

Testimony By: Felipe Concepción, DIN: #91A7219

The New York State Senate Committee on Crime Victims, Crime & Correction Hearing on how the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole Bill Will Improve Parole Release Laws and Public Safety in New York

My name is Felipe Concepción (91A7219). I am 61 years old and have been incarcerated for over 32 years with a sentence of 58 1/3 years to life. I've been a member of the christian community behind these walls for almost 32 years and very much active within the community, as well as aiding others to connect to resources in the community. I've participated voluntarily for 8 years as a Youth Assistance Program (Y.A.P.) member and spoken to more than 7,000 youths, teachers, chaperons, police officers, as well as family members concerning the importance of family, violence, gangs, drug use and prison life.

Over the course of my incarceration, I have obtained, by the grace of God, two college degrees, an Associates degree in humanity from SUNY Sullivan Community College and a Bachelor's of Social Science from St. Thomas Aquinas College. As of today, I am still an active member of the Sullivan Correctional Facility Church (Prison Fellowship Church).

During my 32 years of incarceration, I've seen older individuals, like myself, suffering from bad health, lack of family ties due to constant loss of loved ones through the years, and living with pain and struggles and the possibilities of dying in prison without any kind of hope or ever getting out and being or seeing family or loved ones again.

I believe these bills should be passed because it will give hope to the elderly, who are suffering from different illnesses, being a liability to the state, and having to continue to provide for medical help and care. These bills should be passed because it will give family members of the incarcerated a sense of hope that they will one day be united someday with loved ones. The passing of these bills will help reduce the burdens of families financially, materially and mentally, as well as physically, due to traveling to different facilities to see their incarcerated loved one or loved ones. These bills can help to even mend and help family bonds and strengthen relationships between husbands and wives and their children.

Concerning public safety: I feel I'm no longer a threat to the safety of others in society. I am an elderly person who has learned from the bad decisions made on my part. As an elderly individual, I believe I have a lot to offer, and help build the community I once left destroyed. I have much to offer and give to the community. Especially the youth of today's society who are in great need due to today's gang and gun violence, as well as drug-abuse. I am not the same man as I was 32 years ago. My life has changed through the love of God and the power of his son Jesus Christ. I pray these bills pass, because they will make a great difference in the lives of many incarcerated people for the greater good and for society, as well as families.

Sincerely,
Felipe Concepcion
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Sullivan Correctional Facility