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Moving Men into the Mainstream: The Next Steps in Urban Reform

From Recidivism to Redemption: Ending the Cycle of Incarceration

This bulletin is adapted from the second panel of three at a Manhattan Institute conference, "Moving Men into the Mainstream: The Next Steps in Urban Reform," held in New York on June 21, 2006. The other panel discussions are available in Civic Bulletins 44 and 46.

CLARENCE PAGE: I want to say a couple of words about our topic, "From Recidivism to Redemption: Ending the Cycle of Incarceration." This week is the twentieth anniversary of the death of Len Bias, the University of Maryland basketball player who died of a cocaine overdose, ending what promised to be a stunning career. His death sparked the new phase of the drug wars we have seen since the 1960s. I bring this up because it is indicative of the explosion of prison populations over the last few decades and the inevitability of people reentering society from prison. This has a particularly brutal impact on the African-American community, and raises questions about how we can reintroduce—or in many cases introduce—folks to a mainstream life. We have a group of distinguished experts here today who I hope can offer some insight into this. I am going to ask each of our panelists to give a brief overview from their own perspective on this topic and then have a broader discussion with me.

We will begin with Jeremy Travis from the John Jay College of Criminal Justice.

JEREMY TRAVIS: I am very pleased to be part of this timely and important conference. I have done a fair amount of work over the past five years on the issue of incarceration and re-entry, so I will limit myself to three points. The first is the question of scale, the second is to talk about the issue of recidivism, and the third is to talk about the phenomenon of reintegration. I call these the "three R's:" re-entry, recidivism and reintegration. I will leave it to Reverend Goode to discuss the question of redemption.

The scale of imprisonment is important for us to keep in mind when we talk about the status of Black men in our society. Over the past 30 years, we have more than quadrupled the per capita rate of incarceration in this country. Some have termed this a grand social experiment in which we set out-not quite intentionally, but it was no accident either-to increase dramatically the use of imprisonment as our response to crime. We now have the dubious distinction of having the highest rate of incarceration in the world. The consequence of having roughly

1.4 million people in prison and another 600,000 or 700,000 people in jail is what I have termed the "iron law of imprisonment," which is that they all come back to prison. *But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry* is also the title of a book I wrote on this topic. We need to think about prisons not as static institutions, but rather as institutions that churn large numbers of individuals, mostly men, in and out of a small number of communities—mostly communities of color—in our society. As policy analysts, we must think about the consequences of this phenomenon.

Consider a few statistics: we have about 650,000 people coming out of our state and federal prisons each year now, which is about 1,800 a day. That is four times as many as made similar journeys 20 years ago. This has to be part of any conversation on the state of Black men in our society due to the sheer size of this population.

The geographic concentration of this national phenomenon is also very important for our understanding. These men—I will use "men" because 90 percent of the individuals coming out of prison are men—are coming from a small number of communities, which has profound effects on those communities.

Let me just give two ways of thinking about it; one is to talk about the consequences of the removal of large numbers of men from society on the relationships between boys and girls. Donald Braman, an anthropologist from Yale, has done some wonderful work. He coined the phrase "gender imbalance" in this sense to describe the differences in communities with high levels of incarceration in the growing up experiences of boys and girls. Anything else that we discuss relating to cultural and individual lifestyle issues-education, for example-has to take into account the fact that we have a gender imbalance. In the communities where Braman did his work in Washington, D.C. the highest rate of imbalance was about 62 men per 100 women in communities of high concentration of incarceration.

The second way to think about this is to look at this as a phenomenon of a right of passage at the community level. Todd Clear, my colleague at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, has documented that in East New York, on a yearly basis 1 in 8 parenting-aged males on the high concentration blocks is arrested and sent to jail or prison. That yearly number aggregates over time, so a very high percentage of the men in the communities of concern here experience incarceration at some point in their life. On a national level, an African-American man today has a 30 percent lifetime chance of serving at least one year in prison. I would like to be optimistic about the likelihood of reversing this reality and returning to the status quo of 1972, but I think the chances of even getting close to that are slim. I think we have to recognize that we now live-regrettably, in my view-in an era of mass incarceration.

