

**Written Testimony of Jhil Marquantte,
Board Member, Remerg**

**Senate Committee on State, Veterans, & Military Affairs
February 19, 2020**

Support for HB20-1010

Good afternoon chair and members of the committee. Thank you for this opportunity to testify in support of House Bill 20-1010.

My name is Jhil Marquantte, and I represent myself and the nonprofit Remerg for which I serve as the co-chair of the board.

The mission of Remerg is to stop the revolving door of recidivism. Our vision is a world where people released from incarceration are able to restart successfully and never go back.

Part of that process is making sure that the communities incarcerated people come from retain their rightful political power *so that votes fully matter upon release.*

A week from tomorrow, February 27th, will be two years to the day since I was released from the Colorado Department of Corrections after almost 26 years of incarceration.

During that time, I spent approximately four years in Limon Correctional Facility in western Colorado, five years in Colorado State Penitentiary, one year in Centennial Correctional Facility, and two years in Fremont Correctional Facility, which are all about five miles from Canon City, eight years in Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility, which is about two hours east of Pueblo, almost two years in Buena Vista Minimum Center, three months in Trinidad, which is almost to the New Mexico state border, and then about two and a half years outside of Colorado, part of that time in Texas and part in Oklahoma.

All of these prisons are located far away from Aurora and the home where I grew up, where my family lived when I was 18 and went to prison, and where we all live now.

I want to be clear: my community and family in Aurora was and is my home. My prison cell was not a home. And a prison should not be a home for any other person.

I am just one person, but I represent tens of thousands of other people who, like me, were from homes far away from the prisons where we served our time.

My actions as a young man hurt others and my community, and I accept responsibility for that.

But if part of the purpose of the census every ten years is to establish where people are from for the purpose of political representation, that means that *my community was also punished*

by this current practice of redistricting people by where they are incarcerated and not by where they lived and where they are most likely to return to after their release.

During the almost two years since my release, I have re-entered my family and community with joy at having a second chance.

I have been serving my sentence of parole supervision without incident and was recently honored to be chosen by my peers to be the graduation speaker for the first class of the Seven Habits on the Outside Denver chapter.

I am a property manager for SWAN Enterprises and Consulting, which manages different properties throughout the Denver metro area. As mentioned earlier, I also serve as a member of the board of directors for Remerg.

I voted for the first time ever last summer when it became legal for people on parole to vote, and this is my first time to ever testify before a legislative committee.

I am here today to put a face on the almost 20,000 people currently incarcerated in state prisons who, without House Bill 1010, will not be included by a census as residents of where they are from without the passage of this bill.

I urge you to vote yes on House Bill 1010 today.

Thank you again for this opportunity.