



September 24, 2019

Representative Graham Filler  
House of Representatives  
P.O. Box 30014  
Lansing, MI 48909-7514

Re: HB 4980-85

I would like to thank this Committee for inviting members of the public and other stakeholders to appear before you today to speak about these House Bill proposals. As important as it is for this committee to hear from the public and vested community stake holders prior to voting on this Bill, it is equally important that law makers consider these same community public interests members and stake holders, prior to and during the actual drafting of proposed legislation. After all, we are your constituents whose voice and input matters.

As a criminal justice and community advocate, and as someone who has been greatly impacted by the system of mass criminalization, along with other advocates from a broad coalition across the State of Michigan, we began discussions later last year about engaging community around the importance of expungement reform and of how best to help create momentum and dialogue around the processes for implementing Clean Slate through legislative action.

As an advocate, I believe that communities that are most impacted should not only be the initial starting point of beginning that dialogue, but also continue to play a significant role in developing the proposal and shaping its ultimate outcome. To achieve this, we set out to engage Michiganders across the State and hosted a series of Community Listening Sessions from over a dozen different House District communities spread across 9 different cities.

These listening sessions were attended by every stakeholder you could imagine, from returning Citizens to local County Prosecutors, from the husbands and wives of formerly incarcerated persons to local elected officials, as well as multiple non-profit organizations, social service providers and even law enforcement. Together, they discussed expungement and Clean Slate; who should and should not qualify, at what point should people qualify, and of what offenses should and should not qualify, as well as what the process should be for people who ultimately qualify. The results of these conversations were remarkable in their similarity – they were rational, in line with scientific research, and carefully considered.

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The data collected from these sessions, attended by several hundred in total, became an important and valuable ingredient in this discussion being had today. However, that data has not been used by this Committee in drafting these proposals. As stated in the beginning of my testimony here today, community input is by its very nature, an important factor in the outcome of whatever laws are passed by this legislative body. Some of the testimony you will hear today is directly informed by the data we have collected. We believe this Committee should take a special look at this body of cumulative data and use it to incorporate amendments that reflect the intrinsic value you all place on community input. We are all redeemable. Thank you again, and best of luck to you all as you begin the arduous task of working to pass this Bill proposal as legislation.

Sincerely,

Hakim Crampton

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