My second point is about recidivism. How do we think about this new phenomenon of high rates of incarceration affecting a small number of communities using the standard criminal justice metric of recidivism, or re-arrest for criminal behavior in the future? There are two Bureau of Justice Statistics studies that look at recidivism, one from the eighties and one from the nineties, and both have found that roughly two-thirds of people released from prisons are arrested for one or more serious crimes within three years of their release. This is not a good track record in terms of accountability and bottom line outcomes, and there is no indication that it has changed. One might hypothesize that a study conducted in the nineties, when we saw steep declines in rates of violence in our urban areas, may have seen a corresponding decline in the misconduct

of those coming out of prison, but we did not see that. In fact, we saw a slight increase from the eighties.

This recidivism phenomenon takes on particular importance if you look at it from a public safety point of view. Our rates of crime and arrest are so much lower today, and the re-entry cohort is so much larger, but it is recidivating at about the same rate as before, so the group coming out of prison now constitutes a much larger share of our crime problem than ever before in the nation's history. This means that those who are interested in public safety need to especially focus on this population. It is an identifiable population, and we have legal control over them to some extent for a period after their release, and although they are not more dangerous than before, they are contributing more than ever to our nation's crime issue. In particular, we need to focus on the mechanisms of supervision. As the number of people coming out of prison has increased fourfold, the number of people we send back to prison for parole violations has increased sevenfold. Approximately two-thirds of these parole violations are technical violations—they fail to observe a curfew, fail a drug test, fail to keep a job—and we now have 200,000 people going back to prison for parole violations every year, which is the same number of people we sent to prison for any reason in 1980. We have created this system of back-end sentencing in which we churn people in and out of our prisons, and the mechanisms of supervision tend to be a very effective way of sending them back to prison without much accountability for their results, but at great public expense.

My third point has to do with reintegration. The ultimate goal-which is both a justice goal and a social goal-is desistance from crime. Stated positively, the ultimate goal is to help people reconnect to the positive influences of family, work and civil society. There are several programs that do this well, but the larger question is not a programmatic question, rather it is a policy question of how to respond to the reality of large numbers of men of color coming in and out of the prison system. In my book, *But They All Come Back*, I make a few policy suggestions, such as creating re-entry courts. I like the idea of justice intermediaries, which is a way of thinking about somebody at the community level other than a parole officer managing the reintegration process. I am associated with a project in Chicago—mounted by The Safer Foundation and funded by the John D. and Catherine T. McArthur Foundation—that is about to test the idea of a justice intermediary, borrowing from the welfare reform experiments with employment intermediaries and housing intermediaries. This is an urgent policy debate, and we are now at the point where we know there is a big problem and our current remedy is not working. The Urban Institute study that I recommend to you shows that parole supervision does not reduce recidivism rates, so our common policy response of parole—supervision, drug tests, assistance getting jobs—is not working. We are still at the same stage as we were when the Kansas City Preventive Patrol research came out showing that the basic police methodology was not working, and it is going to take us 30 years to figure out what to do next.

I think there are some instructive analogies to welfare reform that apply here. One is to devolve responsibility to the lowest level possible in government, which in my mind is at the community level with justice intermediaries. Secondly, we should engage community. We need to place a premium on work, and I argue for full employment prisons as the way to start that idea. There is a lot of idleness and work for the state in prisons now, but we need to get the private sector involved in prisons. We need to give prisoners the idea of working or doing something productive to improve their human capital while in prison, not as a coerced requirement, but as a strategy for moving toward productive

reengagement on the outside. These conversations must include an inside/outside partnership. We have to remember that people spend, on average, less than three years in prison nationally, and we need to consider where they go and what they do when they come out of prison. We need to think about drug treatment in connection to mental health and overall health, as well as communicable diseases, workforce development, and family reunification; all of these dimensions of re-entry require partnerships. My personal recommendation is to have full employment prisons established prior to re-entry and to get very close to requiring some sort of work as a condition of release, organized along the idea of helping to make communities stronger again. We should require productive and redemptive work in connection to private sector jobs wherever possible.

