

## TESTIMONY IN SUPPORT OF [Senate Bill 767](#)

To: Senator Paul G. Pinsky, Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Chairman

From: Stan Andrisse, PhD, MBA, Endocrinologist Scientist & Faculty, Howard University College of Medicine

February 22, 2020

Dear Education, Health, and Environmental Affairs Committee Members:

My name is Dr. Stanley Andrisse. I am a **formerly incarcerated person** with 3 felony convictions, sentenced to 10-years in prison. I was once told I had no hope for change. I am now an endocrinologist & professor at two world renowned medical institutions. **People can change.** With mentoring and support, statistics and many personal stories show that **offering second chances is healthy for the individual, healthy for their families, and healthy for the community.**

I hold several professional positions that I split my time between. Primarily, I am an Assistant Professor in the Department of Physiology and Biophysics at Howard University College of Medicine. I am also an Alumni Adjunct Assistant Professor in the Division of Pediatric Endocrinology at the Johns Hopkins Medicine. More pertinently, I am the Founder and Executive Director of [From Prison Cells to PhD](#), a mentoring program aimed at helping individuals from underrepresented backgrounds enter and excel in college. Mentorship and education were transformational in my personal journey. This is why **I fully support Senate Bill 767.**

My interest in this stems from my story. Growing up in Ferguson, Missouri, I got involved with making poor decisions at a very young age. By my early 20's, those poor decisions had exacerbated, and I found myself sitting in front of a judge facing 20 years to life for drug trafficking charges. The prosecuting attorney classified me as a prior & persistent career offender. The judge sentenced me to 10 years in a maximum-security prison.

Very much tied to my departure, my dad's health plummeted while I was in prison. Through phone calls and letters, I'd hear that piece by piece, they amputated his lower limbs up to his torso. Before I could reconcile our relationship, he fell into a coma and passed due to complications associated with type 2 diabetes. Upon release, after several rejections, I was accepted into a Ph.D. program, completed my Ph.D./M.B.A. simultaneously, and started at Johns Hopkins Medicine.

**Education has been the game changer for me.** I share this with you to give you the perspective of I support this bill. This bill will help change the life trajectory of men and women with criminal records. I am a three-time convicted felon. Education has given me the tools and the titles to balance out those strikes that I placed against me. More important than the letters behind my name, **education has broadened my life perspective and has given me hope.**

I am quite certain that it was because of this "criminal conviction" question that I was rejected from several of the PhD programs I had applied to. Fortunately for me, I had made a good impression on one of my college professors from my undergraduate studies (before I went to prison). This professor vouched for me and had a connection to the admissions committee at Saint Louis University. I completed my PhD at the top of my class and 2 years earlier than expected, suggesting that I was indeed qualified to have been admitted to the other programs.

This short one sentence question is a mountainous barrier to one's successful reintegration into society. It is my and many others' scarlet letter. Yes, I am a convicted felon. But I am also a doctor, a scientist, an MBA holder, a newlywed husband, a son to an aging mother, a community organizer, an institutional leader, a youth mentor, a published author, and many other things. Eliminating me before you know all of these other great things is an injustice to society. I am in full support of House Bill 2471. I humbly urge a favorable report.

**Stanley Andrisse, MBA, PhD**

Executive Director, [From Prison Cells to PhD](#)

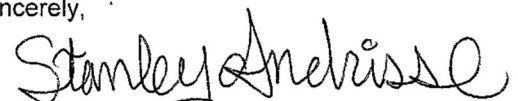
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Sincerely,



Stanley Andrisse, M.B.A., Ph.D.