

Help for Incarcerated people and Their Families

In our **Exploring Asylum Hill** Column this month we revealed some of the talent that exists in our prisons here in Connecticut. This is a report about what we who are not in prison are doing to help prepare those who are for their eventual return to society.

More and more society seems to be realizing that people are our greatest resource. Anything that's done to foster their development, including those in prison as better more successful members of society benefits us all. To that end, the Connecticut General Assembly passed several provisions regarding those in the Criminal Justice System. The first and likely the most important for those currently incarcerated is Senate Bill 972, which removed charges for phone calls to those incarcerated. Previously a 15-minute call would cost \$5.00, the highest rate for any State in the union. Connecticut is now the first state to make calls and other communications free.

Senate Bill 1202 restores the right to vote to those on parole. Previously that was only granted to those on probation. That distinction regarding voting no longer exists in any state in the Union.

SB 1019, the Clean Slate bill, allows for a number of misdemeanors and some minor felonies to be removed from a person's record if they do not reoffend for a defined period of time. These are just some of the reforms passed this session. For a full list and explanation go to <https://cpa-ct.org/criminal-justice-bills-2021/>

