

## Proponent Testimony HB 2018

Jermaine Wilson

My name is Jermaine Wilson, 7 years of my life I spent incarcerated. 4 years in Juvenile Corrections and 3 years in prison. While in prison I made the decision to become a Christian. I educated myself during my time and prison and discovered my purpose. Once I was released from prison, I realized I was faced with new challenges and obstacles. It was difficult for me to find employment because I was a convicted felon. My first job was in Grandview Missouri, one hour away from Leavenworth making \$8.50. I had to accept that job because that was the only job that would hire me. I worked that job for 6 months until I no longer had reliable transportation. I worked for a cleaning company for a few months, they paid me cash under the table because they didn't want their customers to know I had a criminal background. I even lost a job because of my criminal background. I was always honest about my criminal history, the owner took a chance on me and had to terminate because the state wouldn't allow me to serve at their business. I was hired at Cantu services at Ft. Leavenworth Ks in 2012. I was informed in 2014, if I couldn't get government clearance, I would be terminated. That's when I looked and discovered I was eligible to get my record expunged. Although I was eligible, I didn't have the resources available. I waited until I received my income taxes. I used the money to invest in my freedom. in 2015, my record was expunged.

I received my government clearance. I worked with the company for 6 1/2 years. Since my expungement, I have accomplished so many things. I became the city commissioner and served as the Mayor of Leavenworth, Ks. Because of the second chance that was given to me, I helped others get their criminal record expunged. In 2019, Leavenworth County offered free expungements to individuals that were eligible. This expungement program opened the doors for so many people that needed a second chance.

I have been elected the Mayor of Leavenworth for the second time and I'm currently serving as the Mayor of Leavenworth. I'm the first ever formerly incarcerated person to serve on the Kansas Sentencing Commission. I also serve as the Regional Director for Prison Fellowship.