

Chairman Manning, Vice Chair McColley, Ranking Member Thomas and members of the Senate Judiciary Committee, my name is Preston Blankenship and I am testifying in support of TC Reform in Senate Bill 288:

Growing up in a broken home with no positive role models left me with no foundation. The guidance and direction that most children receive at a young age was not afforded to me, and by the age of 8, I had already entered the penal system. My teenage years were fraught with alcohol and drug addiction, and by the time I turned 25, I had served time.

The information above does not excuse the choices I made, but it sets the stage for how the first quarter of my life unfolded.

After serving roughly three years in prison, I entered the Harbor Light Transitional Control program to round out the last four months of my sentence in August 2013. The Harbor Light Complex is where the second quarter of my life began. Everything from the compassionate and involved staff to courses like "Thinking for Change" helped shape the person I am today - a seven-years-sober father of four, husband and small business owner in Lakewood, OH.

Not only did the TC program allow me to gain new job placement experiences, but it also helped me transition back to normal life. In the short time it takes to form a habit (28 days to be exact), I had formed new habits over the three years I spent in prison, and it took effort to revert back to normalcy. I'm grateful for the TC staff for helping me get back on my feet. From teaching me how to manage and budget money to showing me how to build a resume, I learned the necessary life skills needed for success outside of the system.

In the weeks leading up to my program completion, I couldn't believe how much the staff advocated for my success in landing a job with the Local 17 Union Iron Workers. They went above and beyond to help me, which I will never forget. (Much to all of our happiness, I got the job.)

The tools TC equipped me with have helped me lead a positive, sober and hopeful life. I think about the program often and how much it has influenced not only me, but my family, because as I've learned, one's actions and ideas don't just affect the individual. They affect everyone around him too.

All of my life experiences have made me who I am today, and I thank the Harbor Light Transitional Control program for the part it's played in my life journey.

If you have any question's, please don't hesitate to reach out. Thank you in advance for taking the time to read this.

With gratitude,  
Preston Blankenship