



"There are many paths approaching the truth that unites us"

The Unitarian Society of Hartford

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The Rev. Cathy Rion Starr
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Co-Ministers

Written Testimony Submitted to the Connecticut General Assembly Joint Committee on Judiciary in **Support of Senate Bill 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.

March 9, 2021

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

I am co-minister of the Unitarian Society of Hartford, a Unitarian Universalist congregation with over 200 members from around the region. Our congregation is a member of GHIAA (the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance). I am very much in support of this bill!

Unitarian Universalists covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. Our Unitarian Universalist Statement of Conscience about Criminal justice in 2005 commits Unitarian Universalists *"to working in our communities to reform the criminal justice and correctional systems and effect justice for both victims and violators. The act in the spirit that we are indeed our sisters' and our brothers' keepers. Love is our governing principle in all human relationships. Therefore, we commit ourselves, to [among many other things] the elimination of post-prison restrictions on civil rights and civil liberties."*

We need a strong Clean Slate Bill that will make it smooth and simple for those who have done their time to live free from the shackles of their past. Expungement works! A 2019 study in Michigan found that those who have had their records expunged saw a 25% pay increase after just two years, but a criminal record reduces a job seeker's chance of getting a callback or job offer by nearly 50%. This disproportionately impacts Black and Brown and poor communities. Let's take a step towards equity and fairness by passing a strong Clean Slate Bill so those who have done their time can move on with their lives more freely.

I urge you to approve Bill 1019.

In faith and love,

Rev. Cathy Rion Starr
Hartford minister and West Hartford resident