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COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

4

PUBLIC HEARING - COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY

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Room 400, City Hall

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Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

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Monday, February 7, 2005, 1:30 p.m.

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10 RESOLUTION 040816 - Resolution authorizing City
11 Council's Committee on Public
12 Safety to conduct public
13 hearings to examine and
14 analyze the Community Re-entry
15 process of ex-offenders and
16 persons under authority of the
17 criminal justice system, hear
18 testimony and collect data on
related public, private and
community based program and
policy efforts, so as to
determine what actions Council
may take to help deliver the
resources and support required
to operate and promote such
programs and policies.

19 PRESENT:

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COUNCILWOMAN DONNA-REED MILLER, Chair
COUNCILMAN JUAN F. RAMOS

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3 P R O C E E D I N G S

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5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good

6 afternoon, everyone.

7 I'm Councilwoman Donna Reed-Miller,
8 Chair of the Committee on Public Safety. And
9 I just want to say that the public hearing is
10 officially now in session.

11 We will be joined by other Council
12 members momentarily. I don't want you to
13 think that absence means people aren't
14 interested.

15 So, we'll have our clerk read the
16 title of the resolution.

17 THE CLERK: Resolution 040816,
18 authorizing City Council's Committee on
19 Public Safety to conduct public hearings to
20 examine and analyze the community re-entry
21 process of ex-offenders and persons under
22 authority of the criminal justice system,
23 hear testimony and collect data on related
24 public, private and community based program
25 and policy efforts, so as to determine what

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2 actions Council may take to help deliver the
3 resources and support required to operate and
4 promote such programs and policies.

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Thank
6 you.

7 I just want to start this hearing by
8 a statement. Injustice anywhere is a threat
9 to justice everywhere, wherever. Whatever
10 affects one directly affects all.

11 A great many people in this country
12 are worried about law and order, and a great
13 many people are worried about justice. But
14 one thing is certain. You cannot have either
15 until you have both.

16 Ramsey Clark, former Attorney
17 General, indirectly Martin Luther King.

18 In matters of government, I believe
19 justice is served when we develop and
20 implement policy that produces the greatest
21 good for the greatest number of people.

22 Ex-offender community re-entry
23 programs and initiatives are about that type
24 of policy.

25 We have all heard it said it is not

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2 enough to help the fallen get up. We should
3 also, if we can, offer support as they try to
4 get along.

5 As a civilized and healthy society,
6 this principle should reflect our approach to
7 the process of re-entry.

8 Re-entry programs and processes work
9 to assist and facilitate the successful
10 return of offenders back into open community
11 life, after being released from confinement
12 or while they interact with the criminal
13 justice system.

14 The goals and methods are to provide
15 literacy, job training, and placement,
16 temporary housing, including counseling, life
17 skill supports, and a host of other vital
18 services.

19 The process begins the moment
20 someone is incarcerated.

21 Individually or collectively, by
22 helping another, we reap certain benefits for
23 ourselves.

24 So it is with the positive rewards
25 and outcomes of effect and progressive

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2 re-entry programs and policies that are
3 absolutely essential to maintaining the
4 well-being of our total society environment.

5 The payback is crystal clear. When
6 adequate resources, dollars and people are
7 allocated towards the institutions,
8 organizations and systems dealing with all
9 aspects of re-entry, we see a dramatic
10 decrease in all aspects of the high cost of
11 crime.

12 The drop in deadly recidivism is the
13 most apparent and desirable effect of all.
14 This viewpoint is growing all over the
15 country, throughout every rank of government,
16 as we will witness during the course of these
17 hearings.

18 Philadelphia is in the forefront of
19 promoting and demonstrating this perspective.
20 A community, faith-based, business and
21 criminal justice partnership has actively
22 begun to materialize. And the Mayor is
23 involved with a national panel on the
24 subject.

25 As a result of the kind of work and

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2 dedication of those who are present or
3 represented here today, policy makers
4 everywhere are beginning to see the cost
5 benefits and cost effectiveness of investing
6 in re-entry programs and initiatives.

7 My colleagues and I thank and
8 commend you all. These factors are a part of
9 my motivation for drafting Resolution Number
10 040816, and calling for these hearings, to
11 hear from those who are most involved and
12 invested in the re-entry process, about, one,
13 re-entry programs, needs and assessments,
14 what is working, what is not; two, legal,
15 legislative and public policy status and
16 evaluation, what is helping and what is not;
17 and three, resource allocation, funding and
18 levels, and what is being delivered and what
19 is not, in the terms of dollars, personnel
20 and structures.

21 From this information, Council can
22 determine how it can best help to promote and
23 support the best practices of the re-entry
24 process.

25 Additionally, we recognize and

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2 understand the need to increase
3 communication, coordination and cooperation
4 between all agencies and agents involved in
5 the re-entry process, as well as the need for
6 more public awareness.

7 We believe these hearings can
8 provide a forum and opportunity to advance
9 both causes.

10 As an elected public servant, I see
11 my contribution to serving justice as making
12 every attempt, when it comes to public
13 policy, to do the right thing for the right
14 reasons, to help Council achieve this goal on
15 behalf of the critical issue of ex-offender
16 community re-entry, and do it the right way,
17 and let us begin right now.

18 I've just been astounded at some of
19 the data and numbers that we've been hearing,
20 just dealing with this issue in the past few
21 months.

22 On any given day, more than 48,000
23 county cases and more than 8,400 state cases
24 of parole and probation are active in
25 Philadelphia. You know, that's more than a

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2 quarter of our population.

3 There are neighborhoods where eight
4 ought of ten families are affected in some
5 way by the criminal justice system.

6 We can safely estimate, by virtue of
7 these numbers and others, that 40 to 50
8 percent of all families in Philadelphia have
9 been impacted in some way by someone involved
10 in the criminal justice system.

11 So, with that, we'd like to start.
12 And I do have a witness list.

13 Okay. The first witness I'd like to
14 call is Commissioner Leon King. Please
15 proceed to the witness table. I know you're
16 here somewhere. I saw you. Okay.

17 Please proceed to the witness table,
18 and identify yourself for the purpose of the
19 record, and proceed with your testimony.

20 COMMISSIONER KING: Good morning. I
21 am Leon king, Commissioner of the
22 Philadelphia Prison System.

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good morning.

24 COMMISSIONER KING: I believe,
25 Councilwoman Miller, you have a copy of my

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2 testimony. I'm not going to read the whole
3 thing.

4 I have edited it down a bit for
5 your... You can read the rest of the juicy
6 details at your leisure.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Thank
8 you.

9 COMMISSIONER KING: I am pleased to
10 present testimony on the issue surrounding
11 prisoner re-entry in Philadelphia, and the
12 Philadelphia Prison System's vision for
13 improving the services it provides to inmates
14 in this process.

15 Seated with me are Deputy
16 Commissioner for treatment, Alan Appel. I
17 don't know where he is -- yes, to my left;
18 Mike Resnick, our Chief of Staff; and Joyce
19 Adams, our Deputy Director of Inmate
20 Services.

21 Seated in the audience are various
22 members of the Prison System staff who are
23 here to lend their moral support, and to help
24 me answer questions that might be posed that
25 I cannot remember from my present

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2 recollection.

3 As we have pointed out later in my
4 written testimony, the rise in the prison
5 population in the United States and in the
6 City of Philadelphia in the last few years
7 has been significant.

8 With a census of 8336 on October 16,
9 2004, the Philadelphia Prison System topped
10 all previous population levels since its
11 beginnings in 1683.

12 Commensurate with the national rise
13 in the prison population, we have seen here
14 in Philadelphia a rise in the operating
15 expenses of the Philadelphia Prison System.
16 And the time has come to more strategically
17 address the issues.

18 Under the direction of Mayor Street,
19 the City and its Prison System have
20 undertaken to address the growing prison
21 census and related operating budget in a
22 multi-pronged manner.

23 Revamping the services provided to
24 inmates in the re-entry process and thereby
25 reducing the recidivism rate is one of the

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2 key facets of this strategy.

3 There are several key facts that we
4 must all understand when we consider these
5 issues.

6 First, we know by way of empirical
7 evidence, that in order for an inmate to be
8 successful in re-entering society and
9 remaining crime free is, first and foremost,
10 acceptance on his or her part of the
11 responsibility for the results of their
12 actions, and a desire to change.

13 No amount of programming will be
14 successful without that personal epiphany.
15 As Mayor Street has often said, inmates must
16 understand that they are not innocent and
17 injured.

18 Secondly, we know that in order to
19 be successful upon release, inmates must have
20 an adequate job, paying a livable wage,
21 adequate housing, substance abuse and
22 intervention and counseling, mental health or
23 physical health interventions where
24 appropriate, and adequate community support.

25 Providing these necessary

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2 requirements must, and I repeat must, begin
3 inside the walls of the prison or jail, with
4 full cooperation and planning of correctional
5 officials.

6 Programs and services not
7 coordinated in this fashion are doomed to
8 failure. Your correctional professionals in
9 the Philadelphia Prison System must
10 coordinate the beginning of this process.

11 Moreover, these services must be
12 coordinated across City departments, and I
13 must, and I repeat must, include cooperation
14 and planning by all the members of the
15 criminal justice system, service providers,
16 the faith community, the business
17 community -- and that's one I'd really like
18 to emphasize, the business community -- and
19 the leaders and the residents of the
20 neighborhoods where these inmates will return
21 upon release from jail or prison.

22 At present there is more than one
23 group in this City planning for inmate
24 re-entry and requesting funds from various
25 sources to aide in their efforts.

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2 If the services are not properly
3 coordinate, precious resources will be
4 wasted.

5 We as a City must also recognize and
6 understand the inmate population we are
7 dealing with and planning for.

8 While the ingredients of successful
9 re-entry are common across correctional
10 agencies, planning for true prison
11 populations as opposed to jail populations is
12 an essential element to understand in the
13 planning process.

14 I as the Commissioner of Prisons for
15 the City of Philadelphia am addressing and
16 concerned with the jail population of
17 inmates.

18 While referred to as a prison
19 system, the Philadelphia Prison System is
20 really a county jail system, meaning the
21 inmates in our care, custody and control are
22 approximately 60 percent pre-trial detainees,
23 meaning they cannot afford bail and are being
24 held pending the outcome of the criminal
25 proceedings lodged against them in our

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2 courts.

3 A sizable portion of our overall
4 inmate population is released on average
5 within two weeks of their incarceration in
6 our jails, most often with no significant
7 prior notice to the Prison System.

8 Translated, this means that out of
9 the 8336 inmates under the supervision of the
10 Philadelphia Prison System on October 16,
11 2003, it was impossible for the Prison System
12 to provide adequate re-entry services to at
13 least 5,001 inmates.

14 Likewise, of the approximately
15 35,000 admissions a year, it would be
16 impossible for the system to provide adequate
17 re-entry discharge services to at least
18 21,000 of those admissions.

19 This is the nature of the short-term
20 stay of most inmates in a jail-based
21 correctional system.

22 The remainder of the 8336 inmates
23 housed on October 16th would be inmates
24 sentenced to a county sentence, that the
25 Prison System would have more of an

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2 opportunity to adequately plan for their
3 re-entry into society.

4 It is the sentenced population of
5 the Philadelphia Prison System that our most
6 coordinated efforts on successful re-entry
7 should be primarily focused.

8 This is contrasted from a true
9 prison system, like the Pennsylvania State
10 Department of Corrections. The D.O.C.
11 generally houses inmates for terms of five
12 years and longer. Thus, from a time
13 perspective, they have a wider window to plan
14 for and to work with inmates prior to their
15 release.

16 In these budgetary times, we must
17 also understand that the City's coffers are
18 not full. In recent months all City
19 departments have been asked to reduce their
20 expenditures and lay off staff.

21 The Prison System had to do its part
22 and, must live within the budgetary
23 guidelines set by the administration.

24 The Prison System's plans are
25 therefore based on an assumption of no new

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2 revenue to its upcoming proposed operating
3 budget, and no additional General Fund
4 employees to carry out its mission.

5 Finally, public attitudes towards
6 rehabilitated inmates must change. Too often
7 public discourse around corrections and
8 rehabilitation of inmates becomes bogged down
9 in public perceptions that we, as
10 correctional officials, are somehow coddling
11 inmates and/or the common health perception
12 that when we are discussing these issues we
13 are most referring to murderers, rapists and
14 child molesters.

15 The inherent reality is that unless
16 sentenced to death or life in prison without
17 parole, the vast majority of inmates are
18 going to be released from prison or jail at
19 some point.

20 These released inmates may include
21 murderers, rapists and child molesters.
22 However, they also include inmates housed in
23 the Philadelphia Prison System who are
24 serving county sentences for less serious
25 crimes, and those crimes related to drugs and

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2 theft.

3 The glaring point that is missed too
4 often is that these inmates will be returning
5 to the communities from whence they came.

6 The more inmates we can successfully
7 intervene with and stop their criminal
8 behavior, the less crime will be committed by
9 released inmates; and thus, the safer our
10 City and its neighborhoods will be.

11 The more successful we are with the
12 inmates we can reach, the more we can
13 redirect City resources to other worthy civic
14 causes.

15 Thus, the issue of successful inmate
16 re-entry and rehabilitation is a matter of
17 public safety, as well as fiscal
18 responsibility.

19 We are blessed to live in a City
20 such as Philadelphia. We have a visionary
21 Mayor who understands the importance of
22 prisoner re-entry.

23 And as chairman of the U.S.
24 Conference of Mayors' Committee on Prisoner
25 Re-entry, he is spreading the word, the

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2 importance of this subject around the
3 country, ensuring that we lead the nation on
4 this issue.

5 As a result of the Mayor's efforts,
6 in the next few months the Corporation for
7 National Service will announce that
8 Philadelphia has been selected as one of the
9 ten national sites to launch a pilot program,
10 underwritten by funds from the Federal
11 Government, to focus on prisoner re-entry.

