

11-29-2020

Chair Lang

Vice Chair Plummer

Ranking Member Leland

And Fellow house criminal justice committee members

Proponent Testimony Senate Bill 256

Dear deciding members-

I would like get right to it and challenge your imagination for two minutes if you are willing? This journey will take you into a place I have visited and subsequently it changed my life forever.

When I was twenty years old I was sentenced to five years in prison. To say the least I was a scared and confused kid entering a prison population of which I had no idea of what to expect. To help put this culture shock in perspective imagine this years COVID craziness multiplied times a hundred. Once I arrived all my preconceived thoughts were acknowledged and confirmed... prison was unscripted, rough, and independent. I saw parts of people which caused me to question who I was and what they were. I knew there would be rough and challenging times ahead of me; however, I did not know I was in for an amazing transformation.

During my incarceration I met a few individuals which rerouted my path and allowed me a glimpse at what people could be. I came to know one certain inmate which is incarcerated on a life sentence since the age of seventeen years old. This once young man was well versed in prison life. To my surprise, in a place of the unthinkable this man was able to carry himself to a standard of which I could not

comprehend. He was unwavering in his beliefs, he was committed to people less fortunate, and he was and still is fully dedicated to moving on with his life. Over the next four years we were able to grow a friendship that shaped me as an individual. I learned dedication, trust, and determination. I can say that I made it home as a better person than when I arrived.

I have now been home for fourteen years. Over these years I have grown a family and a successful career. I have developed a life which I could only dream about during my incarnation. I was able to show my family and loved ones appreciation for their past support. All of my success was afforded to me due to the chance I had. A chance to show and be the person I was capable of.

I do not know and I can not imagine the uncertainty of a life sentence; however, I do know and I am an example of the ability for people to change. We all move through life on an unpredicted path, we stumble and fall along the way. The beauty in all our lives is the chance and hope to grow. I ask that you think back to your teenage years and consider your development since that time. Please consider what you knew back then versus what you know now. We are all in a constant state of change... please allow those which once faltered a chance to thrive also. Please support the Senate Bill 256.

Sincerely,

Adam Nelson

