



PREPARE
PREpare for PARole and REentry

February 21, 2024

Re: Testimony in Support of SB 0636
Juvenile Law - Commission to study ability of DJS to
provide effective social services to juvenile offenders

Dear Members of the Judiciary Committee:

I am a beneficiary of the Juvenile Restoration Act (JuvRA). Having been adjudicated as an adult in the Criminal Justice System at the age of fifteen, served over 42 years of a life sentence, engaged in specialized treatment for eleven of those years, counseled hundreds of at-risk youth from prison, taught and mentored incarcerated peers, and being released to become a parole advocate and reentry coach, I support SB 0636.

While I am a loyal enthusiast of public safety, accountability, and just desserts, proposed reform to the 2022 Juvenile Justice Reform Act of 2022 lacks a restorative justice component. I agree that there is a need to take action addressing juvenile crime. However, I believe that widening the net for induction in juvenile services is putting the cart before the horse. The Department of Juvenile Service is under functioning. My years of interaction with troubled youth tells me that many exit juvenile services programming worse than when entering.

Something is clearly wrong! The existing structure relied upon to protect and reform our youth has been resulting in irreparable harm to the individual youth and society. Why are our children violating probation? Why do so many continue the behavior which led to DJS involvement in the first place?

So, I applaud this endeavor to determine how to improve our juvenile justice system in order to prevent greater harm. I urge this honorable committee to vote favorably for SB 0636.

Respectfully submitted,

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