12 We are also blessed because it was
13 here in Philadelphia that the modern theory
14 of corrections was born. It was through the
15 Quaker tradition that the Philadelphia jails
16 originated the idea that punishment for
17 punishment's sake was not the proper way for
18 government to treat criminals.

19 It was here in Philadelphia that the
20 idea of rehabilitation of inmates took hold
21 and changed penology around the world.

22 It is the combination of this
23 history and the leadership of this Mayor that
24 Philadelphia will become the national leader
25 in prisoner re-entry.

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2 Our blessings in Philadelphia also
3 include the approximately 2,000 security and
4 treatment staff, who provide services and
5 security to our inmates, while at the same
6 time working in the most dangerous police
7 districts in the City.

8 This work force is complemented by
9 the almost 2,000 volunteers who also help us
10 with our mission. All of them are priceless
11 assets to this City.

12 Our final blessing is that, unlike
13 many other jurisdictions, we have a City
14 Council, criminal justice partners, a
15 faith-based community, and numerous other
16 individuals and groups in the community, who
17 are willing to lend their aide, support and
18 hard works to the inmates in our care.

19 And I'm just going to skip after
20 that. And you can just note there's
21 background information about the prisons,
22 who's there, the charges that are present,
23 the increase in the population since FY'99.

24 I would stop and draw your attention
25 to the chart on Page 8 which is very

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2 interesting. It breaks down by Zip Code
3 where inmates are coming from and where
4 they're going to.

5 And you can note the areas of the
6 City where, you know, there's an increase in
7 number of folks that are released.

8 In talking before we came, you know,
9 there may be areas on that map where Council
10 people... you know, maybe that's not your
11 District.

12 But the point, I think, Councilwoman
13 Miller, you made in your opening statement
14 was that while inmates in these areas are
15 returned there because that's where they
16 live, that's not necessarily where they're
17 committing their crimes, number one.

18 And number two, if you multiply out
19 the family members, the children, and
20 everybody else connected to those inmates, as
21 I think you pointed out in your opening
22 statement, it really is a problem that
23 affects the whole City.

24 I just want to skip forward.
25 There's a very detailed layout of all the

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2 programs that we have going on at the prison.
3 And then I just want to read about the...

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me.
5 Which one is the Zip Code map? The print's
6 so small I'm having a difficult time reading
7 it.

8 COMMISSIONER KING: Page 8. They're
9 both Zip Code maps.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Both Zip Code
11 maps.

12 COMMISSIONER KING: Yes. One's by
13 admission and one's by release. I think
14 that's what it is. The bottom one is release
15 and the top one is admission.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

17 COMMISSIONER KING: So, when I talk
18 about the community round table later on, we
19 use this map to make our choice about where
20 we're going to have the round table.

21 My formal testimony states all the
22 programs that we have going on currently at
23 the prison that we've always had going on.
24 And I just want to capsulize for you what our
25 plan is moving forward, starting on Page 14.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Page 15?

3 COMMISSIONER KING: 14.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: 14.

5 COMMISSIONER KING: Despite the
6 decades of experience in maintaining programs
7 that foster successful re-entry, I must
8 credit the work of many others who have made
9 re-entry the byword among correctional
10 administrators across the country, and credit
11 a Mayor who has relentlessly kept the focus
12 on re-entry across Philadelphia for the past
13 five years.

14 On January 1, Mayor Street created a
15 new tradition, when he addressed inmates
16 assembled at each of our major prison
17 facilities, with a message of hope and a
18 promise that this City would be there for
19 them when they got out of jail.

20 Mayor Street told inmates, you are
21 important to us; you are part of our family.
22 We will do our part. You will have to do
23 your part.

24 No mayor has ever visited the
25 prisons, as Mayor Street has. We looked it

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2 up. No Mayor has done what Mayor Street has
3 done.

4 He has clearly set the agenda for
5 staff and inmates alike. It is the inmate's
6 obligation to change his behavior, and it's
7 our obligation as a community to be at the
8 prison door when he is released with the
9 necessary resources and support.

10 In combination with Mayor Street,
11 Mayor Wilson Goode helped mobilize the
12 communities of faith across Philadelphia,
13 seeking volunteers to mentor children of
14 inmates because we know that if you're a
15 child of an inmate, you're more likely to
16 become an inmate.

17 And out of that has come the Amache
18 (phonetic) program which is a national model
19 that's being replicated all across the
20 country; the R.E.S.T. Program.

21 The Cambria Community Center was
22 something else that came out of that. Of
23 course, we're going to change that to the
24 Youth Study Center. But I think we've
25 successfully duplicated that at the Riverside

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2 Correctional Facility.

3 We also reorganized our providing of
4 service to the people with A.I.D.S. within
5 the Philadelphia Prison System. And I think
6 we have a pretty comprehensive national
7 model, as far as that is concerned.

8 In 2002, the late Deputy Managing
9 Director Diane Granlan convened an ad hoc
10 retreat for all those agencies dealing with
11 inmate behavioral health issues.

12 And out of that meeting was
13 something born called the Forensic Task
14 Force. You'll hear more about this in detail
15 when Dr. Evans testifies next week.

16 But the good news with that is we
17 had the National Institute of Corrections up
18 to the jails. They surveyed what we're
19 doing.

20 And as a result of that, we've been
21 given a grant. I guess it's financed partly
22 by the National Institute of Corrections, and
23 the Council of State Governments, to continue
24 to look at the mental health services at the
25 prison, and give us technical assistance to

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2 improve on what we already have.

3 Some more recent things. With the
4 close of the Jackson vs. Hendricks lawsuit in
5 2001, the City agreed to pay, I think, \$2
6 million in settlement of that case.

7 Instead of distributing that to all
8 of the inmates, we put it in an escrow fund.
9 And there's a committee that was appointed to
10 distribute that money.

11 Out of that money, the Prison System
12 created the J.O.B.S. Project in 2003, again
13 focusing on sentenced inmates, providing
14 treatment, education and vocational training
15 while they were in jail.

16 These inmates... This is a new
17 thing at the prison, too. We recognized our
18 responsibility to help inmates after they
19 were discharged, as opposed to just sort of
20 treating them and showing them to the door.

21 And through the money in the Jackson
22 fund, we have contracted and procured the
23 services of the Pennsylvania Prison Society,
24 Impact Services, Top/Win, The People's
25 Emergency Center, Philadelphia Alive Center

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2 for Transformation, Mount Airy Community
3 Computer Center and the African Chamber of
4 Commerce.

5 Also in 2003, the Prison System
6 contracted with the Urban Institute to create
7 a portrait of prisoner re-entry here in
8 Philadelphia, to review inmate preparation
9 for re-entry and study program effectiveness
10 and outcomes.

11 The first of these reports is
12 presently in draft form. And we look forward
13 to its release in the months ahead.

14 In 2004 the consensus group Search
15 for Common Ground, collaborating with the
16 Philadelphia Leadership Foundation, created
17 the Ready4Work Program, designed to provide
18 referrals and re-entry partnership for
19 inmates who are not eligible for
20 O.P.T.I.O.N.S. or the J.O.B.S. Project.
21 O.P.T.I.O.N.S. I didn't go into detail to,
22 but it's in my testimony.

23 The Prison System also created the
24 Office of Community Justice and Outreach, to
25 help improve relationships with

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05
2 community-based organizations, and to provide
3 an on-campus single point of resource for
4 inmates who are discharged from the Prison
5 System.

6 With the crescendo of interest in
7 re-entry projects in the field of housing,
8 drug treatment, medical and behavioral
9 health, job training and job placement, the
10 Prison System created a re-entry oversight
11 board in 2004, with representation from the
12 various members of the community and the
13 criminal justice system.

14 The purpose of the oversight board
15 was to harness the interest and energies of
16 all these public agencies, advocacy groups
17 and community groups into a single vision, a
18 single coherent strategy, and to coordinate
19 re-entry programs and evaluate proposals.

20 The first outgrowth of the re-entry
21 oversight board was the Prison System
22 Re-entry Summit which was held in Sharon
23 Baptist Church on June 24th, and I believe
24 that Council has been provided with copies of
25 the report that was generated as a result of

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2 that.

3 The Re-entry Summit was truly
4 remarkable, in my biased opinion. We had 800
5 people who showed up at Sharon Baptist
6 Church.

7 Had you been there for the lunch
8 break, you would have seen correctional
9 officers in their uniforms, members of the
10 faith-based community, people in suits,
11 ex-offenders sitting on the steps of the
12 church, eating the lunch that prison
13 industries provided for us. It was a very,
14 very unique scene, I think.

15 As a result of that, we compiled our
16 report. And we have some further action
17 plans that begin on Page 18, in regard to
18 what the Prison System is going to do, in
19 regard to improving our services around
20 re-entry.

21 We're going to continue to
22 coordinate re-entry efforts to the
23 Philadelphia Prison System's Re-entry
24 Oversight Board.

25 The most immediate issue is to begin

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05
2 discussions to integrate and/or combine the
3 resources and the membership of the
4 Philadelphia... the Philadelphia Consensus
5 Group on re-entry and reintegration of
6 adjudicated offenders.

7 This will provide the Prison System
8 with an expanded set of staffing and other
9 resources to initiate the various
10 recommendations made around the issue of
11 prisoner re-entry, and to coordinate the
12 outside interest groups, agencies, service
13 providers and community groups interested in
14 assisting us in prisoner re-entry. This
15 would include the services of a Vista worker
16 from the Federal Government.

17 Under leadership of Julia Danzy,
18 Director of the Division of Social Services,
19 complete the plan which is in progress for
20 coordination among City departments, around
21 the issues of jobs, housing and treatment of
22 inmates being discharged from the
23 Philadelphia Prison System.

24 Part of this reorganization will
25 involve leveraging and redirecting

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05
2 non-operating budget dollars, to directly
3 assist us in their prisoner re-entry efforts.

4 Upon the retirement in the early
5 spring of our present Deputy Commissioner for
6 Treatment, Alan Appel, who's looking quite
7 smart in his uniform today, abolishing that
8 office as it currently exists, and naming a
9 Deputy Commissioner for Offender Re-entry and
10 Rehabilitation Planning, finish developing a
11 comprehensive plan to transform one of the
12 five major jails on the prison campus into a
13 re-entry jail.

14 Inmates assigned to this facility
15 would be sentenced inmates, and all the
16 services at the facility would be directed to
17 prisoner re-entry.

18 Included in this process will be the
19 new performance measures for inmate
20 programming, and modification to the Prison
21 System's management information systems lock
22 and track function, to enable us to track
23 inmates' success, and to direct resources
24 only to those programs that are effective;
25 commence and complete, in cooperation with

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05
2 the Urban Institute, the planned community
3 round table in the Frankford section of the
4 City.

5 Using this model, we will duplicate
6 this process in other highly effective
7 neighborhoods, complete a reorganization of
8 the Volunteer Services Division, with its
9 2,000 volunteers, as well as the Chaplaincy
10 Services Division of the Prison System, to
11 strategically deploy these services as a true
12 supplement to running prison programs.

13 In cooperation with the Mayor's
14 Office of Faith-Based Initiatives, the
15 National Association of Blacks in Criminal
16 Justice and the Corporation for National
17 Service, expanding the training and strategic
18 deployment of members of the faith-based
19 community, support inmates -- to support
20 inmates, beginning behind the walls, and
21 continuing after they're they are released
22 from jail.

23 Initiating a study of the Criminal
24 Justice System of the City, in conjunction
25 with the Mayor's Criminal Justice

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2 Coordinating Committee.

3 The purpose of this study will be to
4 better focus resources in the criminal
5 justice system, to reduce the prison
6 population.

7 Receipt, study and implementation of
8 the recommendation of the Urban Institute's
9 study of prisoner re-entry in Philadelphia.

10 Receipt and study, hopefully this
11 week, of the reports of the progress of the
12 J.O.B.S. project.

13 Implementation of modifications to
14 justify expanding the program, to include
15 more inmates.

16 Implementing the recommendations of
17 the National Institute of Corrections recent
18 technical assistance survey of the
19 Philadelphia Prison System, and utilization
20 of the technical assistance grant provided to
21 the City as a result of this survey.

22 Expanding the operations of the
23 Prison System's Office of Community Justice
24 and Outreach, to continue to foster
25 partnerships in the community, and educate

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2 the public on issues of prisoner re-entry,
3 and the correctional perspective on public
4 safety.

5 These issues will include public
6 service spots similar to those produced by
7 the New Jersey Department of Corrections,
8 which will focus young people on the perils
9 of jail, in an effort to deter young people
10 from entering a life of crime, and making the
11 point that jail or prisons is not an
12 honorable right of passage in life.

13 Under the auspices of the
14 Philadelphia Prison System Re-entry Oversight
15 Board, develop specific action plans for all
16 the areas discussed in the 11 break-out
17 sessions conducted during the first Annual
18 Re-entry Summit, convening a second Re-entry
19 Summit in the late spring, with all those
20 partners who attended the first summit, to
21 implement those action plans.

22 Expand the Forensic Intensive
23 Recovery Program.

24 Complete a performance-based
25 evaluation of the O.P.T.I.O.N.S. program, and

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2 improve service delivery.

3 Continue and finalize plans with the
4 School District of Philadelphia, to improve
5 and expand the services provided by the
6 School District's Pennypack House School,
7 located on the prison campus.

8 Remodel and revamp the A.S.D. Mod
9 III facility, with funding from a federal
10 grant, into special housing and programming
11 for juvenile offenders.

12 And in our final section of our
13 testimony, we answered the question of some
14 of the things we thought City Council could
15 do to assist in this effort.