CHAUNCEY PARKER: My job for New York State is to oversee the criminal justice system, which includes the prisons, parole and state police, among other things. What is our philosophy in state criminal justice? What have we done so far relating to offender re-entry? What is our plan for the future? Our philosophy is very simple: the most important thing that we do in government is protect people, so everything that we do in the arena of criminal justice needs to be geared toward that particular goal. If you are going to have a goal, then it needs to be specific about what it will accomplish, it has to be measurable, and it has to be transparent. If we look at our goal in criminal justice as protecting people, the chief way that we can measure our success is through crime rates. This means that we should be looking at everything we do-prevention, drug treatment, enforcement, or anything on the spectrum-to see if it effectively reduces crime. We have to get out of the business of measuring our success or failure by the number of kilos of cocaine we seize or the number of people we arrest. That may be helpful and interesting, but does it reduce crime? Over the last 12 years, New York State has seen an extraordinary reduction in crime statewide, which New York City led with its historic and world-renowned crime reduction, while the rest of the state has had a 30 percent reduction.

New York State has also been able to reduce its prison population from 72,000 inmates to 63,000 inmates in the last six years. In addition, our parole return rate has gone down about 40 percent for people coming back to state prison over the last 12 years. To summarize, crime has gone down, the prison population has gone down, and at the same time, the return rate for parolees coming back on a new crime has gone down.

What are some of the strategies we have used to achieve these successes? We have tried to be smarter about what we do. Some of the plans have given people in prison an incentive to participate in programs that we think will improve the hand-off back to the community. The offender re-entry hand-off that I am thinking of is almost like a baton in a relay race, in which the baton is handed from one runner to the other and it never drops: If we really do it right, people should be able to leave prison and go on to live a law-abiding life within the community. One of our programs has been for people who are in prison for a nonviolent offense; if they participate in vocational or drug treatment programs, successfully complete them, and do not get involved in any kind of violence in prison, then they can get one-sixth of their prison sentence reduced. Over the last 12 years, 50,000 people have gotten out early as a result of that particular program. Those types of programs are smarter criminal justice. I think we are only taking the first step in a thousand mile journey, in terms of what we need to do. If we are going to be smarter in criminal justice, we need to be smarter when it comes to prison re-entry, because roughly a third of the 63,000 people in prison leave every year. If we were real crime fighters, we would see to it that as few of those people come

back to prison as possible. One of the key initiatives that we have just started—which I think is the future of prisoner reentry—is a local hand-off. Local social service providers and criminal justice professionals need to know ahead of time and prepare for that baton hand-off long before someone steps out of prison so that we are as successful as possible, having very few of the 26,000 people who come out of prison go back to prison. For this pilot project we picked eight counties—including Buffalo, Rochester and Nassau County—and we will give the counties funding to hire a full-time person as a re-entry coordinator who will bring together people from labor, health, mental health and criminal justice sectors, who all have an interest in former prisoners going on to live law-abiding lives. The coordinator also puts together a full-time re-entry taskforce, so that in Rochester, for example, they will known exactly when and how many prisoners will be coming back to the city of Rochester, how many have or need a job, and that some of them will need drug treatment. The task force will also know which people are the highest-risk and lowest risk offenders. We will know whether or not we are effective by bottom line measures—crime and recidivism rates—not by anecdotes or because this all sounds good.

I will give you my final observation. As part of my job, I go through all the prisons in New York, and what has struck me is the one common denominator of every prison I have been through: on so many prisoners' pillows is a picture of a little girl or boy, or a wife, or somebody in the family. There is nothing inevitable about returning to prison if we can make the transition and bring people back to their families; the impact of somebody who goes back to being a father or a husband or back to being employed and law abiding is powerful. If we can make that transition, it would be the smartest thing we can do in law enforcement. We are nowhere near where we need to be, but I think we are smart enough to know that if we are going to be effective this must be the centerpiece of what we do.

VICKI LOPEZ LUKIS: I am happy to be here to share with you some of the great policy work that is happening in Florida. As an ex-offender myself, I think I can speak to the redemption side personally, and I think what Governor Jeb Bush is doing in Florida connects the dots. One of the things that Governor Bush did—thanks to support from the Annie E. Casey Foundation—is create a taskforce with ex-offenders, business leaders, law enforcement agencies and some of his executive agency heads to identify the barriers to re-entry into society. Florida has the third largest prison population in the country, and unlike New York, it is growing every day. We have over 87,000 inmates in Florida's state prisons, not including the largest federal prison complex in Coleman, Florida, or the thousands of county jails in our communities. We have 128 correctional facilities in Florida, and now that we have 30,000 people returning home to our communities there is a problem that we can no longer ignore. I think that to Governor Bush's credit, his legacy will be leaving some solutions that will really decrease the number of people who go to prison and who re-enter prison. I am here to talk a little bit about the barriers that we have found.

