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RCC legislator meeting at Table Rock

I was released nearly three ago from a Federal Prison and I have also spent some time within our State Prison system. While incarcerated the tuition prices were astronomical from the universities that would enroll those who are incarcerated compared to those from community colleges. I would like to advocate for those who may wish to further their education from what might seem like a low point of one's existence through having community colleges partnering with the Department of Corrections with distance learning.

I know that having an education has helped me stay employed and having a job that I love has helped me build a meaningful life, the sort that I don't want to ruin by returning to a life of drugs and crime. Today, I am applying what I am learning through my course work and practicum placement and am now a Substance Abuse Counselor in training.

As a society, I feel it is imperative that we promote and make it easier for those who are incarcerated and former inmates to attend college. In part, it's a matter of social justice. It's also a matter of public safety. Numerous studies are showing that education reduces recidivism. So, if we want to lower the crime rate, we need to make education accessible to those incarcerated and those who have felony convictions. Making college accessible and affordable for such population not only gives people a chance to rehabilitate their lives, but it also makes our communities safer.

What helped me the most was when I put in the effort to talk to my instructors. Once I started talking and connecting with my instructors, I realized that they were there to help me not to get me and how great of an impact they have on my success.

Being constructive with my time and deadlines was a huge barrier in the beginning. I had to pursue achievable goals to stay on top of my studies. I had to believe my efforts mattered by staying on top of things that led to my growth.

For me success starts with rating on my goals. having a strategy and a plan to reach those goals and visions. My success is not measured by dollars and cents or trinkets but by being happy and making the world a better place for others.