

The Connecticut General Assembly



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REP. MCGEE REVEALS REENTRY RECOMMENDATIONS AT ROUNDTABLE

State Representative Brandon McGee (D-Hartford Windsor) revealed several reentry recommendations at his roundtable today that focused on helping the formerly incarcerated population integrate back into society.

The recommendations are based off of a study performed by the Commission on Equity and Opportunity entitled, "Hope For Success." The study was made possible by McGee's hard work in the legislature last year and the passage of his bill, HB 6219, An Act Concerning Community Reentry By Persons Who Were Incarcerated.

"Everyone deserves a second chance," **McGee** said. "I championed for the passage of HB 6219 because I strongly believe that we need to do more to reduce recidivism in our communities. In order to do that, we need to provide this population with the necessary tools and resources so that they can make a smooth transition and become productive and successful members of society."

"It gives me great pleasure to have been able to respond to the legislature's request to study the current reentry process and determine where changes can be made to assist with the successful reintegration of the formerly incarcerated in the State of Connecticut," said **Subira Gordon, CEO Executive Director**. "I am also looking forward to working with Connecticut lawmakers during the 2018 legislative session finding specific ways to incorporate our policy recommendations with legislation that can offer a wealth of employment opportunities, employer tax incentives and most importantly help break down barriers that both enhance public safety and boost self-sufficiency."

The reentry study aimed to provide recommendations to policy makers that will help this population access gainful employment, examine the current reentry process, and determine where changes can be made to assist with reintegration.

In developing this report, the Commission reviewed research, analysis and data at the state and federal levels, conducted interviews and developed findings and recommendations proposing state actions consistent with the statutory mandate of this study.

"I am proud of the work this study accomplishes, but my hope is that the state turns these recommendations into action," **McGee** said. "Connecticut taxpayers are paying millions of dollars on corrections every year. If we implement even just some of these common sense recommendations, we

can help thousands of formerly incarcerated individuals find work and housing, reducing recidivism and ultimately saving taxpayers money. This is a win-win situation for both the reentry population and the state.”

The study relayed the following recommendations:

- **Tax credits for businesses**- Currently, the State of Connecticut offers businesses a number of tax credits. It is recommended that the State either create a new tax credit, or extend an existing tax credit, to include and thereby encourage the hiring of ex-offenders. A half-dozen states have established tax credits for businesses that choose to employ individuals who have completed their sentences.
- **Limiting criminal background checks to a relationship to the job**
- **Housing**-Given the restrictions that are placed on many housing authorities because of federal funding regulations, the state has to use creative ways to assist the recently released from incarceration. This study recommends a deeper dive into housing access for individuals with a criminal record.
- **Reintegration center** -While there are reentry efforts in in Bridgeport, New Haven, Waterbury and Hartford, to be successful there should be one place where an ex-offender can immediately access services. These should include resume help, interview assistance, and information on mental health services, housing and transportation to name a few. Ideally there should be life coaches and employment consultants that are available to help with the transition.
- **Collaboration**-For this challenging feat to be a success there needs to be more collaboration with non-profits, state agencies and others who are serving this population.

According to the study, there are 13,941 individuals in prison in Connecticut, as of December 1, 2017