

November 12, 2013

Wilfredo Ortiz #267596
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Re: Testimony on behalf of Wilfredo Ortiz #267596 for November 21, 2013, Sentencing Commission Public Hearing.

Good Afternoon to all Committee Members, My name is Rachael Ortiz and beside me family. We all are here in support of Bill# (HB-6581) Juvenile Sentence reconsideration bill. I would like to read this testimony on behalf of my husband.

Good Afternoon to all committee members, my name is Wilfredo Ortiz #267596. I'm serving a 27 year sentence for Felony Murder. I was 17 years of age when arrested I've been incarcerated for 15 years, going on 16. As I revisit on my thoughts of my past and update my testimony, tears run down my face. I can only imagine what victim and the victim's family live daily. But I must provide my testimony and create awareness, from once a lost child to a progressive mature man. Forever there will be a deep wound, a wound that can never heal no matter how good I do. My actions have hurt so many people I will have to live with this forever. I am truly sorry for my victim and victim's family but sorry is not enough. I was a young ignorant kid with no education or guidance. I lived in the street areas that were filthy with drugs and gangs. At that age I was trying to identify myself, I was trying to fit in. I was looking for acceptance, love and support in all the wrong places. So I joined the streets and this is when my nightmare started. Streets were all I knew I made so many poor decisions in my life because I knew no better. When running the streets you are made to believe these street concepts. Concepts that after 15 years caused lots of pain, suffer and loss, you learn that those concepts were not true. During my 15 years of incarceration I have accomplished so many goals. Of course it was a struggle at the beginning since I found myself with a 27 years sentence and nothing to look forward to. I did everything in the book that describes negative. At that particular time in my life I thought it was over for me. Hope was out the window. How do you explain a sense if he knows nothing? That's when I went from bad to worse. It wasn't until reality started to set in that I said to myself I needed to change. I was hurting, my family was hurting I started to think and reflect on all that I had went through. I knew then, on that moment I had to change but how? At the time I was housed in a Level 5 Maximum Security Prison (Northern Ct). I successfully completed all gang programs D.O.C offers. Still struggling with my ways, but trying. I knew I had to serve 25 years in prison no matter how good I do. Since the charge itself of Felony Murder I had to serve what's required of a minimum mandatory sentence, 25 years. For others this chain of thought is why they continue in the negative path with no hope. For me it was more of just trying to become a better person. I was trying to really find myself, to identify who I am and what I wanted in life. I started to take full advantage of any and every program DOC has to offer. I went to school, learned my English properly; to read and write. After 3 attempts on my 3rd attempt I successfully completed my GED. A tool that is required in life, especially in DOC in order to be accepted in other programs. Out of all the programs I successfully completed two of them that have a huge impact in my life. A.V.P. (Alternative to Violence Program) this one of them, It teaches you how to change a negative situation into a positive outcome, mainly to know that we possess tools in life and we need to use them in a positive way. Make awareness these tools allow us all to be good, to care for others, to sympathize, have compassion for others and always put yourself in other people's shoes. I am currently an AVP Facilitator, my experience in life has driven me to help others.

Another program that I continue to be a part of is the Hospice program. The Hospice program in the prison setting is a life changer. Where we "The Hospice Volunteer" dedicate countless hours, with love providing care for these dying men 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. These dying men become a part of our family men from different walks of life. Some with family members by their side, others with just us holding their hands.

If I learned anything from a decision I made 15 years ago, is that getting a 27 year sentence taught me to appreciate life, to respect anything, everything and everyone. I learned to be humble and have compassion for others. I can proudly say today that I am a better person. I am not that 17 year old kid that knew no better. I still continue to strive to be an even better person every day. Last year at this time I was in the middle of completing 75hrs of text book and instruction to become a (CNA) Certified Nurse Assistant. Today I am very proud to say that I am a (CNA) Certified Nurse Assistant I work here at the prison hospital, here at Osborn CI I love what I do. Last year at this time I was also in the middle of completing the Culinary Art Vocational program. Today I am also proud to say that I have my "Serve Safe" I am trying to stay focused and busy in this prison environment. I believe in second chances and I can't undo my past. I am truly sorry for all the hurt and harm I caused in others. I know for a fact that I am a living proof of change. I know that if given the opportunity I will be a productive member in society. I sincerely hope that my testimony can create a positive outlook from the perspective of someone who has lived it, has matured and been rehabilitated. I hope you see that change of who I was, to who I am today. Thank you for allowing me to present my testimony.

Respectfully Submitted,

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