16 In cooperation with the Office of
17 the Mayor, create additional legislative
18 changes, like the employment tax credit
19 legislation authored by Councilman Goode,
20 that assists inmates of their re-entry into
21 society, and/or similar legislation that
22 prohibits discrimination in employment and
23 housing for those inmates who have
24 successfully completed rehabilitative
25 programs within the Philadelphia Prison

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2 System.

3 Approved the Prison System's
4 proposed legislation to expand the market of
5 the Prison System's industries arm, PhilaCor.

6 Lend your voice, credibility and
7 presence and encouragement to community
8 groups, businesses, the faith-based
9 community, and ordinary citizens in your
10 districts to understand and get involved in
11 the issues surrounding prisoner re-entry.

12 Lend your voice, credibility,
13 presence and encouragement to the employees
14 of the Philadelphia Prison System. This one
15 is one, I think, that people like to brush
16 over, and they don't think it's very
17 important. But I actually think it's one of
18 the key, sometimes more important than money,
19 because we ask our people to work for -- You
20 know, I'd like more money. Everybody would
21 like more money. But I think this is one of
22 the keys, so I pause for a moment before I
23 read the rest.

24 The employees of the Philadelphia
25 Prisons are what are sometimes referred to as

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2 the invisible arm of law enforcement.

3 Security and treatment staff at the
4 prisons risk their lives on a daily basis,
5 working in what are quite literally the worst
6 police districts in the City.

7 They play an important part in
8 public safety and public health, by keeping
9 dangerous people off the streets, making sure
10 these people do not hurt each other, making
11 sure they receive adequate medical and mental
12 health services, and at the same time trying
13 to rehabilitate as many as they can with
14 limited resources.

15 Appearances by Council members at
16 Prison System events, such as Correctional
17 Employee Week, the annual Retirement Dinner,
18 cadet graduations, and other employee-related
19 events throughout the calendar year that lets
20 these employees know you care.

21 While my staff at the prisons
22 already go the extra mile for us, physical
23 presence at their events show them they are
24 appreciated. The extra mile will become two
25 miles.

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2 Lend your voice, credibility and
3 presence and encouragement to the inmates of
4 the Philadelphia Prison by appearing at their
5 events.

6 The Prison System hosts inmate
7 functions for inmates who successfully
8 complete programs within the system.

9 These functions include the yearly
10 high school graduation of our juvenile
11 inmates, O.P.T.I.O.N.S. graduations, J.O.B.S.
12 project graduations, Culinary Arts
13 Graduation, G.E.D. graduations, lots of
14 graduations. Mural Arts, C.E.P., jobs fairs
15 and related events.

16 As was evident from Councilwoman
17 Blackwell's most recent attendance at a
18 G.E.D. graduation, the inmates are truly
19 impressed and gratified to have their efforts
20 recognized in this way.

21 This is not to mention the positive
22 effect on the security of treatment staff who
23 cooperate to make these accomplishments and
24 events possible.

25 Partner with your counterparts in

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2 Harrisburg and Washington to provide
3 assistance with the issues surrounding
4 prisoner re-entry on the state and national
5 level.

6 Share with us your insights, ideas
7 and proposals. We do not know it all.

8 This concludes my testimony. And I
9 wish to thank all the members of Council,
10 especially Council President Verna and
11 Councilwoman Donna Reed-Miller for making
12 these hearings possible, and for helping us
13 focus attention on the issue of prisoner
14 re-entry in Philadelphia.

15 My staff and I are available if you
16 have any questions. Thank you.

17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.
18 Okay.

19 We'll start. I just have a few
20 questions. One very quick one. What are the
21 goods and services that PhilaCor, your prison
22 industry, what do they produce?

23 COMMISSIONER KING: They produce
24 many things. They produce business cards,
25 stationery for the various City departments,

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2 furniture. They make furniture. They
3 re-upholster furniture. They do wood
4 finishing. A number of things.

5 I can have Mr. Freedman come up here
6 and give you the litany, but that covers it
7 generally.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Does the City,
9 usually Public Property or whomever, many
10 times -- I think pieces of furniture I have
11 in my office were made by someone in-house,
12 some City employee. Do you make furniture
13 for City Hall offices or...

14 COMMISSIONER KING: We market our
15 furniture to City agencies. And that's part
16 of the reason I mentioned the legislation.

17 We'd like to be able to expand the
18 market of PhilaCor, so we can use that money
19 to make the programming that they provide for
20 the inmates better.

21 So, it depends. Some departments
22 use us and some don't.

23 Is that right, Mr. Freedman?

24 MR. FREEDMAN: Yes.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Do you have a

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2 catalog?

3 COMMISSIONER KING: Yes, we have a
4 catalog. And we can send you one, if you
5 like.

6 We also have a lovely showroom up at
7 State Road, if you want to come and visit.

8 (Laughter.)

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I'd like to
10 see it.

11 Listen, when we order furniture,
12 they give us catalogs.

13 I just had three, four pieces of
14 furniture re-upholstered in my office.

15 COMMISSIONER KING: We'll make sure
16 everybody gets a copy of the catalog and what
17 services are provided.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

19 I just also, for the record, want to
20 make mention that Councilman Juan Ramos is
21 here.

22 We received written correspondence
23 from Councilman Frank Rizzo, that he would
24 not be able to attend today.

25 And also, Councilwoman Joan

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2 Krajewski is out sick, for the record. Okay.

3 Councilman Ramos, you have a few
4 questions, you said?

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Yes.

6 Thank you, Madam Chair.

7 Thank you, Commissioner, and all of
8 you from your respective offices, either from
9 within the Philadelphia Prison System or from
10 the outside, as advocates or just concerned
11 people, families, and so forth, on this very
12 important issue of re-entry.

13 I want to share a story with you.
14 It's a very, very short story. Early last
15 summer, as we were just getting -- as we were
16 in the middle of the Wilson Goode
17 legislation, something that came out of the
18 Committee of Labor and Civil Service that I
19 Chair, as part of the unemployment
20 hearings -- And by the way, we're going to
21 have those unemployment hearings. We were
22 going to have them tomorrow, but we were
23 supposed to have a parade, and I cancelled
24 the hearings.

25 When are that hearings, Andrew?

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2 ANDREW (unidentified last name):

3 March 3rd.

4 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: March 3rd?

5 ANDREW (unidentified last name):

6 1:00 p.m.

7 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: 1:00 p.m.

8 March 3rd at 1:00 p.m. the Committee
9 of Labor and Civil Service is going to
10 continue its hearings on the reality of
11 unemployment in Philadelphia.

12 And, of course, we would like to
13 extend an invitation to you all, if you have
14 anything to offer. And we'll be giving an
15 update on what has transpired from last
16 spring to this time.

17 I had a gentleman show up in my
18 office early summer.

19 And my constituency service person
20 tells me, Councilman, I have a person that is
21 dressed in dark brown or a dark brown suit.

22 He's got a box with him. He says he
23 was just released from prison yesterday.

24 And these are his -- This is his
25 story: That he was he was released. He was

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2 given some money to get on a bus. And he
3 went to where he used to live at. The
4 neighborhood had changed. It was not in one
5 of our county prisons.

6 This inmate came from a state
7 prison. And he went there. The neighborhood
8 had changed. He knew no one and didn't
9 know -- No one knew of his relative, who he
10 hadn't heard from in, I believe, almost 20
11 years.

12 And then he landed up sleeping in
13 the park. And then he landed up... Someone,
14 a Spanish-speaking gentleman... Someone
15 asked him -- He asked someone, is there
16 anyone Spanish-speaking in Philadelphia. I
17 mean, in City Hall. So he landed up in my
18 office.

19 And I was... We were able to help
20 him in getting him into a place to live. And
21 I believe he qualified for food stamps for a
22 little bit.

23 When I said, why is this a strange
24 coincidence, that we were just discussing
25 this particular issue of re-entry.

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2 And although he was not released
3 from the Philadelphia Prison System, he was
4 still released from a prison.

5 And the only thing he got or the way
6 it worked, according to him, was that he got
7 some money to get on the bus, and then he was
8 on his own. He had done his time. He was on
9 his own.

10 What do you do when you release an
11 inmate from your custody?

12 COMMISSIONER KING: It depends on
13 who the inmate is and when they're released.

14 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Can you give me a
15 couple examples?

16 COMMISSIONER KING: Well, for
17 example, if you were arrested... Let's say
18 we were going to have a parade tomorrow, and
19 we got carried away with celebrating the
20 Eagle's victory, and you got arrested, and
21 you went to the Police Administration
22 Building and you couldn't post bail. So,
23 you're down there two days. You get to the
24 Prison System.

25 On the third day, finally your

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2 family comes up with bail.

3 On the fourth day, you're released.

4 When you're released on that day, you get the

5 Mayor's discharge package, as I recall. I

6 think you may get a bus token. And that's

7 it. That's all you get. You know, if you're

8 there two weeks or less, that's all you get.

9 If you are lucky enough to be an

10 inmate, for example, who's in one of the

11 programs I talked about, like J.O.B.S. or

12 Ready4Work or one of the new things that

13 we've started, you may be lucky enough to

14 have a mentor that's there waiting for you

15 that comes and picks you up at the jail, and

16 they've arranged ahead of time for a place

17 for you to live, and, you know, there's

18 support around you.

19 So, for people who are in those

20 specialized programs, there's somebody

21 waiting for them, so that there's a

22 connection.

23 And that's part of what we started

24 doing new in the last year or two, is

25 recognizing, at least for some of the people

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2 that are in those programs, that they're --
3 You know, we don't want situations to happen
4 like the one that you described because
5 that's the situation that leads people to
6 commit crime again, they get arrested.

7 So, there's a variety of things.
8 And Miss Adams and Mr. Appel probably can be
9 more specific.

10 But generally speaking, if you're in
11 jobs or if you're in Ready4Work or one of the
12 other programs that I mentioned in my
13 testimony, you're going to have someone there
14 who's waiting for you, who knows you're
15 coming, and there's a plan that you know
16 about that's started within the walls, in
17 regard to what we're going to do with you
18 when you're released.

19 But there are -- The vast majority
20 of people who are released from the prison
21 don't get all that. And that's more a
22 function of what I talked about in my
23 testimony. You know, if you're only there
24 two days, there's not a lot we can do.

25 So, the analogy I made this morning,

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2 that may not be right on point, but it's sort
3 of like saying, you know, we have the
4 Roundhouse at 8th and Race. You know, what
5 re-entry planning are you doing for people
6 down there?

7 And I guess the Police Commissioner
8 would say, well, they're there for three
9 days. There isn't much you can do.

10 So... And I'm not saying that -- I
11 think in the future we'd like to improve that
12 for those people who are, you know, just
13 released within the two weeks.

14 We have -- If you come up to
15 C.F.C.F., there's the guard tower, and then
16 there's a little house over here that used to
17 be the gate house for Riverview.

18 And the Office of Community Justice
19 is in the process -- We've gotten it all
20 painted and revamped. There's going to be
21 computers and phones, et cetera. And that's
22 going to be sort of a one-stop shop for
23 inmates who are, you know, released after two
24 weeks or three weeks, who haven't had chance
25 to get into the program, to come over there.

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2 And we're going to have referrals for them
3 for how they get a home, jobs, whatever it
4 is.

5 We just have to figure out a way to
6 get them to come because, you know, most
7 people when they leave prison, they don't
8 want to stop at the kiosk in front of
9 C.F.C.F. They really want to get on the bus.

10 So, we're trying to figure out a way
11 that we can, you know, entice people to come,
12 so that we can have referral services, and we
13 can cut down on the number of people out of
14 the people who are there for a very short
15 time who just leave with nothing.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: So unless you're
17 there for just a couple days, for some sort
18 of non... you know, non-violent misdemeanor,
19 the inmates leave with some kind of a package
20 that tells them where to go for housing, for
21 treatment or relocation, whatever it may be?

22 COMMISSIONER KING: Yes.

23 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Within our
24 Philadelphia Prison System.

25 COMMISSIONER KING: They get a

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2 letter from the Mayor. And in that letter
3 there's a whole packet of information:
4 Names, phone numbers that they can call.

5 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Now,
6 Spanish-speaking inmates or other inmates, do
7 you have services for them?

8 COMMISSIONER KING: I believe the
9 Mayor's letter is translated into Spanish,
10 and... You know, I don't know... What about
11 the other languages?

12 MR. APPEL: (Shakes head from side
13 to side.)

14 COMMISSIONER KING: Just Spanish at
15 this point.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: What does the
17 letter say?

18 COMMISSIONER KING: I haven't read
19 it in a long time. But it basically is the
20 Mayor's message to inmates, you know, this is
21 your chance; take responsibility; you know,
22 there are a lot of resources out there that
23 you can take advantage of.

24 And then there's a list of churches,
25 resource centers, all sorts of things that

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2 everybody gets when they leave.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. I'd
4 like to get a copy of the letter.

5 COMMISSIONER KING: Okay.

6 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Can I ask a
7 question related to the Councilman's
8 question?

9 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Sure.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Is enrollment
11 in the special programs voluntary or is it
12 mandatory or...

13 COMMISSIONER KING: I'll let Deputy
14 Commissioner Appel explain that.

15 MR. APPEL: The programs are
16 voluntary, although there are inmates that
17 are stipulated by their Judge. But
18 ultimately, they still have to have a choice
19 to go in or not to.

20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. So, if
21 and when you implement the new entry prison,
22 that will all be pretty much voluntary.

23 COMMISSIONER KING: Yeah.

24 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

25 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Madam

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2 Chair.

3 Commissioner, during the hearings
4 that I referred to earlier in the spring, I
5 believe it was the Philadelphia Prison
6 Society that testified that a number -- might
7 have been -- I think I can safely say it was
8 at least 20,000 -- might have been more --
9 inmates were going to be released from our
10 Prison System -- I believe it also included
11 state prisons -- into the Philadelphia and
12 vicinity area.

