

October 19, 2015

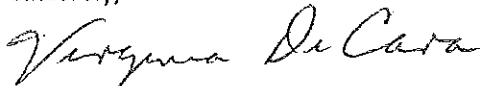
To Whom It May Concern:

This letter is to support the "Proposal to Allow Post-Release Contact". Allowing volunteers and chaplains to work with former inmates in programs that are designed to respect the DOC's safety concerns would go a long way toward assisting men and women as they return to their communities, thereby reducing recidivism.

I was fortunate to have been involved with a mentoring program for two years. I was part of a group from Volunteers of America who were matched with inmates from the Dedham House of Correction. Our relationship with the inmate began three months before their release date. During this time we were able to get to know one another and through weekly visits, the volunteer would be able to learn of the inmate's specific needs. This period of three months was invaluable as it gave the volunteer an opportunity to research areas of interest and/or concern so that when the inmate was released the volunteer was able to immediately put plans into action to help with a job search, food stamps, clothing purchases and the like.

If the volunteers had not been allowed to meet the inmates while they were still incarcerated we would have lost precious time laying the groundwork for their first year back in society.

Sincerely,



Virginia M. DiCara

Volunteer Mentor with Volunteers of America