

Submitter: Patrick Alexander

On Behalf  
Of:

Committee: Senate Committee On Judiciary and Ballot Measure 110  
Implementation

Measure: SB1510

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I am writing in support of HB1510. I believe that parole and probation officers should be required to receive culturally specific and trauma informed training. At present there are currently zero hours of training provided in this area. After getting out of prison and transitioning back into my community it was very difficult to explain my responsibilities as the patriarch of my family. Black culture dictates what that responsibility now meant. My parole officer was unable to understand why, and it was exhausting explaining over and over that my success hinged on integrating back into my family in a healthy way and reclaiming my role.

One of my responsibilities became to support other family members in navigating out of the system and ensuring our young men knew that I would be there and support them in times of distress. One circumstance in particular lead to my serving a 45-day sanction. My nephew called me and said, "I need your help, I think I am in trouble ". I came to ensure that my nephew knew his rights, that he was supported in making the right choices in that moment. I repeatedly informed my parole officer that there was no one else for him to call. That culturally it was my job to show up. There was no understanding of this whatsoever. In fact, I would hear, "I don't understand" and it felt that he didn't care to understand. Maybe if they had received training in this area things would have been different.

When cultural norms and support can change the outcome of transitioning home it is my belief that parole, and probation officers should be educated and aware of how to positively work with those of a different background. Culturally specific and trauma-informed training is much needed so that people of color that are going through the parole system have an easier time.