

Nicholas A. Yanicelli  
Prison Ministry Apostolate  
25 River Road 8001  
Wilton, Ct 06897  
203.223.3701  
nyanicelli@outlook.com

***S.B. 875, AN ACT CONCERNING THE RISK OF HOMELESSNESS FOR THOSE RELEASED FROM THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION.***

Senator Lopes, Representative McGee, Ranking Members Polletta and Cicarella , and distinguished members of the Housing Committee,

Thank you for hearing my testimony today on S.B. 875, An Act Concerning the Risk of Homelessness for Those Released from the Department of Correction.

**Overview**

Initial cost estimates for the housing assistance averages cost \$7,634 per person. Depending on the level of rental assistance needed by individuals, which varies from a one-time assistance to rental assistance spanning 4 to 9 months, funding for the Returning Home and Probationer Rapid Re-Housing Programs would enable both the DOC and CSSD to contract with community housing assistance providers to each serve close to 400 people per year. By that math, a \$3 million investment in each agency could serve 393 people, \$2 million 262 people, and \$1 million 131 people.

Many individuals began their involvement with the Department of Correction as adolescents and have been cycling between homelessness and incarceration for decades, often for multiple repeated short stays for relatively minor charges. The annual cost of incarceration for each incarcerated citizen is substantially more than the cost of housing assistance.

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 – an undeniable revolving door. Annually, approximately 1200 people who utilize shelter have also been released from DOC facility within the last three years.

**Proposal**

To this end, please consider a DOC reentry plan to provide early identification of inmates who are likely to have challenges identifying a housing plan or sponsor. Screening may be necessary to ensure that the DOC is held accountable for addressing housing needs among inmates eligible for release and ensuring that the timely release of inmates is not hindered by the lack of housing options.

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.

Conclusion

Homelessness is an unacceptable condition for any Connecticut resident, 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.

The report, "RETURNING HOME PROGRAM - A strategy to reduce homelessness and recidivism" is publicly available on the Internet web site of the Office of Policy and Management and presented to the Criminal Justice Policy Advisory Commission per Sec. 18-87j. The presentation to the commission also includes information from Department of Corrections on its report pursuant to Section 3 of this legislation.

Thank you for hearing my testimony and thank you for your support to efforts to end homelessness in Connecticut.

Sincerely,

*Nicholas A. Yanicelli*

Nicholas A. Yanicelli  
Prison Ministry Apostolate  
25 River Road 8001  
Wilton, Ct 06897  
203.223.3701  
nyanicelli@outlook.com