



October 11, 2019

Good afternoon Chairman Judge McDonald and members of the Criminal Justice Commission. My name is Marc Donald and I am the Executive Director of the Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership (RYASAP). As an organization working to build healthy communities by focusing on strengths within the communities, we are grateful that you offer the platform for our input to you, members of the Commission, as you look for and interview candidates. Thank you for making the effort to ask for and include public input into your process.

RYASAP is an organization embedded in communities that engages in direct services to divert youth from the juvenile justice system, builds capacity through leadership development and training, and guides policy and advocacy in justice and behavioral health. We invest resources in the communities to build on existing assets and fill gaps in services.

The Chief State's Attorney influences our communities in multiple ways. Through the guidance of local prosecutors, s/he influences how individuals will be charged and prosecuted. They can influence the treatment of those convicted and even influence the experience of those who are not.

Our ideal Chief State's Attorney will understand that all behavior has meaning. Our ideal Chief State's Attorney will recognize that mass incarceration is not a solution to systemic failures from institutions. Our ideal Chief State's Attorney will realize that reducing incarceration means an opportunity to reallocate resources to our distressed communities to address root causes of crime and trauma. Our ideal Chief State's Attorney will understand that impoverished and traumatized populations have unaddressed mental health issues which often lead to substance use and crime. S/he will realize that poverty is a public health issue and that incarceration is not the solution. Our ideal Chief State's Attorney will ensure that all prosecutors understand that all behavior has meaning.

Most importantly, our ideal Chief State's Attorney will be willing to engage with organizations like RYASAP and communities and individuals that are most impacted by the Justice system.

REGIONAL YOUTH ADULT SOCIAL ACTION PARTNERSHIP

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