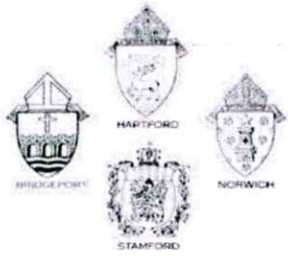


CONNECTICUT CATHOLIC PUBLIC AFFAIRS CONFERENCE
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Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference
Testimony Supporting the Concept of

House Bill No. 5019

AN ACT CONCERNING FAIR FUTURES FOLLOWING ERASURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS

Senate Bill No. 403

*AN ACT CONCERNING THE BOARD OF PARDONS AND PAROLES,
ERASURE OF CRIMINAL RECORDS FOR CERTAIN MISDEMEANOR AND FELONY OFFENSES
AND PROHIBITING DISCRIMINATION-BASED ON
ERASED CRIMINAL HISTORY RECORD INFORMATION.*

Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
Legislative Office Building
March 9, 2020

As the public policy office of Connecticut's Catholic Bishops, the Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference supports the concept espoused in both House Bill No. 5019 and Senate Bill No. 403. While supporting the goal of these legislative proposals, the Conference defers to persons more experienced in criminal law to establish the boundaries of the criminal activities to which the final legislation will apply.

Catholic teaching affirms the purpose and goals of our judicial system. We are called to "protect public safety, promote the common good, and restore community."¹ And our Catholic community is called to believe, as our faith instructs, that justice is required for both victims and convicts – but not vengeance.

In 2000, the United States Catholic Conference of Bishops issued *Responsibility, Rehabilitation, and Restoration: A Catholic Perspective on Crime and Criminal Justice* which noted the following:

We are all sinners, and our response to sin and failure should not be abandonment and despair, but rather justice, contrition, reparation, and return or reintegration of all into the community.²

Proper reintegration of former prisoners aims to address recidivism which improves public safety and helps former offenders to become productive members of our community.

The Connecticut Catholic Public Affairs Conference supports the concept endorsed by the above-captioned legislative proposals as a means to achieve these goals, and will follow the trajectory of both proposals, HB 5019 and SB 403, during this legislative session.

¹ *Joint Letter to Congress in Support of the Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act of 2017*. March 26, 2018

² *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*, no. 403 (2004). From the *Letter to the Senate Committee on the Judiciary Urging Passage of the FIRST STEP Act*. November 20, 2018