13 And that, I remember, you know,
14 was -- I raised my eyebrows. That's a lot of
15 people coming out of our Prison System,
16 coming back to probably their old
17 neighborhoods.

18 And we needed to do something about
19 this mass of people coming out. And that's
20 why I -- It was -- It wasn't that far after
21 that that this gentleman walks into my office
22 that morning and says -- This has to be one
23 of that big number of inmates that the Prison
24 Society stated would be coming back into the
25 community, what are we going to do with this

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2 big population.

3 Do you have any idea how many
4 inmates will be released? I know you have
5 like a weekly or monthly number that I've
6 seen over the last year.

7 Do you have any idea how many
8 inmates will be released between now and June
9 of this year from the Philadelphia Prison
10 System?

11 COMMISSIONER KING: You're asking me
12 to do multiplication, but the last --

13 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Doesn't have to
14 be precise.

15 COMMISSIONER KING: We just... If
16 we discharge 500 people a week -- I think
17 that's what it is -- you'd have to do the
18 math. What is that?

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's just
20 from the county, though.

21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: This is just you.
22 This is just the Philadelphia Prison System.

23 COMMISSIONER KING: Right.

24 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Okay.

25 COMMISSIONER KING: Deputy

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2 Commissioner Appel is telling me it's closer
3 to 3,000 a month. So if you do --
4 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: 3,000 a month?
5 COMMISSIONER KING: So if you do --
6 Six times three is 18,000.
7 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: 18,000.
8 COMMISSIONER KING: Right.
9 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: So my 20,000
10 number might have been -- might have been a
11 small number. Might have been much higher
12 than 20,000.
13 COMMISSIONER KING: Well, you also
14 have to take into account the people that are
15 being released from the State Department of
16 Corrections --
17 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Okay.
18 COMMISSIONER KING: -- that are
19 coming back. And I don't know what that
20 number is.
21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: So we're talking
22 about 18,000 between now -- conservatively,
23 right, between now and earlier June or around
24 that much.
25 COMMISSIONER KING: Correct.

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2 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: And I know we
3 have some good programs out there, and I know
4 I can laud a number of organizations, like
5 the Prison Society.

6 And this is very hard work. I did
7 prison ministry for a bunch of years, and it
8 was... It might have helped -- It might have
9 helped those men, in my case of the year at
10 that time I was visiting men.

11 Might have helped them. Probably
12 helped me more than it helped them, to just
13 be a witness to the reality of life behind
14 bars, and to see the other side of human
15 nature, and the other side of a person who
16 was waiting trial for, you know, a crime.

17 But this is still a big number of
18 people. And I know that you're doing the
19 best you can. But somehow we need to
20 continue to talk more and do more about this
21 issue.

22 Because what happens to a person
23 that's released and is now thinking positive.
24 And then there's not enough positive out
25 there for them, meaning, where am I going to

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2 get a j-o-b, or where do I go to finish --
3 you know, to continue rehabilitation or how
4 do I get my family back, and how do I get
5 a... you know, how do I get these things
6 behind me and moving forward.

7 Is there something -- and please
8 excuse my -- please excuse my, you know,
9 ignorance, right? Is there -- Is there a
10 group that kind of like puts all of our
11 efforts together to drive this?

12 I know you mentioned in your
13 testimony about some Federal funds or a pilot
14 program that you've been funded for.

15 I mean, how do you move this to
16 address -- You know, what does the
17 Philadelphia community do with 18,000
18 just-released inmates?

19 COMMISSIONER KING: Well, first I
20 would say that there's no way that we're
21 going to be able to handle doing something
22 for all those 18,000 inmates.

23 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I understand.

24 COMMISSIONER KING: So we have to be
25 strategic about who we're talking about. And

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2 that's why I tried focusing people's
3 attention on sentenced folks.

4 The other thing I would say is the
5 Re-entry Oversight Board, that's part of what
6 we're trying to do with that, because part of
7 what I want to make sure people understand
8 is, I was in Washington the other week with
9 the National Corporation for Public Services.
10 Is that right, Mr. Taliafero?

11 Folks and we were sitting around
12 talking about this pot of money that
13 President Bush has for prisoner re-entry.
14 And we're all trying to get some. I'm trying
15 to get some.

16 And, you know, we're sitting around
17 the room. There was a guy there from the
18 Salvation Army, I think. And he was telling
19 me how he had a grant for prisoner re-entry,
20 and he was doing it here in Philadelphia.

21 And I said, well, that's news to me.
22 I've never heard of you.

23 So, I'm trying to figure out -- And
24 part of the reason we have the Re-entry
25 Oversight Board, if we have, for example, \$3

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2 million down in Washington to be used for
3 prisoner re-entry, and there are 400 groups
4 in Philadelphia who want to do it, and no one
5 has come to the prison and said -- And we
6 tell you, even though, if you want to be
7 realistic, there are really only 6,000 people
8 that we need to focus on.

9 And you have all these people, you
10 know, getting money and making plans, and
11 they don't -- you know, they haven't
12 connected with us, it's going to be a lot of
13 wasted money, and a lot of wasted resources.

14 So that's why we've got this
15 Re-entry Oversight Board. It has anybody on
16 it that has anything to do with this. So, we
17 can try to be strategic about what we do.

18 Because I do think, if you think
19 about the money that's coming from
20 Washington, the 2,000 volunteers that we
21 have -- And, you know, a year or two ago -- I
22 can't remember how long it was -- Miss Eisen,
23 in which she worked for Judge Shapiro, came
24 up and did a survey of voluntary services.

25 And they're not as strategically

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2 deployed as we would have -- as I would like
3 them to be. It sort of works now.

4 You want to be a volunteer, you call
5 the prison. The volunteer services calls
6 around; and, you know, you're sort of hooked
7 up.

8 We need to have it in a way where
9 we've identified, you know, the holes in the
10 services that we provide, and, you know, the
11 volunteer services are provided accordingly,
12 so that if we already have... I don't know...
13 350 services for deaf inmates, and we only
14 have two deaf inmates, and we need to turn
15 those people away and bring other types of
16 volunteers that we need, because volunteers,
17 you know, take up time and money with C.O.'s,
18 you know, escorting them around.

19 When you think about that; when you
20 think about our chaplaincy services, those...
21 We're going to undertake to more
22 strategically deploy, too, sort of on the
23 lines of what the faith community has done,
24 and sort of backing up to what you said,
25 Councilman Ramos about, you know, when you

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2 went into jail and you were there with prison
3 ministry.

4 You know, it's more than -- inmates
5 need more than -- They need prayer, and they
6 need songs, and they need services. But in
7 the end, when they leave, they need a job,
8 they need a house.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Need a job and
10 a house.

11 COMMISSIONER KING: Et cetera.

12 So, all of those things. You know,
13 we've initiated training with the faith-based
14 communities, that when you come into the
15 prison, you know, you understand what you're
16 dealing with, what it is that we need, and
17 it's more than just providing a service.

18 The other thing is marshaling the
19 community. That's why we have the Office of
20 Community Outreach and Justice.

21 And in conjunction with the Urban
22 Institute, we're actually going to try. We
23 picked Frankford because of the fact that the
24 Zip Codes -- the Zip Code information
25 indicated a lot of our inmates, that was one

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2 of the highest areas of the City where our
3 inmates were discharged.

4 We also... The Re-entry Oversight
5 Board also thought it was important that the
6 neighborhood was ethnically mixed, and that
7 we thought that there were support services
8 there that could help us.

9 And that's another model that we
10 want to try and implement, where we get
11 everybody in that particular community to
12 understand the problem and help us.

13 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you, Madam
14 Chair, for being so patient with me. I'll
15 try and wrap up my last question, put it all
16 together.

17 In your Re-entry Board, do you have
18 Hispanic representation on that Board?

19 COMMISSIONER KING: Yes. Mr. Rojas
20 is there.

21 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Oh, is he?

22 COMMISSIONER KING: Yes, he is.

23 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Okay. All right.

24 COMMISSIONER KING: He's everywhere.

25 And I believe there may be some others, but I

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2 can't remember off the top of my head.

3 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Okay.

4 The issue of Latino inmates, do you
5 have a variety? Because of what you just
6 mentioned, when I took a look at your
7 statement, I saw West Kensington had a high
8 proportion of inmates going back into that
9 community.

10 I saw Fishtown, even. I saw
11 Frankford, east of Broad Street, where you
12 have a lot of people that speak Spanish. You
13 have a lot of people of Hispanic descent in
14 that area.

15 Do you think you have enough
16 programs to address some -- you know, some of
17 the distinct needs of the Latino inmates?

18 COMMISSIONER KING: Well, I know
19 that -- and I'll let Deputy Commissioner
20 Appel comment on that -- that we do have
21 groups come into the prison just specifically
22 for Hispanic inmates.

23 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: I know
24 faith-based groups are active on Sunday over
25 there.

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2 COMMISSIONER KING: But I can't
3 answer the question specifically, so I'll ask
4 Deputy Commissioner Appel.

5 MR. APPEL: Thank you.

6 We also have Spanish-speaking A.A.
7 groups and N.A. We have groups from our drug
8 treatment program.

9 We have quite a few of our own
10 employees are bilingual and bicultural.

11 One of our re-entry partners works
12 with the inmates who speak Spanish only. So,
13 we are trying to make certain that no one is
14 left out of the programs due to a language
15 barrier.

16 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you for all
17 your efforts. I know that there's still, you
18 know, a whole lot of work to do in all these
19 areas.

20 And as you well know, I'm available
21 to you and to be of whatever help. I like
22 your idea of the PhilaCor stuff, by the way.
23 I think that's a wonderful idea.

24 Thank you, Madam Chair, for bearing
25 with me.

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2 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Thank
3 you.

4 COMMISSIONER KING: You're making
5 Mr. Freeman feel very good about your
6 comments about PhilaCor.

7 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Great.

8 I'd just like to get some
9 information on the results of the employment
10 services, the housing. I mean, are people
11 finding jobs?

12 COMMISSIONER KING: That's part of
13 what I'm hoping I'll be getting this week.
14 We did the J.O.B.S. project, I think -- Has
15 it been a year yet, Mr. Appel?

16 MR. APPEL: About a year.

17 COMMISSIONER KING: About a year.

18 And I know they've had some kinks.
19 And I want to -- I requested a report because
20 I want to know -- We spent a number of
21 dollars on this particular project. And I
22 want to know if we've actually gotten inmates
23 jobs.

24 And if we haven't gotten inmates
25 jobs, then we need to pick some other people

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2 to find inmate jobs or modify the programs
3 that we have, because that's the whole point
4 of it.

5 You know, I don't want to come back
6 to Council when I testify for my budget and
7 you say, how much did you spend on the
8 J.O.B.S. project?

9 And I say, a million dollars.

10 And you say how many jobs did you
11 find?

12 And I say 14.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

14 COMMISSIONER KING: That's not what
15 I -- You know, I don't want you to hear that.

16 So I hopefully will have that report
17 this week because, you know, that was the
18 whole point of instituting this. We want to
19 know how many jobs we actually find people,
20 especially through that.

21 And we're also trying with the... I
22 don't know if I talk about Corestar in here,
23 but we're trying... It's very difficult
24 because, you know, we have our M.I.S. system
25 at the jail. It's been there a while. Costs

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2 a lot of money, but it doesn't do everything
3 that we want it to do.

4 So, part of what we're doing, for
5 example, with the O.P.T.I.O.N.S. program, the
6 treatment staff has been nice enough, because
7 I asked them to, to go back, because if we're
8 ever going to make a case to improve the
9 service or expand it, we're going to have to
10 make a demonstration, especially with the --
11 given the City budget, that the program does
12 what it does.

13 But the problem is all the records
14 are manual. So we're going back at the
15 prison right now and we researching. I don't
16 know what time period they picked. And
17 they're going to pull inmates who have been
18 through O.P.T.I.O.N.S. because we do have,
19 you know, good information with
20 O.P.T.I.O.N.S. and F.I.R. together, that that
21 works.

22 But we don't have information on
23 O.P.T.I.O.N.S. by itself. So we're in the
24 process of going back with all these programs
25 and manually going back, to figure out

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2 whether they're doing what they're supposed
3 to be doing.

4 And I hope to have at least
5 information on the J.O.B.S. project before I
6 come back for testimony... I think it's in
7 March.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That will be
9 good, because I do remember, now that you
10 said it, that when we had the hearings in the
11 spring on... the same hearings that
12 Councilman referred to, around employment
13 issues here in Philadelphia, he did mention
14 the jobs.

15 I think that is important to have
16 studies, but we seem to have a whole bunch of
17 studies year after year. And I think people
18 have been looking at the re-entry issue for
19 quite some time.

20 And maybe it was different ten years
21 ago, to some of the problems that people had,
22 because so many people -- According to the
23 data that I've read, 80 percent of those that
24 come in contact with the criminal justice
25 system are there because of some drug-related

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2 offense or use or whatever.

3 So, maybe we didn't have that large
4 of a number years ago, but I just... I'd
5 know that it's very frustrating for me.
6 Many, many people stop me, probably just like
7 every other elected official, about helping
8 them find employment.

9 And those... An ex-offender is the
10 hardest person to help secure employment.
11 And one reason why I'd like to know if you're
12 doing a good job, so I can refer them to you,
13 and...

14 COMMISSIONER KING: Well, I mean,
15 I'll make a deal. If the folks who are
16 working for us haven't found enough jobs for
17 the people for the amount of money we're
18 paying them, I'll resign, take that money --
19 although I don't think I can do that; I'll
20 wait a year -- and I'll find inmates jobs.

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

22 And I just want to ask you this.
23 When we had the hearings back in the spring
24 around employment, it was a young man that
25 testified that said that he was not able to

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2 access services because of some length of
3 time. I can't really remember. You may
4 remember. He was at the table. He just
5 testified on and on and on.