One of the first barriers we explored was the fact that prisoners were actually leaving prison with their prison tag, and that was the only form of identification they had. This was problematic because in order to get a job, fill out a housing application, or cash the $100 check that we give them, they need a government-issued ID; post 9/11, a prison tag is not considered a government-issued ID. We sent a recommendation about this to the Governor in our first report, suggesting that prisoners leave prison with some form of identification, whether that is a driver's license, a Florida ID, or their birth certificate. Many of them do not have one, so they also need to leave with a social security card. It is impossible to do anything without those documents, so we are addressing this as a public policy issue.

In addition, many of our prisoners suffer from medical disabilities, so we want them to leave with their benefits securely in place, which means that the Department of Corrections has to facilitate those benefits applications. If an inmate had SSDI or SSI when they went into prison, we would like them to be able to get those benefits again upon leaving. Working with the benefits system is a very long process, and we are trying to lessen the gap in services. Forty six percent of our prison population has a mental illness, so many of them will receive 30 days worth of medication upon their release, but when that medication runs out, it is likely that these individuals will experience a serious meltdown in our communities. Therefore, our second recommendation to the Governor is that we enable former inmates to maintain their mental health medications through Medicaid or social security benefits.

The third recommendation was that we remove all employment disqualifications where appropriate and necessary. As the state, we want to take a leadership role, and we cannot ask the business community to employ our ex-offenders if we will not employ them ourselves. The Governor actually issued an Executive Order—the first of its kind in the country—directing his executive agencies and their contractors to give their employment disqualifications for ex-offenders a hard look. He gave them 90 days to review their policies and propose changes or waiver procedures. I think that the Governor's Executive Order really sends a strong message to his executive agencies that we expect to be able to employ ex-offenders and give them a second chance.

Child support is another important issue. Many of our ex-offenders have child support obligations, and they often do not understand that they can modify their agreements when they go to prison, so what ends up happening is that they begin to accumulate arrearages while they are incarcerated. We want the Department of Corrections to help identify those that have child support obligations when they come into prison and to assist them in modifying their reports. It is critically important that child support is paid when it can be paid, and to appropriate levels, so that people do not exit prison with almost impossible arrearages, which pose a great disincentive to employment.

We also believe that there has to be a review of the zero tolerance policies. Zero tolerance means, for example, that a failed urine test will send a parolee back to prison to serve his remaining sentence. In another example, an ex-offender who went across the street to have dinner at a neighbor's house, not knowing that the middle of his street was the county line, would be in violation of his parole and sent back to prison. Such policies are contrary to successful reentry, and we want the Governor to look at them and consider whether we need to determine whether probation or parole violations are malicious or unintended.

Lastly, we thought about coaching and support. Florida has three faith-based, character-based institutions that have some extraordinary mentoring programs, which we believe to be deserving of expansion. The taskforce has embarked on the Community Partnership Initiative, which will hopefully bring the justice intermediary and the community together to give ex-offenders the best possible chances for a successful re-entry into society. I appreciate being able to share Governor Bush's vision here today, and I hope that we will be able to talk more about it in the future.

COMMISSIONER MARTIN F. HORN: As I sit here and think about it, it occurs to me that I may well be among the top five employers of African-Americans and African-American men in the city of New York. In the New York City Departments of Correction and Probation we employ close to

12,000 people, and upwards of 75 percent of my employees are African-American. What is interesting is that today 40 percent of the correction officers in New York City are women, and within three years we expect that more than 50 percent of the correction officers in New York City will be women. We have a minimum entry requirement of 60 college credits, which at the time it was implemented was hailed as an innovative way of improving the quality of our workforce, but I now believe that it may have a disparate impact on our ability to hire African-American men. It is something that we are re-evaluating now.

The problem of that educational disparity is very real and has interesting consequences, because the civil service is very much and always has been an entry point into the middle class. These are good family-sustaining jobs, so it is puzzling to me that we are having so much difficulty attracting men to these positions.

I cannot add to what Jeremy Travis and Vicki Lopez Lukis have said about this country's addiction to imprisonment, but I believe that the criminal justice system is a blunt instrument and it is a mistake to rely on it to fix the problem, so I disagree with what Larry Mead has proposed.[1] I do not see the criminal justice system being very effective as an instrument for social or cultural change, and I think that if we rely on it to address these problems the only thing that will result is more incarceration.

