

Submitter: Billy Anfield

On Behalf
Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110
Implementation

Measure: SB1510

Chair Prozanski, Vice-Chair Thatcher, and members of the committee,

My name is Billy Anfield, I'm the advocacy coordinator for Central City Concerns Flip the Script reentry program. The Flip the Script program was designed to assist individuals who are being released from prison and identify as Black or African American. The program was launched in 2017 with the goal being to increase employment placements, secure permanent housing, and reduce the number of black people returning to prison.

The advocacy component of FTS has empowered those enrolled in the program to elevate their voices to identify and speak about what they feel are the necessary reforms very much needed in the parole and probation system. Their message is simple and clear: Many things need to change to support black individuals during their supervision.

Those of us who provide services to this population feel supervision should be a tool that supports re-entry. We feel the word vision implies helping people to find their path to success, and that supervision should not be a tool to intimidate nor cause unnecessary harm, stress, and trauma.

I have lived experience being on supervision for quite a long time. What I learned about myself was that after three years of being grounded in my recovery, sustaining employment, being self-sufficient, and reunited with family, that supervision seemed to be excessive and no longer needed. The FTS alumni are men and women who have reached the same milestones I did, and remain on supervision. Supervision should reward people for their hard work. Nationally, 1 out of every 58 adults are under some form of supervision. The rate for Black people is 1 in 23.

Parole and probation require people to do many things. There are conditions a person may not have the skills, ability, and resources to achieve on their own that supervision could help with. Supervisors should work to connect individuals to resources, not be a shadow looking for a person to fail.

There are two areas of supervision we need supported and consideration for. The first being reporting requirements.

Pre Covid our participants would take time away from work to go visit their supervisor. The majority of them having no vehicle would need to use mass transit.

Usually, the customer spends more time traveling to and from than the actual meeting itself. Furthermore, the risk of losing employment as it relates to attendance is a reality. During the pandemic reporting face to face diminished and the option to report remotely has become the norm. Due to this change we have witnessed people feeling more comfortable overall. Texting, Calling, Zoom meetings, etc. Individuals aren't losing a day or more of pay to accommodate the face-to-face reporting requirement. Not one of our participants has received sanctions for not meeting their reporting requirement.

Secondly, most of us who work directly with black people being released from prison in many cases find it extremely difficult and challenging to place them with employment. Cultivating and developing relationships with employers to consider individuals with a criminal background takes effort. Many hours of employment training and readiness are completed before the placement occurs. When supervisors visit the workplace, especially in full gear, it creates a negative impression on the individual by co-workers. It generates stigma to a degree where the individual is treated differently. Co-workers no longer associate or befriend them, nor want to work beside them, or park next to them. The entire social landscape at work changes as a result of the visit. We must find other ways for supervisors to verify employment for those under supervision.

I urge your support of SB 1510.