6 But how long does one qualify for
7 services as an ex-offender? I mean, is it
8 within a couple months of being released
9 or...

10 COMMISSIONER KING: Are you talking
11 about services like food stamps?

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Like
13 employment.

14 No. Maybe employment, housing.
15 Just some type of supportive services, to
16 help them become independent.

17 COMMISSIONER KING: You mean is
18 there a time before --

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Is there a
20 time limit that it's cut off?

21 COMMISSIONER KING: Oh, with the
22 J.O.B.S. project? I don't think we -- Yeah.
23 With the J.O.B.S. project it's six months
24 they follow them.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Six months.

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2 COMMISSIONER KING: And I'm not sure
3 for the other programs. Do you know?

4 MR. APPEL: No.

5 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We can get you
6 the information on the other programs. But
7 for the J.O.B.S. project it's about six
8 months.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

10 And of course there's been some talk
11 about creating an office of re-entry. And if
12 that office was created, where do you think
13 it should be housed and who should administer
14 it?

15 COMMISSIONER KING: Well, I think
16 that, as I mentioned in my testimony, and as
17 I guess I should also point out when I went
18 to Washington, you know, we are there all in
19 a room trying to figure out where to spend
20 re-entry dollars.

21 And the only person from a jail or a
22 prison was me. And that was because I bumped
23 into the gentleman who was chairing the
24 meeting the day before at just a Sunday at
25 one of my jails.

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2 So, in my opinion the responsibility
3 for this should rest with the prisons because
4 that's where the re-entry process starts.

5 I think that we are the City
6 department that has the most self interest in
7 this area. I mean, until time ends you'll be
8 asking the prisons about the recidivism rate
9 and re-entry, et cetera.

10 So, having the expertise and the
11 self interest, I think it should rest in the
12 prison system. And I think, naturally, as
13 the Prison Commissioner, that's the person
14 who should be responsible.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

16 COMMISSIONER KING: That's my
17 personal opinion. I'm not sure what the
18 Mayor thinks, but that's what I think.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. I want
20 to thank you for your testimony.

21 I have, like, a whole lot of
22 questions, but this is not the last
23 discussion that we're going to have around
24 re-entry.

25 And I'm just very conscious of the

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2 time. And I want to make sure that everyone
3 gets an opportunity to present and testify
4 today.

5 So, thank you very much, and thank
6 you for doing a good job.

7 COMMISSIONER KING: Thank you,
8 Councilwoman and Councilman Ramos.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
10 Is representative Mark Cohen here?
11 (No response.)

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We can have
13 Ray Jones and Reverend Linward Crowe, please
14 come up to the witness table. Is Ray Jones
15 from Impact services or is anyone here from
16 Impact?

17 Okay. Thank you. Thank you for
18 coming. Please state your name and the
19 agency that you're representing. And speak
20 directly into the mike so that the
21 stenographer can hear you.

22 MR. JONES: Thank you Councilwoman.

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You're
24 welcome.

25 MR. JONES: My name is Ray Jones.

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2 I'm Director of Ex-offender Services at
3 Impact Services.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Do you
5 want to proceed with your testimony?

6 MR. JONES: Okay. I'll be very
7 brief. I have submitted some paperwork to
8 the Council, in regards to two programs that
9 we directly oversee.

10 And the Commissioner was kind enough
11 to talk about one of our other programs. We
12 are one of the re-entry partners in the
13 J.O.B.S. project.

14 But the primary thing that I want to
15 talk about today is how best we can take what
16 we've learned from 30 years of experience,
17 working with an ex-offender population, and
18 pass that on not only to this Council but to
19 Philadelphia, as to how best we can move
20 forward on the re-entry initiative.

21 The programs that are in the packet
22 of information that was distributed to
23 Council reflect two programs that have
24 received national recognition, the Fathers at
25 Work Initiative Program and the Helping

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2 Offenders Work Program.

3 Both programs were built around
4 strong collaboration between government
5 departments and Impact Services.

6 The collaborations allow Impact to
7 deliver a quality program through the support
8 and access generated by the agreements with
9 the government departments.

10 The second key factor that makes
11 these programs so effective is the fact that
12 Impact Services has developed a strong
13 relationship with business.

14 Businesses must understand the
15 benefits of hiring ex-offenders. And then
16 more importantly, they must understand the
17 importance of hiring ex-offenders that come
18 out of supportive programs such as Fathers at
19 Work, and H.O.W.

20 The third thing that I wanted to
21 mention was how critical communication is.
22 And Commissioner King alluded to this. We
23 must make sure that all of the partners
24 involved in the re-entry process are at the
25 table, and are able to hear and participate

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2 in this discussion.

3 I'm, in fact, a little disappointed
4 that we don't have more agencies here today,
5 so that Council can hear from all of them
6 that are working in this re-entry field.

7 I would like to make three quick
8 recommendations to the Council. One is to
9 expand and encourage ways that City
10 departments can collaborate on exchange of
11 information and services to help them serve
12 this population, and also to help the
13 community-based programs and faith-based
14 programs that provide supportive services.

15 Second, expand and encourage ways to
16 better inform and reward businesses that hire
17 ex-offenders. Some of the work that
18 Councilman Ramos and Councilman Goode have
19 done, in terms of the tax relief program for
20 businesses that hire ex-offenders is
21 wonderful.

22 But there are many other ways that
23 we can entice businesses to become more
24 informed, and more importantly, to become
25 more receptive to working with the

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2 ex-offender population.

3 And finally, encourage all entities
4 that want to help solve this problem to come
5 together and join a unified effort to deliver
6 these solutions.

7 The consensus group is one of those
8 entities. The Commissioner mentioned his
9 Oversight Board that he has.

10 We all need to be at the table so
11 that we can hear each other and make sure
12 that we're moving together as one City.
13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILMAN RAMOS: Thank you. Thank
15 you, Mr. Jones.

16 You can proceed. Please state your
17 name for the record.

18 REV. CROWE: My name is Reverend
19 Linward Crowe. I am a Presbyterian minister,
20 but I would like to give testimony today as a
21 volunteer. And I would like Council to see
22 the work of volunteers through the eyes of
23 the congregations of the City.

24 And in particular, Councilman Ramos,
25 you mentioned your own involvement as a

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2 religious volunteer in your own personal
3 experience.

4 I serve inside the Philadelphia
5 prisons in a training program as a religious
6 volunteer at C.F.C.F., but I also participate
7 on the Re-entry Oversight Board at the
8 prison, and I'm also part of the Philadelphia
9 Consensus Group on Re-entry.

10 And in each of those arenas I
11 represent and speak with and for the faith
12 community in its particular interest.

13 And I believe that we're in the
14 process right now of experiencing a dramatic
15 reorienting of people's understanding of how
16 to do volunteer service in prison.

17 And it's related to the various
18 programmatic issues that the Commissioner
19 raised, and the people like my colleague Ray
20 Jones raises.

21 But so that you can get a snapshot
22 of the big picture, we have about 2,000
23 religious care volunteers who participate in
24 the Philadelphia prisons every year. That's
25 a virtual army.

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2 And they represent dozens and dozens
3 of congregations. And they really care what
4 happens to these men and women in the
5 prisons.

6 And there's a great interest in a
7 renewed energy around re-entry, that's been
8 stimulated by the prisons, by the Mayor, by
9 the Council itself.

10 So in my mind there's a great
11 opportunity here, but one that may not
12 require a huge outlay of new money, but as
13 Ray has just mentioned, a better coordination
14 of service, that involves and includes
15 volunteers and involves congregations.

16 What I have submitted to you in my
17 written report is a condensation of the
18 report of our Summit this summer.

19 Deputy Commissioner Appel and myself
20 facilitated the workshop on the faith
21 community and volunteers. And we felt that
22 some of the key issues raised in that Summit
23 this summer are the key issues that need to
24 be focused on here by City Council.

25 And the two issues that we

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2 identified, I think, are extremely important
3 to understand how congregations connect to
4 the professional services, not only of prison
5 staff, but of other agencies that provide
6 services to ex-offenders.

7 And the one question is, how can the
8 faith community effectively provide personal
9 support to the offender and his family
10 through mentors or through mentor groups?

11 And the second is, how can the faith
12 community assist offenders to gain knowledge
13 of resources that are available in the
14 community, because they are often a place
15 where people come to find help.

16 And that raises the issue that I
17 discovered over the last several years, that
18 our faith community has been largely
19 ineffective in addressing these questions
20 because we've been focused, in a sense, on
21 the wrong issue.

22 The faith communities were coming
23 into the prisons for years, largely
24 conducting religious services, and not
25 focused on the providing of other kinds of

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2 care and service.

3 And partly that's because of an
4 institutional interest and predilection on
5 the part of those who serve, but it's also
6 been a problem that the Philadelphia Prison
7 System had created. But they've now
8 recognized that problem and have begun to
9 move beyond it.

10 And the problem is that they created
11 a fire wall. If you came into the prison, as
12 you had done yourself, to serve as an
13 in-house prison ministry group, like if you
14 came in with a choir or if you came in to
15 teach, you were not permitted to be on the
16 individual visitor list for inmate.

17 And so, it was almost impossible to
18 have follow through and to have a real
19 mentoring relationship.

20 And when the Prison System
21 recognized that challenge and that obstacle,
22 they began to change those rules.

23 So now, as a result of changes this
24 year, it's possible for faith community
25 groups or volunteer groups to actually

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2 strategically think about conducting ministry
3 in a different way, establishing mentoring
4 relationships that will carry forward.

5 And so, as we met this summer, and
6 as our group met during the Summit, we had a
7 very diverse group. And in my written
8 comments to you, you'll see the diverse
9 membership on our panel. We had people from
10 the Catholic community, from the Islamic
11 community, a variety of different Protestant
12 groups involved, we raised up three different
13 models for people to look at.

14 One was a group mentoring model that
15 the Philadelphia Archdiocese has. Another
16 was the model of R.E.S.T. Philly which you'll
17 hear testimony from them, I'm sure, at the
18 next session of the hearing, under Dr.
19 McKinney.

20 And another was the model of the
21 Philadelphia Ex-offender After Care Program,
22 under Bishop Ernest McNair, kind of a typical
23 City congregation, but a group very
24 committed, to try to provide after-care
25 service.

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2 In fact, just for your information,
3 I noticed -- This is not a part of my
4 testimony, but I just noticed that Prison
5 Fellowship which is the largest prison
6 ministry group probably in the world, in
7 their current issue of their newsletter
8 features on the front page a wonderful story
9 about that program right here in
10 Philadelphia, right down at 16th and Mifflin
11 at Bishop McNair's church. And I have copies
12 of that if you're interested to look at that.
13 But they look at it as a model, an example,
14 of how a congregation can best serve.

15 Well, the key details that we
16 raised, I think, are part of the discussion
17 and the process of testimony before you
18 today.

19 And the challenges are, how do you
20 improve communication with this vast, this
21 diverse group of volunteers.

22 Secondly, how do you enroll inmates
23 qualitatively in a relationship with mentors?

24 And third, how do you train those
25 mentors so that they can become more

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2 effective?

3 There are risks for congregations,
4 but there are also risks for inmates. What
5 if this does not go well? What if the
6 congregation becomes disappointed by the
7 work?

8 So, this is not something that's
9 automatic because it's laid out on a piece of
10 paper. But it's a human dynamic, and it's a
11 human drama that's unfolding here in the
12 City, because the churches are getting more
13 and more interested and willing to become
14 mentors.

15 And so, as the Commissioner has
16 stated, as Mr. Jones has stated, there's a
17 need for a broad coalition of groups that
18 will work to strengthen the mentoring
19 capacity of not only professional service
20 agencies which they represent, but also this
21 great body of volunteers here in the City.

22 And I want to suggest to you that,
23 without a whole lot of money, but changing
24 policies and changing purposes, we believe
25 that the congregations of the City can become

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2 much more effective partners, by raising
3 awareness of the importance of mentoring, by
4 including training for those mentors, but
5 also by requiring that all groups that come
6 into this prison system to provide religious
7 care services be part of this network that's
8 focused on after care. And a good bit of
9 control can be supervised in that way.

10 And I think as an outcome we'll have
11 an effective network here in the City that
12 mobilizes thousands of volunteers.

13 And in conclusion, I had a paragraph
14 there where I raised kind of a vision
15 challenge. And we believe that sitting in
16 our institutions here in the prisons are many
17 people who contribute and make a tremendous
18 impact and do much good here in the City.

19 And we often raise, even with the
20 inmates themselves, the picture of, in the
21 religious care community, in our
22 Judeo-Christian community, two of the
23 greatest examples are Moses in the Old
24 Testament and the Apostle Paul in the New
25 Testament, both of whom committed serious

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2 crimes, and yet, were used in dramatic ways.

3 If you remember, Moses killed an
4 Egyptian, and ran into the desert and was an
5 outcast. And yet, it was only after that
6 experience that he was called out to become a
7 leader of his people, to lead them out of
8 slavery.

9 And the same with the Apostle Paul,
10 who was terrorizing the Christian community.
11 And after becoming a mass murderer, he was
12 called out to become an Apostle and wrote
13 most of the New Testament.

14 And so, we believe that even men and
15 women who commit serious crimes, if they take
16 personal responsibility and become part of a
17 fellowship in a faith community, can do much
18 good. And so, we're encouraged.

19 And I just want to pass on to you,
20 as volunteers, encouragement to become part
21 of this new emerging network. No matter who
22 drives the train, everyone needs to be on
23 board.

24 Thank you.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Do you

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2 have information you want us to receive with
3 you today?

4 REV. CROWE: I just have additional
5 copies of that newsletter.

6 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Is the
7 Sergeant-at-arms here?

8 REV. CROWE: Apart from my written
9 testimony. I have four copies of it here.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All right.
11 Thank you.

