

Mr. Chairman, Members of the Commission, Good morning

My name is Christine Ely; I currently work for the State of CT and have an extensive history employed with non-profit, community addiction and mental health services, case management, counseling and outreach. But today I am here representing my experience as the mother of inmate #386131, my son, Samuel Miller III.

Your appointment of the Chief State's Attorney and their responsible role is imperative for the emergent young men and women in the judicial system. My son was sentenced to 8 years on July 27, 2016 at the age of 24. I want to share my experience concerning the State Prosecutors' role that day and how important the judicial pre-sentencing investigations (PSI's) are in the sentencing process as well as historically the role they could have had in interceding with his previous behaviors while he was under the influence and getting arrested.

My son was arrested on occasion as a teenager for alcohol related misdemeanors. In every incident where a plea was offered by prosecution it was punitive, there was not one time where they supported the public defenders request for inpatient substance abuse treatment or mental health services even when it was financially being covered by family. Each release to probation failed remarkably due to my son's inability to handle peer pressure or being referred to a court ordered outpatient treatment where the therapeutic value or atmosphere of recovery was unimportant to the attendees.

Ironically, as a teenager, he was also on the road to success with his football career. Through the probation-ordered treatment and judicial shortcomings, he was still able to receive a college football scholarship and headed to Maine to play only to come home after a semester due to alcohol abuse and depression. His father committed suicide during this time from hanging. It was a painful few years and Sam's arrests were evidence.

During his last case, a PSI was ordered but when I reviewed it, it was limited to all his failings and missed the entire essence of his life filled with so much achievement and efforts to get sober. I took it in my own hands to write a truthful, effective PSI, which I was able to give the Honorable Judge the day of sentence another perspective of Sam and leave the prosecution in agreement with her that though he needed to be accountable for his crime, his sentencing did not have to be unreasonable but needed to be fair with his entire life history being considered.

And the most amazing thing happened that day, I was crying because 8 years is a lot of time, but I felt a sense of pride in knowing that the in-depth PSI assisted in the judge's and Prosecutor's decision in establishing the length of sentence. I found a new passion. I changed my major from Social Work to Criminology and I am preparing to graduate soon from CCSU in the near future.

In closing, I want to report; my son remains grateful and is doing incredible. Currently, he has completed all the programs that have become obtainable to him. He has not received one ticket and has become a leader and reference point for others to become attracted to education and living a conflict free lifestyle in one of the most challenging surroundings he has ever experienced. He feels receiving the 8 years with the eligibility to parole is giving him the ability to still come out a young man and have the opportunity to still achieve his goals to be successful. We both regret that the intervention didn't come sooner but have gained a new passion to make a difference with our experiences. He is finding new ways to develop a positive atmosphere in prison even as a prisoner as well as promoting self-study education opportunities for those like him that have already had some college experience and want to continue to better themselves with the available time on their hands.

My hope in this testimony is your Chief State's Attorney appointment search will include:

1. Valuing how important the State Prosecutor roles are in each sentence
2. Valuing the State Prosecutor's ability to intercede early in a young man or woman's life to obtain inpatient treatment and;
3. How important it is to see each person individually in sentencing vs. only by the crime they committed by creating effective Pre-sentencing Investigations.

I have testified in only one of the roles the Chief State's Attorney's oversees but a life changing one; the States Attorney's role in Sentencing.

Thank you