

Housing Committee Hearing

Testimony of Rev. Abraham Hernandez

**In support of S.B. 875: An Act Concerning The Risk Of Homelessness For Those Released From The Custody Of The Department Of Correction**

**March 4, 2021**

Distinguished members of the Housing Committee

I, Rev. Abraham Hernandez, serve as the Executive Chapter Director of Connecticut's Chapter of the NHCLC (National Hispanic Christian Leadership Conference) that represents over 300 Hispanic Evangelical churches in the state.

I write in support of SB 875: An Act Concerning The Risk Of Homelessness For Those Released From The Custody Of The Department Of Correction.

Men and women returning home face many challenges – the vast majority have a history of substance disorder, while others may have medical or behavioral health issues, or a combination. Many do not have support systems when released and often end up homeless. 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.

This bill is vital - it will create and fund a new program within the 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. I 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.

Once again, I respectfully ask you to approve SB 857 - An Act Concerning the Risk of Homelessness for Those Released from the Custody Of The Department Of Correction.