

Testimony Supporting SB 572:  
An Act Concerning Community Crisis Response Teams and Reentry Centers.  
Legislative Office Building  
2/11/2021

Representative Horn, Senator Bradley, Senator Osten, Representative Paolillo, and distinguished members of the Public Safety and Security Committee, thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Earl Bloodworth, I'm the Director of the City of Bridgeport's Re-Entry Department.

The City of Bridgeport supports SB 572 because it will tackle issues that disproportionately affect communities of color, one of these being a dire need for services helping the men and women returning home from incarceration. People returning home from incarceration are disproportionately affected by issues related to housing, employment, substance use disorder, mental illness, and chronic medical illness. The City of Bridgeport welcomes 700-1,000 formerly incarcerated individuals home each year. These residents need a myriad of services to ensure that they can successfully reintegrate into society and avoid recidivism. Since the inception of the Mayor's Initiative for Re-Entry Affairs in 2016, we have helped serve over 800 individuals returning home with services including:

- Access to housing,
- Backpack program including toiletries and other necessities,
- Access to IDs and drivers' licenses,
- Access to support groups,
- Connecting folks to higher education through local partnerships,
- Entrepreneurial programs, and more.

SB 572 is the first step to ensuring that men and women returning home from incarceration have better chances to reintegrate society. The Reentry Welcome Centers will ensure that people are connected to these services on their day of their release, they will help people apply for public benefits, and provide continuing supports while people are already in the community. The Re-Entry Welcome Centers can assist those returning from various release statuses including under community supervision, end of sentence, pre-trial release, and those that may be already in the community but require some guidance to get back on track.

Through the closing of the Northern Correction Institute and two other facilities, funds should be reinvested to support these Re-Entry Welcome Centers. This funding would greatly impact the ability for local municipalities and community partners to serve these residents.

Thank you for allowing this bill to reach a public hearing, I encourage the committee to favorably report out this legislation.

Sincerely,

Earl Bloodworth  
Director  
Mayor's Initiative for Re-Entry Affairs  
City of Bridgeport