

# COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA



## OFFICE OF THE COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY CITY OF PORTSMOUTH



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For Immediate Release  
Portsmouth, Virginia**

### **Second Chance Success seminar hosted by Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie Morales**

The Ctrl+Alt+Del Program was formed by Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie Morales in 2015 with the purpose of providing resources to our formerly and presently incarcerated community members. Many other organizations across our state and region are committed to the same important goal, which drastically reduces recidivism and provides opportunities for our citizens to be successful. "Justice takes on many different forms and one thing that is important to acknowledge as a prosecutor is that procedural justice calls for us to care about re-entry," said Morales.

On Tuesday, Ctrl+Alt+Del in partnership with Tidewater Community College, the Virginia League for Safer Streets, NOLEF Turns and Prevention Reform Recidivism presented the Second Chance Success seminar to explain the status of legislation pertaining to Second Look and expungement.

Portsmouth Commonwealth's Attorney Stephanie Morales hosted a panel discussion with Sheba Williams, founder of NOLEF Turns and Taylor Paul, founder of Virginia League for Safer Streets. Williams is the co-author of the Second Look bill that addresses extreme sentences given to those convicted of felonies. According to Williams, many jurors were not aware that parole was abolished in 1995 in Virginia and were imposing sentences that far outweighed the crimes committed, by hundreds of years in some cases, to ensure sufficient time was served. "The Second Look bill gives judges the ability to take a second look at a sentence and modify that sentence if the person has met certain qualifications. It is not a free pass to be released from prison but gives judges the authority to reevaluate a sentence," Williams said.

The panel addressed the mental health detriment of the currently and formerly incarcerated, and how it affects their return to society. Rehabilitation, most times, does not happen during incarceration. "We don't talk about the people who come home, who physically made it out but their minds didn't make it out," Williams said. Mental health resources are a necessity both during and after incarceration.

Our formerly incarcerated community members face a myriad of barriers when returning to society. They have less access to resources such as education, employment opportunities, public assistance and student loans. "When we come home, we have the opportunity to irradiate some of the social ills that we helped to create," said Taylor Paul but the lack of resources is a

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hinderance. “Restorative justice needs to be approached from a systemic standpoint, which calls for resources to be aimed at harm reduction,” according to Mrs. Morales. “We must simultaneously work to reduce crime and foster successful re-entry for the benefit of our communities.”

Access to information on resources for mental health, job preparedness, business formation and the re-entry process can be found at the following websites:

- <https://www.nolefturns.org>
- <https://wearepr.org>
- <https://wtpmoneymangement.com>

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