I have several observations that I would like to share with you as a result of my experience working in the criminal justice system. I have done direct work and had a lot of contact with many African-American men in prisons and jails in New York State, New York City, and Pennsylvania. My first observation is that we need to intervene earlier. I think that we over-incarcerate juveniles. In New York State, we rely extensively on out-of-home placement for juvenile delinquency. In New York City, we send about 1,300 juveniles a year to congregate foster care agencies outside of the city, some run by the state, some run by private organizations, at an enormous cost of about $150,000 a year. Imagine what you could do with $150,000 a year. Fifty percent of these boys are re-arrested within six months, and 81 percent of all of these children are re-arrested within three years.

We are creating a culture of imprisonment; we are turbo-charging whatever is going wrong in those young people's lives. For one thing, we are interrupting their educational progress, and in many cases, they are not receiving credit for the education that they received in detention upon returning to the city schools, particularly in some of the private schools. It seems to me that we are creating a group of young men with anger and retarded educational potential, and we are perpetuating the pernicious alienation from the mainstream that Abigail Thernstrom has described.[2]

When I think about the large number of men who are supposedly not working, I see something quite different in my role as Probation Commissioner: they are all working—they all have money in their pockets, they all have the carfare to come see their probation officers, and they are not on welfare. These men are working, but they are working in the underground economies that exist in the very communities that Jeremy Travis discussed. So I do not believe that this is a matter of a lack of self-discipline, rather I think it is the inability of our economy to compete with the existing underground economy.

I think part of the problem, as I perceive it, is that the jobs in our economy are service jobs that do not pay sufficiently and are actually more attractive to women, except for being deliverymen. The jobs that our economy has created are not jobs that the young

1. *See* Civic Bulletin 44.
2. *See* Civic Bulletin 44.

men that I speak to on probation or in our jails are interested in, nor can they compete with the glamour or the tax-free money that comes with no-questions-asked jobs. In this respect, I would point a finger at the media, which glamorizes a gangster culture over a conventional lifestyle.

Let me tell you a little bit about the inmates we have in our city's jails. We do not run not the largest jail system in the country—that distinction belongs to Los Angeles, and I am afraid that soon Chicago and Philadelphia may well overtake New York City too—but of our 14,000 inmates, 70 to 80 percent have some form of addiction history. I do not think that you can talk about the ability to help people find work if you do not deal with their addiction; if they cannot stay sober, they will fail. Years ago when I complained about the people on parole who we were referring to the Neighborhood Work Project not getting jobs, one of Mindy Tarlow's predecessors said to me, "you're sending them to me and they're high. Of course I can't get them work, and of course they're not going to keep their jobs. If you can't keep them sober, I can't keep them employed." We have to deal with the issue of drug addiction and sobriety: 20 percent of our inmates require detoxification upon admission; 32 percent of them are illiterate at the time of admission; 40 percent of them require some form of mental health services; and 29 percent are what New York State calls SPMI — seriously and persistently mentally ill. Thirty percent of those leaving jail end up in homeless shelters.

I would suggest to you that if we were serious about breaking the cycle of crime and jail and unemployment, and about helping these young men return to what we call the conventional mainstream—and I would argue that in their communities they are in the mainstream, they are just not in our mainstream—we would concentrate on education while they are in prison. How can we let people leave our prisons without being able to read and write? If we were serious about breaking that cycle, we would be looking at education inside our prisons and we would be talking about sobriety.

When Mayor Bloomberg's transition team first interviewed me, Edison Jackson, the President of Medgar Evers College, looked me in the eye and said, "I'm told that it's easier to get drugs on Rikers Island than it is in the community." In 1995, when Governor Tom Ridge interviewed me to become Secretary of Corrections in Pennsylvania, he asked me how inmates could be leaving prison high. I thought that could not be the case, but in fact, it is. Drug use is happening in every jail and prison in the United States, and we must be committed to the notion that jails and prisons be drug free places where we enforce abstinence and teach sobriety. There has to be a way of keeping people abstinent while they are in prison and teaching them how to stay sober, because they have to leave prisons and jails work-ready.

Finally, if we were serious about changing the cycle, we would ask the question of government, how much do you invest in seeing to it that upon release from prison or jail every offender goes someplace other than a homeless shelter? How much money do you invest in helping them to find a job? We do about 110,000 admissions in our jails, and 25 percent of them are for three days or less; these men are trying be conventional, and a few days in jail interrupts that. Their progress is not going to proceed in a straight line—they are going to have some slips and falls—and we have to understand that with respect to their sobriety and education.

