

Appropriations Committee Public Hearing on the Governor's Proposed Budget for  
Transportation, Judicial and Corrections, and Legislative Agencies

Good evening, my name is Marlene De Bellis Brandon and I thank you for this opportunity to testify. I volunteer as the current Board Chair of CT Renaissance, and I'm a licensed clinical social worker.

I believe it is crucial to provide funding and investment in programs that serve persons with significant legal histories in order to effectively give them the tools and hope to rebuild their lives. The school to prison pipeline and the high rate of recidivism among convicted and incarcerated persons is a tragic pattern that impacts the entire community. In order to change this formidable pattern, treatment and services need to offer highly skilled clinicians, adequate environmental conditions for both workers and clients, and community services with employment opportunities that would hold a high level of morale and set up the client for success. When persons with criminal histories are able to turn their lives around, the entire community benefits and becomes safer.

Thank you.