



H.B. No. 5035 AN ACT ADJUSTING THE STATE BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM ENDING JUNE THIRTIETH 2019, AND MAKING APPROPRIATIONS THEREFOR.

Good Evening Senator Formica, Senator Osten, Representative Walker, Representative Ziobran and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee. My name is Randy Braren and I am currently the Director of Reentry Initiatives for Family Reentry, Inc., a non-profit corporation based out of Bridgeport, CT. We provide a variety of services in the areas of Youth and Family, Domestic Violence and Reentry Programs. I am submitting this written testimony to you regarding the Governor's Proposed Adjustment, specifically as it impacts upon men and women being released from Connecticut's correctional facilities. The Department of Correction's *Community Support Services* line has been severely cut over the past several years and I am respectfully urging you to not only avoid further cuts, but that you make efforts to restore a portion of what has already been eroded.

My concern is informed not only by my ten years in leadership roles in the non-profit world, but also by my 27 year career with the CT Department of Correction in which I served as a Parole Officer, District Supervisor, Assistant to the Chair of the Board of Parole (now CT Board of Pardons and Paroles), and as Director of Parole and Community Services under then Commissioner Theresa Lantz. Throughout my career, the role of the non-profit community provider network has been indispensable.

Over the past several years, CT has been very successful in reducing the prison population, along with its commensurate costs, both human and economic. This reduction has been the result of a number of factors, including "front end" initiatives in policing and bail setting policies, to sentencing and post-sentencing practices such as discretionary release programs (as administered by CTBOPP and CTDOC), and reentry services. It is this latter component---reentry services---that will continue to be negatively impacted without adequate funding.

Recent projections compiled by OPM's Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division indicate a continued downward trend in the prison population, as well as an increase in release rates and community supervision caseloads. The funding that supports safe and effective reentry programs, and that helps to reduce recidivism and re-incarceration should be viewed, in my opinion, as an investment rather than as an expense. In addition, I urge you to consider further privatization of certain post-release service that, when properly funded and coordinated with the community supervision responsibilities of state parole officers, can reduce costs, while improving outcomes.

Finally, I want to thank you for the leadership that you have shown over the years in this area of public policy, to acknowledge the progressive policies that you have initiated and supported, and to express to

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you my appreciation for helping to make CT's Criminal Justice System one that I have been proud to be a part of.

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