

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 Beth Richter and I am a resident of Bethany, CT. **I support S.B. 1019** for the automatic erasure of criminal records. I am a teacher who believes the data that tell us that inconsistent sentencing and institutional racism have produced disproportionately high effects of mass incarceration on Connecticut's black and brown communities. Long after a criminal has served his/her sentence, criminal records present longtime 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. **Clean Slate will automatically expunge the records of people who have already served their time, returned to our communities, and remained crime-free.**

A criminal record should not be a lifetime sentence; reformed criminals need the incentive of a future where they can have access to jobs, housing, and occupational licensing; this will make them less likely to recidivate and less likely to be a financial burden to taxpayers in the future. 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."

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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