

**Testimony in Support of SB 935**

**Submitted to the Senate Committee on Judiciary  
By Shannon Wight, Deputy Director, Partnership for Safety and Justice  
April 4, 2017**

Chair Prozanski, members of the committee:

Partnership of Safety and Justice (PSJ) supports SB 935 and thanks Sen. Steiner Hayward for forwarding this legislation this session. PSJ is a nonprofit organization that advances solutions to crime that ensure justice, equity, accountability, and healing. We do this by advocating for proven strategies that achieve safe and strong communities, prevent crime, and provide opportunities for both victims and people who commit crimes to rebuild their lives.

PSJ supports the expansion of short term transition leave (STTL). STTL creates a strong transition plan and a period of intensive supervision for people coming out of prison. It is proven more effective at reducing recidivism while also keeping down the increasing costs of our prison system. As indicated by the Criminal Justice Commission, the 2-year conviction and incarceration rates are significantly lower for those who participated in the program than for those who did not participate but are otherwise eligible by statute. Likewise, it has saved the cost of over 200,000 prison bed days since implementation.

STTL is saving the state money and reducing crime. That is the kind work we should expand and support, especially in this budget climate. The State's \$1.7 billion budget deficit means that DOC has already had to cut critical programs, including 140 treatment beds when 70% of our women's prison population and 50% of our men's suffer from addictions and mental health issues. As you know, we also face cuts to local communities through Justice Reinvestment and Community Corrections.

Allowing the counties to expand their STTL programs will free up desperately needed resources for programs that further reduce recidivism and keep our communities safe. We understand there are some concerns about the lack of transitional housing, but we believe counties will still be able to help more individuals transition back to the community and keep communities safe through an expanded STTL program.

We ask for your support of expanding short term transition leave. Thank you for your time and consideration.