

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 Elisabeth Stenger and I am a resident of Hamden, CT. **I strongly support S.B. 1019** for the automatic erasure of criminal records. Mass incarceration has had real, ongoing consequences in Connecticut, disproportionately hurting Black and brown communities in our state, and burdening hundreds of thousands of Connecticut residents with a criminal record. Having a record presents barriers to employment, housing, occupational licensing, and higher education. **9 out of 10 employers, 4 out of 5 landlords, and 3 in 4 colleges** use background checks. Clean Slate will automatically expunge the records of people who have served their time, returned to our communities, and remained crime-free. A criminal record should not be a lifetime sentence.

Clean Slate makes communities safer. When people have access to jobs, housing, occupational licensing, and higher education, they are

more likely to earn higher wages, and less likely to repeat criminal behaviors. 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.” That makes all of us safer, in all our communities. Access to decent full employment, education and professional licensing will also boost our state’s economy and disproportionately impacted neighborhoods.

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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