

January 31, 2014

Sent Via E-Mail: JKoury[@]NYSenate.gov

John Koury, Director, ARRC  
The New York State Capitol Building  
Albany, New York 12247

Re: Public Comment, Notice of Proposed Rule Making, 9 NYCRR, Part 8001 and Sections 8002.1(a) and (b), 8002.2(a) and 8002.3

Dear Senator Koury,

The Parole Board ("Board") has historically denied parole release to far too many people in an arbitrary and inconsistent manner. The Board often denies people primarily based on people's crimes of conviction or past criminal history, static factors that can never change, rather than releasing people who have demonstrated their rehabilitation, low risk to public safety, or clear readiness to return to their community. The legislature attempted to remedy this situation in 2011 by directing the Board to focus on risk and needs principles and to measure people's rehabilitation and likelihood of success upon release.

Unfortunately, the Board has not changed its practices and the Board's proposed regulations of December 18 would allow the Board to continue to ignore objective and evidence-based factors. The regulations simply list a risk and needs assessment and a case plan/transitional accountability plan ("TAP") as one of twelve factors for the Board to consider, without requiring that those factors guide and control release decisions as intended by the legislature. Such regulations would still allow the Board to maintain the status quo, ignore low risk scores and demonstrated rehabilitation, and deny people based primarily on the nature of their crime of conviction or past criminal history.

The Board needs to come into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and use evidence, rather than gut reactions, to make parole release decisions. The regulations should require that a person who has a low risk score in a risk assessment **or** who has substantially participated in her or his case plan/TAP activities should generally be released. For any people who are denied release, the regulations should require the Board to provide guidance to those individuals with specific, written instructions for steps to take in order to be released.

Thank you for your consideration of these comments.

Very Truly Yours,

Shazzia Hines