12 I have a question. When you say
13 that all the services should come together,
14 are you not a part of the Oversight Board?

15 REV. CROWE: Yes, ma'am.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Oh. Okay.
17 Good.

18 And I want to thank Impact Services
19 because your agency is one that my office
20 calls all the time when we're trying to help
21 an ex-offender find employment.

22 I want to ask you this question.
23 You know, many ex-offenders -- some anyway --
24 try to get a pardon.

25 So, if you have a pardon -- And on

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2 some employment applications -- on most --
3 they do ask whether you've ever been
4 convicted of a felony or of a crime.

5 So if you get a pardon, how do you
6 answer that?

7 MR. JONES: If the Governor has
8 granted a pardon -- And in Pennsylvania it
9 does come through the Governor's Office.

10 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: The Governor,
11 correct.

12 MR. JONES: If the Governor has
13 granted a pardon, then you can clearly say on
14 the application that you have not committed
15 any crime.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

17 MR. JONES: That's the good news.
18 The bad news is that the difficulty in
19 getting a pardon is extreme. The percentage
20 of people who apply and who actually receive
21 one is probably less than three or four
22 percent.

23 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Are you
24 familiar with the movement in Illinois,
25 through the state, where they're trying to

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2 get the records expunged?

3 MR. JONES: Yes.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Of those
5 non-violent criminals? Non-violent. People
6 that have been convicted of a non-violent
7 offense.

8 MR. JONES: There are actually
9 several states that are in the process of
10 looking at that type of expungement
11 legislation.

12 COUNCILMAN MILLER: Mm-hmm.

13 MR. JONES: And Impact, along with
14 several other organizations, are trying to
15 bring public policy issues to the state
16 level, in regards to not only expungement but
17 other ex-offender issues.

18 I think there are a lot of things
19 that we can do to make it easier for the
20 ex-offender to get back into the work force.

21 And expungement of non-violent
22 crimes would make a lot of sense, I think,
23 after a period of proving to the community
24 that they have led a good life and that
25 they're back and trying to do -- trying to do

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2 the right thing.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. All
4 right.

5 I want to thank both of you for
6 coming in, and look forward to having further
7 discussions another time. Thank you.

8 MR. JONES: Thank you.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Roger
10 Zepernick from Centro Pedro Claver, Inc. And
11 you're accompanied by two people or...

12 (No response.)

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Deborah
14 Raddock, Director of O.P.T.I.O.N.S.

15 Now, there are a lot of people here.
16 Have you signed up to testify?

17 And I just have one other group
18 listed here, Byron Cotter, Director of
19 Alternative Sentencing Unit, Defender
20 Association. And those are the only names I
21 have on my witness list.

22 So if there's someone here that is
23 here to testify, they need to sign up with
24 Howard.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Hi. Thank

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2 you. You can begin. Don't forget to speak
3 directly into the mike.

4 MR. ZEPERNICK: Councilwoman, my
5 name is Roger Zepernick, from Centro Pedro
6 Claver. Centro Pedro Claver is a
7 community-based organization in North
8 Philadelphia.

9 First of all, I'd like to thank you
10 for calling for these hearings and for this
11 testimony.

12 Also like to thank the Commissioner
13 from the Philadelphia Prison System.

14 It's very clear to us that it's
15 important that there be an attitude in our
16 City that recognizes the value of people and
17 doesn't separate people, as seems to be a
18 common tendency more and more in our country
19 and has recurred throughout history, of
20 trying to separate people into the good and
21 the bad, the sheep and the goats or the
22 do-gooders and the evildoers.

23 That is a national problem. And I'm
24 glad to feel that our City, our Council, our
25 Mayor, and the Commissioner of the Prison

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2 System all are speaking of the value of lives
3 that some people may be tempted to classify
4 as being bad. We're all some good and some
5 bad.

6 Central Claver is a community-based
7 organization that has a history of dealing
8 with the criminal justice system.

9 We started over 25 years ago as a
10 sister organization to a civil rights group
11 known as the Puerto Rican Alliance.

12 And part of our work has gone from
13 trying to defend people in cases where we
14 felt that the community had a strong support
15 for folks that incorrectly were incarcerated,
16 including some people who subsequently were
17 released from what was called in the '70s the
18 Art Museum case. And that's a struggle that
19 goes on, after 30-some years.

20 We were also involved in community
21 policing program in the Franklinville/Hunting
22 Park area of North Philadelphia which some
23 people have said was a model for community
24 policing work that was done later.

25 I don't know if that's true or not,

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2 but it certainly was effective, in terms of
3 breaking up a very serious problem of
4 violence in gang-related drug dealing in our
5 community in the '80s.

6 And we continue to try to work with
7 people that on the one hand we fuss about
8 when they're causing damage to our community,
9 and on the other hand that we try to do some
10 work with and support when they come back to
11 our community.

12 Our position is, as mentioned in the
13 paper that we have handed out, that, first of
14 all, that we think it is important that we
15 strengthen that voice that recognizes the
16 value of all of God's creation and all human
17 beings.

18 But specifically, we realize that in
19 our community, in Eastern North Philadelphia
20 specifically, there's a tremendous need to
21 strengthen relationship between our
22 neighborhood, our people, and the criminal
23 justice system; that is, that we're not
24 taking advantage of some of the resources
25 that are available.

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2 We do not have some of the dialogue,
3 are not carrying out some of the dialogue
4 that is important to us, and that we need to
5 work at that even harder than we have been.

6 We appreciate the fact that the
7 Prison System is reaching out to us. We've
8 been able to work with the Office of
9 Community Justice.

10 Mr. Rojas, again, has spent a lot of
11 time with folks in our community, with
12 individuals and organizations in our
13 community. And that's an important effort.

14 And our community needs to respond.
15 And we're trying to respond in kind by
16 building on that relationship and improving
17 the relationship that we have with the entire
18 criminal justice system.

19 And the third position, third point
20 under that section on position, is that we
21 want to put on the record today -- and it's
22 very important that it be on record -- that
23 resources for re-entry include programs,
24 support and relationships with people that
25 have limited English proficiency, that fall

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2 under the category of Act 6 as declared by
3 the Mayor of Philadelphia, where resources
4 would be available in that category.

5 We specifically are speaking about
6 folks whose primary language is Spanish.
7 There is a high percentage of folks -- We
8 talk about needs. There is a high percentage
9 of folks in our system who are Latino, who
10 out of that percentage two years ago was a
11 little over ten, almost eleven percent of our
12 inmates that were identified as Latino.

13 We do not know the percentage of
14 those folks that speak only Spanish. And
15 there's a continuum, in terms of language
16 skills.

17 But we recognize, first of all, that
18 there's a need to make sure that resources
19 are available to people that have the limited
20 English proficiency, whose major language is
21 Spanish.

22 And we believe that it's also
23 important that some of the relationships be
24 built in a way that respects some of the
25 cultural values of our community, of the

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2 Latino community, and of the North
3 Philadelphia community which has a variety of
4 cultures, but which has also a community
5 culture that is important.

6 The other... There's a number of
7 statistics that don't need restated, but as
8 you all know, too many of our kids are going
9 to jail, getting caught up in the system.

10 And we need to find ways to prevent
11 that from happening. And that's part of the
12 response that we see that we have to make as
13 a community and as a community-based
14 organization.

15 We have in the documents that we are
16 submitting a presentation for a program.
17 We're trying to secure funding from the
18 Hendricks Jackson settlement, forward with
19 people that are coming back to our community,
20 and work that would be accessible to people
21 that have limited English proficiency.

22 And it's pretty general, the same
23 thing that most folks would do, except for
24 two items that I wanted to mention.

25 One is that we feel it's important.

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2 And again, it's part of building
3 relationships with the system and within our
4 community, that it's important to identify
5 leaders. And we would intend to look for
6 leadership among the folks that are coming to
7 us from the institutions.

8 We work now with a Latino inmate
9 group in a state institution in Graterford
10 which is actually one of the best-run
11 organizations that we work with anywhere in
12 Southeastern Pennsylvania.

13 And we have hopes that similar kinds
14 of organizations can be done with leadership
15 among ex-inmates.

16 In addition to that, we found in our
17 work with young people, that a knowledge of
18 Latino history and culture is an important
19 tool for people to establish themselves and
20 to establish self respect and to seek
21 dignity, their self worth and their dignity
22 as a value. And we want to make that part of
23 our program that is available -- part of a
24 presentation that is available to people that
25 come to us that come back to our community.

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2 So, in addition to working on jobs
3 and housing, that's part of what we hope to
4 do as a program.

5 So, part of it is our presentation
6 is to say there's a need -- And I hope the
7 Council and the folks in the Prison System
8 keep in mind the need to work with people who
9 have limited English proficiency, the need to
10 develop stronger relationships with our
11 community.

12 And then obviously we're making a
13 pitch for our own organization, Centro Pedro
14 Claver.

15 In the documents that are handed out
16 are two statements, one by a gentleman named
17 Garcia, Jorge Garcia, who, when he came out
18 of jail, went into a halfway house.

19 Fussed with the people in the
20 halfway house because of some of the
21 restrictions, but in the end realized that
22 they were helpful to him.

23 And he's been able to get back with
24 his family. He's been able to find work.
25 He's been able to be a positive member of our

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2 community. And he gives credit to the fact
3 that people were there to help him when he
4 came out.

5 There's also a statement from a Mr.
6 Rivera, Javier Rivera, who still has not
7 found work, and who has pretty much been
8 going it alone. Those statements are on
9 record and we'll leave you with them.

10 They represent, I think, the kind of
11 continuum that people find themselves in,
12 coming back to our community.

13 Thank you.

14 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Are those
15 statements a part of your testimony?

16 MR. ZEPERNICK: Yes, they are.
17 They're in the back of the testimony.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

19 I just have a question. And just
20 listening to you testify, do you work with
21 female offenders also?

22 MR. ZEPERNICK: We do not have an
23 offenders -- an ex-offenders program at this
24 time, but there are people from our
25 neighborhood that come to us, to our

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2 organization.

3 We're a community-based organization
4 mainly doing housing counseling, community
5 improvement projects, and a variety of
6 programs with youth.

7 But because of being in that
8 neighborhood, there are constantly folks
9 coming to us, including females, but we do
10 not have a program per se.

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Like you do at
12 Graterford, you don't have one at Muncy or...

13 MR. ZEPERNICK: No. No.

14 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

15 MR. ZEPERNICK: Graterford is about
16 all we can handle.

17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.
18 Everybody comes up here saying "he." And I
19 was just wondering what was happening with
20 the females.

21 MR. ZEPERNICK: No; we put that on
22 our agenda, Muncy. And for a while we were
23 working with some people in New Jersey. But
24 we just don't have the resources to do it.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

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2 MR. ZEPERNICK: We do have a
3 program. We have a series of programs about
4 history, culture, the history of North
5 Philadelphia, various issues that we'd like
6 to take, and that the folks in Graterford
7 have said have been helpful.

8 But we just don't have the resources
9 to go further at this point. You can help us
10 with that, maybe.

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All right.
12 That's something we have to help you with.

13 All right. Thank you.

14 MS. RADDOCK: Good afternoon,
15 Councilwoman Miller.

16 My name is Deborah Raddock, and I am
17 the Director of the O.P.T.I.O.N.S. program at
18 the Philadelphia Prisons which is the prison
19 alcohol and other drugs treatment program.

20 And I want to thank you so much for
21 having these hearings, and also for
22 mentioning about the women's issues because
23 when I first started in 1972, we had 35 women
24 in the prison.

25 And when we wanted to open a program

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2 for women, we were told, well, women are a
3 minority.

4 Well, now we have 800 women. So
5 sometimes it's important to look at those
6 issues and see what could have been
7 prevented.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's right.

9 MS. RADDOCK: As I said, I came to
10 the prison in 1972.

11 And in 1973, I was privileged to
12 open the system's first therapeutic
13 community, which we opened with 20 men at the
14 House of Correction.

15 And now in 2000... is it '5? 2005,
16 the O.P.T.I.O.N.S. program treats close to
17 900 men and women every month. So, we've
18 come a long way.

19 In my testimony today, I wanted to
20 touch on a couple of things, some of them
21 from a professional standpoint and some of
22 them a very personal standpoint because I
23 feel very passionately about the programs and
24 services that we deliver behind the walls.

25 First I want to say that jails in

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2 themselves don't interrupt the behavior or
3 the thinking that the people, the men and
4 women, behind the walls came in with.

5 Because it's the way that their
6 values are. It's the way the priorities are.
7 It's their coping skills.

8 They come not because of one crime,
9 but they come with multiple levels of burden
10 in most instances. They come with multiple
11 levels of burden that have built up over the
12 years.

13 And it's important for us -- For
14 those of us that may not understand, there's
15 a real difference between someone that's in a
16 jail and somebody that's in a prison, because
17 someone that's in the state prison is going
18 to be there for a longer amount of time, and
19 they're going to be able to start and finish
20 treatment, as opposed to people who are in
21 the jail system.

22 So, when they come into our system
23 and we do have the ability to work with them,
24 our mission in programs and services needs to
25 be interrupted their lifestyle and all the

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2 things that were included in their lifestyle,
3 and then not just interrupt that but redirect
4 people.

5 Because believe it or not -- and
6 I've looked at grown men and women's faces in
7 the prisons over the years. And they've
8 said, Oh, Miss Raddock, you look like you
9 think I should know this.

10 And then I realize, yes, because of
11 their chronological age, that they should
12 know certain things that all of us take for
13 granted.

14 And they don't always know.

15 They may be able to say to you, I
16 know I need a job. I know I need to take
17 care of my family, but when it comes back
18 down to the actual steps of doing that, they
19 may be clueless.

20 And that's not everybody. And I
21 don't want to generalize about everybody
22 behind the walls, but it's many, many of the
23 people that we work with because of what
24 they've been doing, what's been happening in
25 their lives.

