slate laws. Let Connecticut be a leader in the country! 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. Records present barriers to employment, housing, occupational licensing, and higher education. 9 in 10 employers, 4 in 5 landlords, and 3 in 4 colleges use background checks. Hundreds of thousands of people live as second class citizens due to the burden of a criminal record, often decades after they have served their time and returned to our communities. Clean Slate will automatically expunge the records of people who have served their time, returned to our communities, and remained crime-free. A criminal record should not be a lifetime sentence.

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Clean Slate makes communities safer. When people have access to jobs, housing, occupational licensing, and higher education, they are more likely to earn higher wages, and less likely to recidivate. A study from the University of Michigan Law School found that recidivism rates for people who have had their records expunged are so low that they actually “pose a lower crime risk than the general population as a whole.” My concern is when we do not provide people with opportunities and support to do better, we thusly push people to the edge with no real choices. We can do better.

With S.B. 1019, Connecticut can **strengthen our economy, improve public safety, and advance racial justice**. I encourage all members of the Judiciary Committee, on both sides of the aisle, to support this important measure. Thank you.

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