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I currently work in the Juvenile Justice System helping teachers to educate the students that come into our care. I can see clearly how many of our students' poor choices were the result of the environment they grew up in and the narrow options presented to them if they want to progress and be successful in life. I have also seen how they can change when given the right structure, support and care. We have students who were not going to school before coming to us leave with high school, technical and associates degrees. They learn to be leaders, community members and caring individuals.

This process of transformation can be true for any individual, youth or adult and in the end is what we all want to be the result of our criminal justice system. Parole would provide a structure to allow those who have worked hard to transform themselves to go back to their communities and contribute to their betterment. Not only would it lessen the burden on the system itself, it will reunite families, strengthen communities and improve the economy of the state. The current plan addresses potential pitfalls and thoughtfully provides a path forward for those in our society who have overcome the circumstances leading to their crimes to come out on the other side as better people. The purpose of justice is not punishment, but the creation of unity. This bill allows for that purpose to be realized.