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2 And so, I really think it's
3 important -- We've talked a lot about the
4 services that are on the outside. And I
5 think it's very important for us to look at
6 that re-entry or return begins very early in
7 the incarceration process.

8 And so, it's very important for us
9 to deliver these services and continue to
10 deliver these services behind the walls,
11 getting men and women ready to return and go
12 beyond the walls.

13 And to do that in partnership with
14 many of the people that are here today and
15 many others is really important because, as I
16 said, we have a short time. And we can
17 accelerate the treatment.

18 We do know ways of doing that. And
19 we need to improve some of the ways that
20 we're doing treatment behind the walls.

21 And then we can, in partnership with
22 all these re-entry partners that want to come
23 in, these volunteers and other associations,
24 we can link and hand over our men and women
25 to their care, because it really does take a

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2 network.

3 For most folks behind the walls it's
4 going to take a network to help them to go
5 out and stay out. And that's another thing,
6 in terms of keeping a realistic expectation.

7 My expertise is in alcohol and other
8 drugs. Recovery... We say that relapse is
9 part of recovery. It's not necessarily a
10 requirement, but it can be expected.

11 And so we know when we're trying to
12 change our behavior how many times we might
13 relapse. Every Sunday night, if you want
14 to -- You know, you're going to stop smoking;
15 you're going to, you know, watch your budget;
16 you're going to take your diabetes
17 medication; and you're going to exercise,
18 whatever it is you're going to do. We know
19 how many Monday mornings we haven't followed
20 up for ourselves.

21 So, unfortunately, when the men and
22 women behind the bars slip, they're slipping
23 into also behavior that has illegal -- that
24 has legal consequences.

25 So I think that we need to also be

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2 realistic about that recidivism is not always
3 complete failure because I think our
4 clients -- I call them clients -- I believe
5 that my clients, you know, learn failure, if
6 they learn nothing else.

7 And they feel so overwhelmed. And
8 I'm not saying... I don't take away any
9 responsibility, nor do I condone any behavior
10 that they engage in that hurts other people.

11 But it does take... It takes -- We
12 have to help them have the fortitude, and the
13 information, and the skills to go out and do
14 things differently.

15 Because we say we know they need
16 jobs, they need housing, they need this and
17 that, they're feeling so overwhelmed.

18 And if they can take small steps,
19 they feel very encouraged. Often I think
20 that -- I know personally I've seen a man or
21 woman behind the walls, and I've seen all
22 these, as I said, levels of burden. And I've
23 translated that to them, and apparently put
24 them in more of a panic than they were before
25 they've seen me, you know, because I'm

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2 saying, are your needs this, are your needs
3 this, that?

4 But there can be very small steps
5 that they can take that can be incremental.
6 And just as relapse can be progressive, so
7 can recovery. So, I think it's just
8 important to understand that.

9 And then just to put -- just to put
10 a face on some of the people that are in the
11 prison. And we were discussing this morning
12 before we came here some of the success
13 cases.

14 And you had brought up the PhilaCor
15 department. And Mr. Freedman had shared with
16 us that he had an inmate in the PhilaCor
17 program who then went on to work release.

18 And then, when he was released into
19 the community from work release, Mr. Freedman
20 hired him, and now he works in the prison as
21 a prison staff member.

22 We also have several -- And it's
23 wonderful. We also have several social
24 workers who were behind the walls. Some were
25 in our programs. Some were in other programs

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2 when they left. And now they are back as
3 social workers with M.S.W.'s which I think is
4 incredible. And they're inspirations and
5 they're role models.

6 And we also have people who came
7 from very, very dysfunctional families, where
8 everybody was involved in criminal behavior
9 and addiction behavior.

10 And they did horrendous crimes. But
11 they owned what they did, decided to make a
12 change, took advantage of every opportunity.
13 And they -- You know, for one in particular I
14 think about who's working, he's managing a
15 stop-and-go. And it's like awesome because
16 he probably never envisioned himself, you
17 know.

18 If you're sitting in a room in the
19 prison, and you're talking to people and
20 you're getting a lot of blank stares. And
21 you may say, okay. Wait a minute, how many
22 of you think that you can make it?

23 And you may not have anybody raise
24 their hand at that point because they've been
25 told or they've failed or they've experienced

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2 or they feel that they have such a stigma now
3 that there's no way that they can be
4 accepted.

5 So, all the people that come in for
6 re-entry and the staff that works behind the
7 walls delivering programs and services does
8 give hope, they give direction, they give
9 criticism which is fine, and they give
10 opportunity.

11 And I guess I'm very optimistic,
12 even though 34 years ago I was determined
13 that we wouldn't -- you know, we could close
14 the jails up. And we only had 3,000 people
15 in there then.

16 And, you know, 34 years later I'm
17 still feeling as though this is a great
18 conversation, and if we really follow up on
19 it, that we can have not too far in the
20 future a conversation about what to do with
21 all that beautiful real estate up on State
22 Road because we won't need to house the
23 people in the jails there.

24 So I want to thank you for
25 listening. And I do have a prepared

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2 statement that I deviated from which you may
3 have because I e-mailed.

4 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: You know,
5 actually, I don't have a copy of your
6 statement.

7 MS. RADDOCK: Oh. Okay.
8 I have to get you a clean one
9 because I scribbled all over this.

10 And I wanted also to give you this,
11 as some of the voice of the men and women who
12 are behind the walls, and what they see as
13 their problems and what they see as the
14 solutions.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. That's
16 great.

17 MS. RADDOCK: So, thank you.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: All right.
19 Thank you. Thank you for coming in. Thank
20 both of you for coming in.

21 So we have Byron Cotter, and...
22 What is your name, sir? Do you want to come
23 up to the table? I didn't get your name.
24 From Employment Training and Referral
25 Associates.

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2 Mustaffa Bradford. Come on up.

3 Well, you can wait, if you want to or you can
4 just sit in one of these side chairs here
5 because we only have two microphones. You
6 can pull your chair up and we can... at some
7 point you can just share the mike.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good
9 afternoon. Thank you for coming.

10 State your name, and don't forget to
11 speak in the mike.

12 MR. COTTER: Good afternoon. My
13 name is Byron Cotter. I'm Director of
14 Alternative Sentencing at the Defender
15 Association.

16 With me today is Kate Kochimonte
17 (phonetic), who's an attorney who works for
18 the Defender Association, and heads up our
19 Intermediate Punishment Unit.

20 I've submitted written testimony,
21 plus additional supplemental testimony. The
22 additional supplemental testimony may answer
23 some of your questions about success rates.

24 My function at the Defender
25 Association is to review sentenced inmates in

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2 the county prison and file early parole
3 petitions.

4 In 2004 I filed 2,731 petitions, and
5 I was 81 percent successful. The judiciary
6 granted 81 percent of those petitions.

7 In order to prepare these petitions
8 for early parole, I reviewed the client's
9 history, prison social worker reports,
10 Defender social worker reports, probation
11 officers' reports, and information from the
12 clients families.

13 And then I try to put together a
14 parole program which the District Attorney's
15 Office and the courts will agree to. As I
16 stated, I'm 81 percent successful with those
17 petitions.

18 These petitions are extremely
19 important because they reduce overcrowding,
20 and they prevent recidivism, and they save
21 millions of dollars in prison costs.

22 In fact, 50 percent of the petitions
23 that I file were to drug and alcohol and
24 psychiatric programs.

25 We did a study to find out the

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2 success rate. 66 percent -- There was a 66
3 percent decrease in convictions over the
4 first two years for the clients that went
5 into these programs, even though they were
6 early parole.

7 There's certainly a need for more
8 housing, for more employment, and especially
9 for more mental health housing. Often
10 clients with mental health problems are not
11 paroled, do their maximum sentence merely
12 because there's no facility that will take
13 them.

14 I work with many groups to
15 accomplish preparing early parole plans, the
16 Philadelphia Consensus Group for Re-entry,
17 Philadelphia Prison Re-entry Group, the
18 F.I.R. programs, the R.E.S.T. group,
19 Ready4Work, Prison J.O.B.S. Project, the
20 Prison Work Release Program, Impact Services,
21 the Prison Society, the Prison O.P.T.I.O.N.S.
22 Program, run by Deborah Raddock who just
23 testified, and the Career Link Program.

24 I try to coordinate all these
25 programs and come up with a rational,

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2 successful early parole program.

3 We also look at clients before
4 they're sentenced. And Miss Kochimonte is
5 going to speak about that.

6 MS. KOCHIMONTE: Good afternoon,
7 Councilwoman.

8 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good afternoon

9 MS. KOCHIMONTE: My name is
10 Katherine Kochimonte. I'm an attorney at the
11 Defender Association.

12 I've been an attorney there for
13 about ten years. I currently head up the
14 Intermediate Punishment Unit, under Byron
15 Cotter's Alternative Sentencing Unit.

16 The Intermediate Punishment Statute
17 which was started in 1995 by the state
18 designates certain clients for pre-trial
19 sentencing to either house arrest and
20 treatment or direct sentencing to treatment
21 programs.

22 The unique thing with the
23 intermediate punishment sentence in
24 Philadelphia County is the working together
25 of all the parties.

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2 We currently work with the District
3 Attorney's Office, the Philadelphia Health
4 Management Corporation, the Probation
5 Department. And we all come up with a
6 solution for the client that will involve
7 house arrest and/or treatment.

8 You had a question earlier as to
9 when people are released from county custody,
10 are they set up with anything and do they go
11 anywhere?

12 With the Intermediate Punishment
13 Program, they're actually sentenced to either
14 house arrest or the treatment program.

15 If they get inpatient treatment
16 programs, the sheriff actually transports
17 them directly to the program.

18 If they receive a house arrest
19 sentence through intermediate punishment, the
20 Probation Department transports them to
21 either house arrest at a recovery house or
22 house arrest at their home.

23 And they are given detailed
24 information, their case manager's name from
25 Philadelphia Health Management Corporation,

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2 as well as their probation officer's name
3 through the Probation Department, and actual
4 paperwork as to what is expected of them for
5 the program.

6 Each program, 50-plus programs, that
7 we use in Philadelphia County through the
8 F.I.R. network has specific guidelines,
9 specific rules. And those are given to the
10 inmates prior to them being released. And it
11 seems to be working very well at this point.

12 One of the positive things that
13 we've done in the last three years is we've
14 come up with case conferences, where we
15 follow the clients after sentencing.

16 About 30 to 60 days after they're
17 sentenced, they are set up with a case
18 conference. That is a meeting between the
19 District Attorney's Office representative,
20 myself from the Defender Association, as well
21 as the case manager and the probation
22 officer.

23 We meet with the clients in a group,
24 and we give a presentation to them as to how
25 they're doing and what should be expected of

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2 them.

3 In addition, it's an open session
4 for them. It's a chance for them to ask
5 questions about what is going on with their
6 treatment, how they are doing with their
7 recovery, do they have any issues.

8 And it seems to be going very well.
9 And we've been doing that for about three
10 years.

11 MR. COTTER: To sum up, we review
12 clients after they're sentenced and before
13 they go to trial, to try to come up with an
14 alternative program that prevents recidivism
15 and that saves the City millions of dollars
16 in prison costs.

17 Thank you very much for allowing us
18 to speak today.

19 MS. KOCHIMONTE: Thank you,
20 Councilwoman.

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Thank you.

22 Now, would people be referred to you
23 through drug court?

24 MS. KOCHIMONTE: Drug court's a
25 little -- Treatment court, do you mean,

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2 Councilwoman?

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Well, yes, I
4 guess.

5 MS. RADDOCK: Treatment court's a
6 portion of us. We are a little bit separate,
7 though. We work together with treatment
8 court.

9 There's another Defender who
10 targets, as well as I target some people for
11 the treatment court.

12 And we will work with the District
13 attorney from treatment court, to see if the
14 person is more eligible or more suited with
15 treatment court or intermediate punishment.

16 MR. COTTER: Treatment court is for
17 the less serious crimes.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

19 MR. COTTER: We deal with the
20 felony -- usually the felony charges.

21 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

22 MR. COTTER: We work closely
23 together with them.

24 MS. KOCHIMONTE: And many of our
25 offenders have prior records for the

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2 intermediate punishment.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. All
4 right.

5 Thank you. Thank you very much for
6 your testimony.

7 Now we'll have Mustaffa Bradford.
8 Somebody will accompany him.

9 MR. BRADFORD: I'd like to say good
10 morning, City Councilwoman.

11 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Good
12 afternoon.

13 MR. BRADFORD: Good afternoon. Yes.

14 My name is Mustaffa Bradford. I'm
15 President of Employment Training Referral
16 Services and Associates.

17 We work very diligently with the
18 Point Breeze Community Development Coalition
19 and the various organizations in that
20 particular community.

21 The issue of public safety is about
22 consideration in paroling ex-offenders being
23 released to the community and neighborhoods
24 in Philadelphia.

25 While consideration in safety is

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2 fundamental and a benefit to our children and
3 families and law-abiding citizens, the bigger
4 question is, what is to be done about the
5 issue of recidivism and rehabilitation of
6 ex-offenders returning home to the community?

7 How do we provide the means to aide
8 ex-offenders in the successful transition
9 through probation and parole? Is there a way
10 to reunite these men with their families?

11 An investment must be made to
12 rehabilitate, promote and sustain
13 ex-offenders to explore and re-define
14 themselves in the contributions that they can
15 make to society.

16 The men and women -- These men and
17 women have never been or never felt to be a
18 part of the mainstream of society, and
19 therefore have acted out of desperation and
20 the despair -- and the cycle of despair,
21 seeking the means to satisfy their unmet
22 needs.

23 The re-entry of ex-offenders is by
24 definition -- is to oppress and control the
25 movement of an outcast population.

