

Zach
Schmidkunz

Good morning Chairman Wanzer & members of the Committee. My name is Zach Schmidkunz ~~see above~~ I am a mentor in RR

I came to prison at the young age of 20, with a very lengthy sentence. As we know, the human brain isn't fully mature until at least 25 years ~~old~~ of Age

I think we can agree that prison is not the first choice where we ~~can~~ want our young people's brains to mature. Learning to navigate my new life was a struggle.

I tried taking an anger management class, & I was ~~the~~ ~~treatment~~ ~~deprived~~ told ~~that~~ I did not qualify unless I committed an act of violence within the prison. So I ~~was~~ allowed ~~to~~ myself to be warehoused.

When the Restoring Promise initiative came to NDSP - focussing on 18-25 year-olds, I wasn't interested in a baby sitting job. But then I learned of their values, & how they focus on creating living units in prison that allow people to heal, and become ~~voluntary~~ part of a community.

I ask that you pass this bill for the budget, because to help these young men, we need all the help we can get. Some of this includes money for books to teach curriculum, resources to provide areas for 1 on 1 mentoring, & the availability to give our Restoring Promise officers the pay they need to stay in our unit, while remaining part of our community.

I know first hand what its like having to be in prison with people who were close to the person who's life you took - its not comfortable.

this restorative justice doesn't happen between us in other housing units. Instead there is hurt, anger, & uneasiness between us.

~~When you spend enough years in prison with all of those pent up emotions, how well does that prepare us to be good neighbors upon release?~~ Most of us will be released from prison eventually.

Members of the Committee... if you want us to be good neighbors to you, please pass this bill that will provide us more opportunities to prepare.

Because I believe so much in Restoring Promise, ~~It is~~ that mentee I was just speaking of, is now my mentee & I his mentor to walk beside him, not against him

Thank you.