W. WILSON GOODE, SR.: I am going to make one point: the best re-entry program is no entry. We need to look at prevention. We know a lot about those who are likely to end up in prison. We know that single parent homes, low achievement in school, environmental conditions, and the absence of positive role models are contributing factors to a child ending up in prison. We also know that on

any given day in America there are 7.3 million children with a parent in jail or under some type of state or federal supervision. We also know that if we do nothing about that problem, 70 percent of those children will end up in prison themselves.

I went to a prison outside of Philadelphia and saw in that prison a grandfather, a father, and a grandson, and as I was about to leave, the grandson told me, "I have a son that I've not seen and I guess I will see him for the first time in prison too." There is a generational cycle of incarceration.

The addiction to incarceration feeds on itself, and in the last 30 years, there has been a 757 percent increase in incarceration of women, and a 257 percent increase in incarceration of men. Crime has remained about stable in that timeframe. So if you have 70 percent of 7.3 million, about 5 million children in this country are at risk of going to jail themselves. We also know that a relationship between a loving, caring adult and a child can help reverse these trends. We know that when a parent is separated from a child by virtue of incarceration four basic things happen to the child: a deficiency in academic achievements, truancy from school, misbehavior in school, and a lack of trust in others. We have also learned that when there is a loving, caring adult in the life of a child for at least one hour at least once a week for at least one year, some positive outcomes occur in that child's life.

Assessments show that two-thirds of those who had been in a mentoring relationship for one year ended up getting better grades, attending school more regularly, and not misbehaving in school. After six months, 90 percent of them said they trusted others more. Therefore, I believe that there is something here that can begin to reverse this trend.

The model of the Amachi Program—a program that partners a secular institution with faith-based institutions to find mentors for children with a parent in jail—has influenced some 30,000 relationships across this country, and I believe can lead to the reduction in the prison population in this country.

I recommend that every state in America put aside at least one-half of one percent of its corrections budget and use it toward mentoring children of prisoners, and another one-half of one percent to use for re-entry programs. If we were to do this, I think that we could begin to solve this problem.

How would I use the money? I would use the money for re-entry to begin removing the employment barriers that exist for those who are coming out of jail. Public/Private Ventures has done very nice work in this area, which shows that people who get a mentor as they come out of jail—preferably one from a faith-based institution—who walk them through the reentry process and help them reintegrate into their home and family and find a job, can really turn things around. I think this is very promising.

MR. PAGE: I want to do a couple of quick follow-up questions here before we go to audience questions. Jeremy Travis, I remember you mentioned that in some states judges are working with ex-offenders in a post re-entry court. I was wondering how you feel about that as an example of court-mandated parole.

MR. TRAVIS: I am a big fan of drug courts and we now have a ten-year history of looking at them. A report just came out from the Justice Department that shows them to be effective at reducing recidivism and cost effective. I like the idea of re-entry courts and have proposed this model as a way to make the entire supervision process more transparent, and to provide both carrots and sticks to people coming out of prison, which has been an

effective strategy in drug courts. The re-entry court idea is a jurisdictional shift between the executive branch and the judicial branch, but it is also a shift in managing the re-entry process; it changes the process from one that is administrative in nature, with some social work and surveillance, into a more open forum with a direct relationship between judges on the one hand and the individual who is leaving prison and his family and support system on the other.

MR. PAGE: Chauncey Parker, how do you feel about that, and also in regard to the low literacy rates that Dr. Horn mentioned?

MR. PARKER: If we know that people who are working under the supervision of parole have a lower recidivism rate than people who are not working, common sense would tell us to have as many job opportunities, and as many men working as possible. Therefore, we look at the employment rate, but we also know that in order to get a job you need a birth certificate, a social security number, and a GED. These are common sense steps that we need to take.

MR. PAGE: Vicki Lopez: I would like to get your thoughts on this gender gap. I asked my son why he and the other guys in class keep getting in trouble in school, and how come I never hear about any trouble from the girls in class, and he told me that paying attention is for girls. Commissioner Horn mentioned how our modern post-industrial America is producing jobs that are not that appealing to men. What have you run across in Florida?

