



TESTIMONY IN OPPOSITION TO S292 RELATING TO CRIMINALS- CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS-PAROLE

Alliance fore Safe Communities opposes S292 Relating to Criminals
Institutions -Parole

Alliance for Safe Communities questions why special consideration would not be offered to victims of crime to serve on Rhode Island's Parole Board. Codifying into law what has been implemented the last 3 years is peculiar. What is even more perplexing, is why victims have not been considered as equally capable candidates to serve on our parole board over criminals.

Are victims now only recognized if they have been adjudicated, incarcerated, and processed by our criminal justice system?

Do convicted criminals have abilities of special insight, recognition, and oversight that victims lack in enabling them to serve on the parole board?

Are our legislators aware that victims do not choose to be such? Victims do not choose to be part of a criminal justice system that will impart them with future qualities of insight, recognition, and oversight that surpasses that of any criminal.

While this legislation paints with a broad brush any criminals eligible for this position, it neglects examining all the qualities of so many victims.

Let us review some qualities victims possess in contrast to their counterparts:

Only a victim has insight into the loss of a loved one due to no choice of their own at the hands of a criminal. This degree of loss and impact can only be truly experienced from a victim, not a criminal.

Only a victim through no choice of their own understands the steps of rebuilding their personal lives following the loss of a loved one, due to a criminal act.

Only a parent who has lost a child to a criminal act truly understands the pain, suffering, and loss that is unique unto any other circumstance.

Only victims of crimes, especially violent crimes, understand the perseverance necessary to carry on with their lives, with measured steps, so as not to be judged harshly if their emotions should overcome them.

Victims are survivors forced to pick up the pieces of their lives, and often those of other loved ones impacted by a criminal's actions.

Victims live out and eternity of "coloring in the lines" of society's expectations for them.

Victims are constrained to abide by the very laws criminals violate, knowing retaliation for their loss, will be met with consequences.

Accepting "victimhood" is a personal humbling journey for victims.

While convicted criminals may identify with some of these special quality's victims endure, collectively they are unique only to the victims who live their lives out navigating through turmoil and sorrow, for eternity.

A victim's journey is a lonely one with no special recognition or rewards, simply the "acceptance" of their broken lives.

Are victims in Rhode Island made to believe from this legislation that they are not even "acceptable" over that of convicted criminals to be chosen to serve on our parole board?

Respectfully,

Carolyn Medeiros , Executive Director Alliance for Safe Communities