

Co-Chairs Broadman and Evans, and members of the committee,

My name is Cameron Hayes, and I the Director of ReGroup (a reentry support network), and the Community Education and Engagement Developer for Conflict Artistry (a restorative justice diversion organization).

In addition to working in the restorative justice field, I am also someone who has been able to make amends from these processes and principles. I spent 14 years incarcerated, and spent most of that time engaging in crime and violence.

One day I was in solitary confinement and was talking to another prisoner about this thing he had been involved in, called restorative justice. When I got out of solitary confinement I started getting involved. It took awhile, but through the community and exposure to true accountability, I was able to follow the same path. I now see it as my duty to help others transform their lives, so that the cycles of harm can stop.

These restorative justice programs are essential to truly deal with the problem of crime. As a person who has been incarcerated I can tell you the current system does not reform prisoners. In fact, in many cases such as my own, it make them even more criminally active.

It is restorative justice that victims can truly get closure, and the harmers can learn to take true accountability and live in amends.

Thank You for taking the time to read this letter,

Cameron Hayes, QMHA-R, CADC I, CRM II, CGRM, PWS

Restorative Justice Practitioner