MS. LOPEZ LUKIS: I think it has been the reverse in Florida, interestingly enough. I am working with community-service providers who are finding it more difficult to place women in jobs, but that is because in Florida construction is the leading industry for jobs and many of the men in prison have some skill related to that. Most often, the women leaving prison do not have any skills at all. In fact, I just interviewed 100 women who are leaving our maximum-security facility in Broward County in the next four months and asked them, "what can you do?" They said things like, "I don't know, I've never worked," and that they do not know how to work a computer, and many of them just broke into tears. As a side note, conditions of confinement truly are indicators of how you will leave prison, and Florida has not done a very good job of improving confinement conditions, which are related to emotional well-being, especially for women.

QUESTION: I wonder if you can comment on the success of faith-based programs versus non-faith-based programs, and how do you deal with the issue of the prison population being a recruitment grounds for terrorists among the faith-based programs? I know that everybody has faith-based programs and that is a below the surface concern when you introduce religion into the prisons.

MR. GOODE: In my view, that is the wrong question; we spend so much time trying to compare programs, but the fact of the matter is that we have enough problems for everyone to be involved, so we need non-faith based and faith-based folks working to solve these problems. Is there a difference? What I know is there are about 3,000 congregations across this country who are engaged in helping children who were not engaged five years ago, and that means there are a lot of people involved in trying to help solve these problems. If we focus on getting people to involve themselves in a positive way to help someone else grow and become all they can become, I think we are able to use both faith-based and non-faith-based people in that process.

QUESTION: My question is for Commissioner Horn: What kind of outreach are you doing to grassroots organizations, because I think that there should be some monies allocated to grassroots

organizations that are in the community to work with the people coming back into the community.

COMMISSIONER HORN: All of the work that we are doing in New York City for re-entry programs we are doing through community-based organizations. As Jeremy Travis said, there are specific communities that most of the individuals coming to our jails and prisons are coming to us from, and unfortunately, many of the not-for-profit, social service, community-based organizations are not physically located in or directly connected to those communities. The New York City Council two years ago put about 14 million dollars toward promoting connections between some of the more established community-based organizations and grassroots organizations in individual communities. In New York City we are spending over 10 million dollars on re-entry, most of which is going to private, not-for-profit organizations, but there is still a long way to go.

QUESTION: This conversation has hardly mentioned the police, and I am curious what you think the police could do as part of this agenda. Leaving them out seems to make no sense to me. Secondly, I would like to comment on sending people back to jail for minor or technical parole violations, as someone mentioned earlier. Police are under great pressure to reduce crime. For example, Operation Cease Fire in Boston explicitly took advantage of the vulnerability of people on probation, in that if they were doing something else that the police could not convict them for, the police could instead bring them back into custody on a parole violation. It seems to me that there may be an underside to that story that we are missing here.

MR. TRAVIS: The police have been a missing voice in the re-entry conversation for reasons that are historical and cultural in terms of how police think about their relationship to the backend of the criminal justice system. However, they are an important potential player, both from a public safety point of view and, I would argue, from a reintegration perspective. From a public safety point of view, this is a crime reduction opportunity, but the police do not think of it that way. A partnership here would start between police and corrections, and the basic argument would be to charge that partnership with the task of reducing failure rates in the first months after someone gets out of prison so that every person coming out of prison has a safety plan. Right now, neither corrections, nor parole, nor the police think about this as an accountability question. The first task is to go where the risk is, and the risk is highest right after people get out of prison. If we put resources where the risk is, we would think very differently about re-entry management, and we would look at the risk factors associated with that period of time when people leave incarceration and go back to the chaotic world of the streets.

The police also have a role in a re-integrative sense. One of the programs that I like the most around the country is in Baltimore, called the Re-entry Partnership, where the community group comes to the table to meet with everybody coming out of prison and going back to their community within the next 30 days, and talks about success, risks, and failure. The beat officer for that community attends, and the message he and the parole officer send to the people coming out of prison is that they want them to succeed. That is a very important message to come from the police; that makes them not only the enforcers, but also part of the reintegration.

As to the second question, we have to be very careful in extrapolating from things like the Boston success to a general policy proposition that we should use supervision and legal leverage to say that no matter what the violation, the consequence is going back to prison. That approach misuses an expensive

resource, it fails to get the desired behavioral change, and it is not tied to the realities of re-entry. Those people also come back, and they usually come back quickly, and we have no data that shows that there is a public safety benefit to putting someone away for a parole violation when they come back within a matter of months or years. We do not have to use this hammer to the fullest extent just because we have it.

