

## Testimony to the Connecticut General Assembly's Judiciary Committee

In support of Senate Bill No. 1019 3/10/2021 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 Jennifer O'Neill resident of Marlborough, CT and I am writing today in support of S.B. 1019 for the automatic erasure of criminal records. History has shown us that mass incarceration has significant and long lasting impacts upon individuals and our state, disproportionately impacting brown and black communities. This legislation supports the notion of the American dream, where people can work hard and get ahead. Criminal records present barriers for housing, employment and education, key components in allowing residents to become citizens fully able to participate in society. Records can present barriers to independence personally, professionally and financially.

Clean slate will remove obstacles for those individuals who have made mistakes but paid their debt to society. This legislation will help remove barriers to employment, housing, higher education and occupational licensing. A criminal record should not be a lifetime sentence. Clean slate will automatically expunge the records of people who have served their time, returned to our communities, and remained crime-free, thereby helping individuals overcome the barriers that past convictions pose.

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." Simply stated it is not a public safety issue. 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.