

Housing Committee Hearing
Testimony of Pastor Jose Champagne
Supporting SB 875:
An Act Concerning The Risk Of Homelessness For Those Released From The
Custody Of The Department Of Correction
March 4, 2021

Senator Lopes, Representative McGee, Ranking Members Polletta and Cicarella , and distinguished members of the Housing Committee, thank you for hearing my testimony in support of S.B. 875, An Act Concerning the Risk of Homelessness for Those Released from the Department of Correction.

My name is Jose Champagne. I'm the Senior Pastor at Holly Church of God in New Haven, and the President of the Greater New Haven Hispanic Clergy Association.

It concerning that recent data shows that nearly 1,200 people who utilize shelter have also been released from a Department of Correction facility within the last three years. Many individuals began their involvement with the Department of Correction as adolescents and have been on a cycling between homelessness and incarceration for decades, often for multiple repeated short stays for relatively minor charges.

For people who are under parole or probation supervision, homelessness can make it difficult to comply with the terms of supervision, leading to technical violations and/or revocations of parole or probation and more time spent in prison.

I ask you to please support this bill because it will create and fund a new program within Department of Corrections to contract with community-based non-profit organizations to provide housing search and navigation, housing application assistance, and short-term rental assistance for people eligible for release from Department of Correction, but who lack stable housing or a sponsor.

Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, it's inhumane and an expensive public policy problem. We urge you to support the proposed legislation and to help ensure that those returning home to our communities from incarceration have the supports needed to transition to housing, stability, and hope.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to testify and appreciate your efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Pastor Jose Champagne
President, Greater New Haven Hispanic Clergy Association
Senior Pastor, Holly Hill Church of God International Ministries.