ED DANIELS: I work with ex-offenders, veterans, and their families out of the Harlem Veterans Center. My first question is for Commissioner Horn. I sit on the advisory board for one of the largest shelters here in New York City called the Borden Avenue Veteran's Residence in Long Island City. We have 400 people there, and a large number of ex-offenders, and it is very difficult to find housing for them because of their circumstances, so do you have a specific idea or suggestion as to how we could help them find houses? As you said, many of them come out of prison ill-educated and not skilled enough to make enough money to support their housing on a private level. My second question is to Mr. Travis: When you talk about full-employment prisons, what do you mean? How would that work?

MR. HORN: It is very clear that individuals who come out of shelters have a much higher likelihood of failure. Indeed, 30 percent of the shelter admissions in New York City are ex-offenders. Linda Gibbs, our current Deputy Mayor and former Commissioner of Homeless Services, once accused me of creating homelessness in the jails. It is a real problem. There are impediments to housing; for example, many offenders leaving our jails have family living in public housing, so by virtue of their conviction they may be barred from returning to that housing or put their family at risk of eviction. Clearly, it is hard to obtain housing without an income stream, and there is a crisis of affordable housing in New York, but we are trying to break through that. We have reached an agreement with the New York City Housing Authority for an experimental program, in which they are waiving the prohibition to enable ex-offenders who have successfully made the transition from jail to the community after a period of 90 to 180 days in a transitional housing program and can make use of Section 8 vouchers. We are also trying to use good behavior and work as an incentive to obtain that Section 8 voucher to make the housing more affordable.

I believe that every individual—no matter how heinous their crime or how long their sentence—should leave prison through a halfway house that is part of their sentence. When we sentence a person to prison we should make him spend the last year of his sentence in a halfway house that the state runs, which would help him find work, and save money, and stay sober. Then he should be able to leave that halfway house anytime after a certain number of days if he has saved a certain amount of money from his earnings. Of course, the problem is that at the very time that New York State releases 20,000 people a year, most of them returning to the New York City area, New York State has reduced the number of halfway house beds located in the city; that is not necessarily a criticism, it is just a reality.

One of the things that we have discovered among the men leaving our jails is that, on the day of their release, they have a plan to go live with someone; they are going to go back to live with grandma or with mom or with a girlfriend, and they have the best intentions. They swear they will not go back to crime. They swear they are not going to use drugs. They swear they are going to work and to help support that household, but after three months of living on the couch, not finding work, not having any privacy, it all falls apart. What if we gave them a subsidy so that they could pay grandma or mom part of the rent? For a lousy $100 a week we might

help them stay with family instead of in the shelter. It seems to me that would be a wise and prudent investment.

MR. TRAVIS: A couple of years ago, I gave a talk and started with the phrase "It's time to end parole as we know it," borrowing from the welfare reform mantra of President Clinton. While Mr. Horn and I disagree on some things, we agree that it is time for a very radical change in the way we think about things.

From an employment point of view the question is, is it possible to do something while in prison and while returning to community to reverse what Bruce Western and others have documented as the lifetime diminution of earnings? How does this work? Somebody who has a felony conviction has a lifetime diminution of earnings of 10 to 30 percent, which means that they may be employed, but they are not employed on the same sort of trajectory as other people. The result is that we have a significant depression of earnings concentrated in a small number of communities.

Oregon has adopted a full employment prison by public referendum, saying that they want prisoners to be working 35 hours a week or doing something else like an education program, getting a GED, or working on their drug addiction. I would add, as did Oregon, that to the extent possible we want the private sector to be in there providing the jobs so that there is a continuity from the same employer inside and outside as well as a continuity of skills. That would take some work with unions and require creating some tax incentives for those private employers, but we should do it because there is a great public benefit. In Europe, jobs in prison are union jobs, so the union is there overseeing inmates, and then they come out with a union card. We have a long way to go. The idea of the full employment prison is to think of prison as a place to improve human capital, but that only works if we couple it with something back in the community. The Philadelphia public, according to a Public Agenda poll, was surprised to learn that work was not a part of re-entry. In a classic American sense, the public expects work to be part of the re-entry experience, and right now, we are not providing it.

Notes

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