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2 The City of Philadelphia attempts to
3 remove -- to resolve the issues of
4 ex-offenders is a -- as a specific economic
5 group, downtrodden and disenfranchised. We
6 have to uplift them and keep them -- the
7 promise of their American dream.

8 Contrary to the conventions
9 governing the criminal justice system in the
10 areas of philosophy, psychology and
11 punishment, these men and women have never
12 been welcome in the society, and have been
13 disenfranchised.

14 They -- They are for the less
15 expenditures dollar per dollar than newly
16 arrived immigrants coming to America.

17 The fact that there are... In fact,
18 they are candidates for a re-entry program
19 for formerly incarcerated persons who have
20 been imprisoned by a conflict of poverty,
21 despair, ignorance, and lack of
22 opportunities.

23 E.T.R.S.A. was founded on the
24 precepts that obstacles confronted by those
25 on welfare will ultimately encompass a

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2 pyramid of issues.

3 These issues includes but are not
4 limited to poor education, abuse, neglect,
5 child care, absentee fathers, and lack of
6 male mentors as role models, that are
7 challenged by social isolation that creates
8 dysfunctional family lives, in the
9 every-changing world of technology, economy
10 and opportunity.

11 Consequently, today's job markets
12 has greater demands on family resources than
13 ever before. Educational, employment and
14 career opportunities, as well as the ability
15 to sustain family life are all considered and
16 connected by the lack of self-motivation,
17 self-sufficiency, as it is characterized by
18 this population.

19 E.T.R.S.A. is committed to improving
20 the quality of life with a variety of
21 training components which will raise the
22 level of self-awareness related to the issue
23 of shared responsibility.

24 Our rationale for implementing such
25 specific employment and training programs,

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2 non-custodial support services, and parental
3 workshops serves to enhance the process and
4 raise the level of family financial and
5 social resources.

6 The issue of improving parenting
7 relations is in essence a commitment to
8 provide consistent financial support for
9 children and youth at risk are linked
10 relatively by the social economic standing of
11 their parent providers which these
12 ex-offenders represent.

13 Research cited in June 3, 2002
14 edition of the Daily News, released by the
15 Associated Press reports on a study, More
16 Cons Returning to Jail Than a Decade Ago, the
17 article highlights a study with the following
18 findings:

19 Within three years, 52 percent of
20 prisoners released in 1994 was back in
21 prison, either new lines [sic] of parole
22 violations for the earlier release.

23 Men were more likely to be
24 re-arrested than women, 68 percent to 58
25 percent. Blacks were more likely to be

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2 arrested again than whites, 73 percent to 64
3 percent.

4 Among prisoners with one arrest
5 prior to release, 41 percent were
6 re-arrested. Among those with more than 15
7 prior arrests, 82 percent were released in a
8 three-year period.

9 The article indicates that
10 ex-offenders face significant barriers with
11 regard to employment, namely, a lack of
12 education, training, certification and work
13 experience, in addition to social -- the
14 social stigma of criminal -- of a criminal
15 record.

16 The coalition that will operate to
17 provide program services and deliver goals
18 that are family centered with the extra
19 organization projects a course curriculum
20 [sic].

21 It is anticipated that extra in the
22 coalition can provide a effective way to
23 address and resolve consistent and chronic
24 barriers to achieving self sufficiency [sic].
25 Okay.

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2 In the report Legal Barriers to
3 Employment, authored by Allen Paken, Esquire,
4 Juris Doctorate of Law School, Widener
5 University, he states that ex-offenders will
6 encounter a myriad of legal barriers which
7 will make it extraordinarily difficult for
8 them to succeed in caring for their children.

9 Ex-offenders who must find work,
10 acquire safe housing, and assess public
11 benefits, to just name a few, are hit harder
12 with the reality that they are ill prepared
13 and stigmatized.

14 Addressing the legal barriers to
15 employment by ex-offenders is paramount in
16 their rehabilitation and success for
17 returning to the community.

18 In closing, Employment Training
19 Referral Services and Associates welcome the
20 opportunity to address City Council members,
21 and to continue a dialogue that will result
22 in the collaboration with the City of
23 Philadelphia and the Department of
24 Corrections, to develop a strategic plan for
25 effective and innovative re-entry programs.

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2 I thank you, the City Council.

3 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: We also would
4 like to thank you for coming in.

5 Do you do -- Your agency actually
6 does counseling for family reunification,
7 parenting issues, issues involving spouses,
8 et cetera?

9 MR. BRADFORD: We do a fatherhood
10 program where we counsel the individual
11 father to reunite, to reconnect with his
12 children.

13 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Mm-hmm.

14 MR. BRADFORD: We would like to
15 expand that, to include family counseling.
16 Given the dollars that it would take, we
17 don't have that capability at this time, but
18 we would like to be able to rise to that
19 level.

20 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. All
21 right.

22 Thank you. Thank you for coming in.

23 Mr. Austin and Hunt.

24 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. Good afternoon,
25 Councilwoman Reed-Miller.

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2 My is Lorell Austin. I'm the
3 President and C.E.O. of Austin Hunt
4 Consulting.

5 We work in collaboration with
6 E.T.R.S.A.

7 E.T.R.S.A. is a non-profit
8 organization. Austin Hunt is a private
9 corporation for profit.

10 We work with the ex-offenders, the
11 inmates six months before they are released
12 from prison, a job training readiness
13 program.

14 We're working in the State of
15 Delaware currently right now with the
16 Department of Labor and the Department of
17 Corrections.

18 We're working to develop contracts
19 here in the City of Philadelphia which is our
20 home.

21 Our capability information that you
22 have in front of you is basically a fact
23 sheet of some important issues that
24 ex-offenders need to know and need assistance
25 in and the transition back into society.

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2 Obviously it's housing. They need
3 some strategic planning, working with social
4 organizations on securing housing.

5 And our forte is employment. The
6 latter three pages that you have in our
7 capability statement breaks down a 6-week or
8 to a 12-week program -- I'm sorry -- It's six
9 weeks to a 12-month program, that will assist
10 them on the skills that are needed: Resume
11 writing, interview skills, conflict
12 resolution, skill assessments, developing a
13 marketing job strategy, introduction to role
14 playing, feedback, work force initiative,
15 research and opportunities, developing a work
16 strategy, dealing with customer service and
17 public relation issues, team building and
18 business loyalty, basic communication skills,
19 oral and in writing, interview skills,
20 techniques, job fairs.

21 We're working towards bringing a job
22 fair into the prison system. So, a month
23 before the ex-offenders or the inmates are
24 released, they will go through a thorough
25 training program, and we will invite

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05
2 prospective employers to come in and
3 interview them while they're incarcerated so
4 that they will know exactly what they're
5 getting.

6 At that time they'll be able to do a
7 background check on the prospective employer.
8 I'm sorry. The employer will be able to do a
9 background check on the prospective employee,
10 the ex-offender, so that when they are
11 released, they will know that they have a
12 strategic plan on where they're living, where
13 they're going to start employment.

14 And if the employer has any time
15 before they're released, they're able to
16 investigate and do all of their due diligence
17 at that time.

18 Our program is designed to help the
19 inmate, before they become ex-offenders, to
20 make a smooth transition back into society so
21 that we can cut the recidivism rate to as
22 minimal as possible. Our goal would like to
23 be 50 to 80 percent.

24 We're working with organizations.
25 We work currently with the A.M.E. throughout

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2 our Philadelphia area, and as I mentioned the
3 Department of Labor in the State of Delaware,
4 to work with the inmates so that when they
5 are released into society, they have a
6 strategy on how to secure gainful employment,
7 how to work with their community, and develop
8 ties back with their families.

9 What we see as far as support as
10 ex-offenders, there needs to be an
11 orientation for help as needed.

12 They need health insurance. They
13 need public assistance. They need to know
14 where they can go for public welfare, medical
15 assistance. And in all cases, if there is
16 needed, psychological help.

17 They need to have this information
18 readily at hand, so that they once they leave
19 the prison walls they have a support
20 mechanism that will give them the full
21 support so that they can be gainful -- so
22 that they can receive gainful employment and
23 be valuable citizens back into society.

24 We are encouraging them to follow
25 the probation officers' program, to make sure

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05
2 they report 24 hours once they are released.
3 That is mandatory to their parole.

4 A lot of the problems that
5 recidivism occurs is because the ex-offenders
6 do not follow the program. They do not
7 follow through on how the parole officer has
8 given them guidelines on what's needed for
9 them to be successful.

10 While they're incarcerated, Austin
11 Hunt Consulting and E.T.R.S.A. works with
12 them so that they're able to have successful
13 re-entry back into the community.

14 I'd like to appreciate -- thank you
15 for taking the time to listen to our
16 testimony.

17 We're bringing the private side to
18 the testimony.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's really
20 good. I mean, we need to hear the private
21 side.

22 How long have you been in
23 business --

24 MR. AUSTIN: Two years.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: -- and how

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05

2 successful have you been?

3 MR. AUSTIN: Two years in operation.

4 And as I mentioned, we are currently with the

5 State of Delaware which means we've been very

6 successful. We're working diligently to

7 secure contracts with the State of

8 Pennsylvania.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. And

10 have you ever had this mini job fair before?

11 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. We're

12 currently -- We've had a job fair in

13 Delaware. We're currently operating -- There

14 will be a job fair with the Department of

15 Labor March the 16th in the State of

16 Delaware.

17 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And only those

18 employers that already committed to hiring

19 ex-offenders will be invited, correct?

20 MR. AUSTIN: No. We are -- We

21 are -- It's currently -- We're looking for

22 all employers, but currently we have a track

23 record of a few employers who have hired

24 ex-offenders in the State of Delaware.

25 But, no. As far as we're concerned,

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2 every employer that's within the Delaware
3 Valley is an applicant for our clients.

4 MR. BRADFORD: Yes. And we continue
5 to develop relationships.

6 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay.

7 What do you think are some of the
8 barriers or misconceptions of employers? Why
9 are they so resistant to hire ex-offenders?

10 MR. BRADFORD: Well, you have
11 basically two types of employers. You have
12 the ones that will hire ex-offenders and who
13 are open to that. They tend to be maybe the
14 lower-paying jobs and labor related.

15 But we have an idea that we can
16 retrain these ex-offenders into skilled
17 positions, specifically into the construction
18 trades, where manpower is needed. And
19 whether you have a criminal record or not,
20 you know, they're more interested in the
21 skills.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: What about
23 females?

24 MR. AUSTIN: Yes. We handle both.

25 MR. BRADFORD: Yes. Yes.

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2 MR. AUSTIN: One of the key issues
3 that we are encouraging the inmates -- we
4 call them clients -- is the technology aspect
5 of it.

6 We're gearing them towards computer
7 programming, those who do not have computer
8 skills. There are prisons that have, quote,
9 labs that have computers. They are taking
10 computer classes.

11 We're trying to emphasize or bring
12 that aspect to the inmates or the
13 ex-offenders, so that when they come out
14 they're able to operate some basic office
15 equipment and things that they feel
16 comfortable with.

17 It's also the key issue with our
18 employers is making the employers feel
19 comfortable that you do have good quality,
20 hard-working individuals.

21 Once you've done your due diligence
22 and done the background check, yes, they have
23 served their time; but everyone deserves a
24 second chance.

25 And in some cases there are people

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2 who really were wrongfully committed. And
3 when they come back to work, they're no
4 different than your average employee.

5 As a matter of fact, they may be a
6 little better because they're a little more
7 focused. They understand that this is their
8 second shot, and that they need to take care
9 of their family and do their civic
10 responsibilities.

11 So, we're spending a lot of time
12 grooming the employers also. It's an
13 education for employers.

14 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: I'm sure. I
15 mean, we really have to work to help people
16 get livable wage positions, rather than those
17 positions --

18 MR. BRADFORD: Yes.

19 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: -- on a lower
20 scale.

21 MR. BRADFORD: Yes.

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: And I know a
23 half a loaf is better than nothing.

24 MR. BRADFORD: Nothing.

25 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: However, when

1 Res. 040816 - Public Safety - 2/7/05
2 you have a family, housing is not always so
3 affordable.

4 And I think now people that are
5 ex-offenders don't qualify for programs like
6 Section 8, and it just continues to create
7 barrier over barrier, layers of barriers.

8 Well, again, I want to thank you for
9 coming in. I know that these discussions
10 have been ongoing with many people. And
11 they're going to continue.

12 And I know you're based in
13 Philadelphia. Where are you based?

14 MR. AUSTIN: We're based in
15 Philadelphia also.

16 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Philadelphia.
17 Okay.

18 So I'm sure next week at these
19 hearings -- We're going to recess -- Has
20 everyone here had an opportunity to testify?

21 (No response.)

22 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Okay. Good.

23 We're going to recess these hearings
24 until Tuesday, February 15th, at 1:00 p.m.
25 next week.

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2 And we have many community groups
3 and other types of groups similar to yours
4 coming in to testify. And we're, you know,
5 again, we're looking at how can we make life
6 a little bit more easier for ex-offenders.
7 So I want to --

8 MR. BRADFORD: I hope so.

9 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Excuse me?

10 MR. BRADFORD: Yes. I say yes, you
11 know.

12 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: Right.

13 MR. BRADFORD: They represent our
14 brothers and our sisters.

15 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's right.

16 MR. BRADFORD: Our fathers and our
17 sons.

18 COUNCILWOMAN MILLER: That's right.

19 Okay. Thank you. Thank you very
20 much for coming in.

21 This hearing is now in recess until
22 Tuesday, February 15th at 1:00 p.m.

23 (Hearing concluded at 3:35 p.m.)

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CERTIFICATE

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the proceedings and evidence are contained fully and accurately in the stenographic notes taken by me upon the public hearing of The Philadelphia City Council, taken on February 7, 2005, and that this is a true and correct transcript of same.

DAVID A. DEIK, RPR and
Commissioner of Deeds

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