

## Testimony in support of Clean Slate legislation SB 1019

Written Testimony submitted in support of Raised 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.

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

My name is George Stone. I am an 80-year-old white resident of West Hartford, CT. I am also a member of the First Church of Christ, Congregational (United Church of Christ denomination) in West Hartford. My church is a member of the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance (GHIAA). As an active member of my church and supporter of GHIAA, I am advocating for a strong Clean Slate Bill (SB 1019) that includes all misdemeanors and Class C, D, and E felonies, and specifically excludes convictions for sex crimes and family violence.

Importantly, this bill should be retroactive, and include antidiscrimination protections for people with records. To qualify for expungement under this bill, a person would have to live crime free for a period of years, for example, 3 -5 years. People excluded from the provisions of this bill can still use the existing process through the Board of Pardons and Paroles.

Currently, conviction of a felony carries with it not only a term of prison. However, long after the person has served his or her time, the conviction effectively continues for a lifetime, as that person suffers from exclusions from employment opportunities, housing opportunities, higher education opportunities and licensing opportunities – all due to background checks used by all or most employers, educational institutions and state licensing boards. This Clean Slate bill would eliminate those barriers to those who have served their time and been crime free for a period of time.

People with jobs, housing, educational opportunities and access to professions covered by state licensing are able to become contributing members of our society, rather than being consigned forever to the margins of society, where legal opportunities are far fewer. As you probably already know, those who have had their records expunged have very low rates of recidivism, according to a study by the University of Michigan. Their rates of recidivism are so low, according to this study, they actually “pose a lower crime risk than the general public”.

In conclusion, I ask the member of the Judiciary Committee to support SB 1019 as a moral, practical, economical way to eliminate a lifetime sentence of missed opportunity. Passage of this bill would also reduce government expense for prisons, criminal justice systems and welfare support.

Thank you for your consideration,

George Stone  
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I will reiterate that I am a white person and a resident of the suburbs, and I am not afraid of anything this bill will create, for the reasons shown below.