

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing | 03-10-2021
Testimony SUPPORTING SB 1019

Dear Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Constanza Segovia, and I write on behalf of Hartford Deportation Defense, an immigrant-led immigrant rights group based in Hartford CT.

I write today to express my support for **SB 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.

This proposal includes a provision that would reduce the maximum length of all misdemeanor convictions in Connecticut to 364 days. This technical fix could sever a segment of the prison-to-deportation pipeline, which funnels community members from the state criminal justice system directly into the deportation machinery. This means individuals who serve mere weeks, or even no time at all for state misdemeanor convictions, can be ripped away from their families and communities!

We cannot allow our state to remain complicit in an unjust immigration enforcement regime.

Our work is centered on mutual aid and mutual support, one community member to another. Every day we see how members of our community must navigate both the immigration system and the criminal justice system, and we have seen countless people impacted by this technicality. We have seen people get picked up by ICE because of this.

When people in our community are sentenced to 1 year from a misdemeanor, ICE is immediately notified and an administrative detainer is placed on their file. Getting involved with ICE is a highly disproportionate consequence for a misdemeanor, often resulting in months of incarceration in ICE detention facilities, and ultimately family separation caused by deportation. It also runs counter to a spirit of reducing sentences and consequences of many offenses, something the state says that it values doing. This is an easy technical fix to show the state is actually committed to real reforms.

Additionally, if the maximum sentence for misdemeanor convictions is not changed to 364 days, the state of Connecticut is choosing to work in collaboration with ICE, which is a white supremacist government agency that mostly targets Black and Brown immigrants, particularly when intersecting with the criminal justice system.

Connecticut cannot allow unjust laws at the federal level to tear our people away from their families and communities. Funnelling individuals from our own deeply problematic criminal

justice system into a highly punitive immigration system runs counter to public safety, peace, and common notions of justice and fairness. This is a relatively easy, technical fix, and we urge the committee to vote for passage of this bill to ensure immigrant families are not disproportionately impacted by sentencing practices that we have the power to change.

Sincerely,
Constanza Segovia
Hartford Deportation Defense