

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 Alana Rosenberg and I am a resident of Woodbridge, Connecticut and a Research Associate at the Yale School of Public Health. I am writing in support of SB 1019.

For ten years I have worked on research examining mass incarceration's role in producing health inequalities. In 2011, I began interviewing men and women with an incarceration experience for a drug related offense, meeting with each person several times over a couple of years. Although participants were seeking employment to provide for themselves and their families, swearing never again would they return to prison, society had a different resolution for them, branding them with the irrevocable mark of criminal. Criminal background checks were a pervasive barrier to obtaining employment and housing. As Michelle Alexander's book *The New Jim Crow* became a bestseller, mass incarceration revealed itself to me through people's stories, as a far reaching, thinly veiled racist system keeping people of color oppressed, in New Haven and across Connecticut.

Sadly, as we began another project in 2017, and I interviewed dozens of additional participants with a criminal record, much had stayed the same for people returning from incarceration. Our policies seem determined to create a second class, apart from society, despite individuals' earnest desire to be contributing citizens. Each participant I got to know through interviews was quite simply a person, with loved ones, dreams, skills, goodness, and a unique way of looking at the world.

As a member of Temple Emanuel in Orange, CT I joined Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut to work on passing Clean Slate legislation and reforming our broken criminal legal system. I believe, quite simply, that everyone deserves a second chance, that nobody is beyond forgiveness and redemption, and that Clean Slate is an opportunity to right the wrongs of our overreaching criminal legal system that has entrapped too many people of color through not just prison sentences, but forever lasting criminal records. This will not only improve our economy and public safety but will give hope and a route to self-sufficiency to the tens of thousands of Connecticut residents we have labeled and exiled. I urge Connecticut to become a leader in criminal legal reform in this country and to pass a strong Clean Slate bill in 2021.

Thank you,

Alana Rosenberg

Woodbridge, CT