

S.B. 1019

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

My name is Adlyn Loewenthal and I have lived in West Hartford for 35 years. I am a member of Congregation Beth Israel and a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA). I am writing to urge you to support the Clean Slate legislation proposed in Senate Bill 1019.

I am the President of the Common Sense Fund, a family foundation that has long supported the work that the Judy Dworin Performance Project does with women incarcerated at York Correctional Facility and, more recently, with men incarcerated at the Cybulski Correctional Institution. We have been witness to the spoken word, movement, and musical performances that the prisoners are given the opportunity to create under Judy and her staff's direction. We have seen the psychological work that these women and men do to come to terms with their lives, assume responsibility for their actions, and repair what can be repaired in their family relationships.

Many of the people incarcerated at York and Cybulski have been sentenced for drug offenses. A majority of them come from lives disadvantaged from the start. When they leave prison they have the extraordinarily challenging task of building a successful life. When they have to indicate on job, rental, and loan applications that they have a criminal history, they are unlikely to receive positive responses to those applications, and are thus more likely to remain part of the underclass – homeless and unemployed. Nearly half the population in homeless shelters have been incarcerated. A criminal record reduces a job seeker's chance of getting a callback or job offer by nearly 50 percent.

Successfully functioning returning citizens contribute both financially and socially to the well-being of society. Time served for these felony offenses should end upon release, and the formerly incarcerated should not continue serving time by virtue of forever having to check the box "Have you ever been convicted of a felony?".

I urge you to support Senate Bill 1019

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