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# *Public Hearing*

before

ASSEMBLY FAMILY, WOMEN,  
AND CHILDREN'S SERVICES COMMITTEE

*"Addressing the needs of children of incarcerated parents"*

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**LOCATION:** Edna Mahan Correctional  
Facility for Women  
Clinton, New Jersey

**DATE:** March 21, 2002  
2:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEE PRESENT:**

Assemblywoman Mary T. Previte, Chairwoman  
Assemblyman Peter J. Barnes Jr.  
Assemblyman William D. Payne  
Assemblyman Alfred E. Steele  
Assemblywoman Rose Marie Heck



**ALSO PRESENT:**

Michele Leblanc  
*Office of Legislative Services  
Committee Aide*

Meredith Schalick  
*Assembly Majority  
Committee Aide*

Tasha M. Kersey  
*Assembly Republican  
Committee Aide*

*Hearing Recorded and Transcribed by*  
The Office of Legislative Services, Public Information Office,  
Hearing Unit, State House Annex, PO 068, Trenton, New Jersey

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**ASSEMBLYWOMAN MARY T. PREVITE (Chairwoman):**

Good afternoon, I'd like to welcome you to a forum sponsored by the New Jersey Assembly Committee on Family, Women, and Children's Issues (*sic*). I'd like to introduce some members of our Committee that are here today: Assemblyman Peter Barnes, who chairs the Assembly Committee on Law and Public Safety; Assemblyman Al Steele; Assemblyman William Payne, also a member of our Committee. And we will have others that will be coming in as they arrive.

I'd like to especially thank and welcome Charlotte Blackwell, who is the Administrator of the Edna Mahan Correctional Prison for Women (*sic*) here, who has so graciously, with Bill Hauck, her assistant, welcomed us to our event today. And I would like everyone to put their hands together and thank her. (audience claps)

I should let all of you know that I'm sort of back home in the sense that I am the only corrections professional in the New Jersey Legislature. I am the Administrator of the Camden County Youth Center, where I am mother to about 1600 juvenile delinquents that enter my doors every year. And Charlotte, I cannot tell you how thrilled I am to bring people to spotlight your facility today so that people come in from the outside and see the wonderful things that we do with the difficult clients that become our challenge every single day. So, thank you so much for giving this opportunity.

And I would just like to see the wonderful range of people that have responded to attend today. Would you raise your hand if you are a corrections professional? Put your hand up so we can see -- is that adult corrections?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (speaking from audience) Yes, ma'am.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Okay.

And how many are juvenile justice or juvenile? (audience members raise their hands) Excellent.

How about houses of faith? (audience members raise their hands) Excellent. A goodly turn around there.

How about Department of Human Services? (audience members raise their hands) Excellent.

What am I missing, Peter?

ASSEMBLYMAN BARNES: It looks like you covered everything, Mary.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: School-based social services? (audience members raise their hands) Oh, we got quite a few from schools.

Treatment programs?

Now, what have I missed from all of this range?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: (speaking from audience) Community-based organizations.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: What did he --

ASSEMBLYMAN STEELE: Say community-based organizations.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Community-based organizations? (audience members raise their hands) Oh, a good turnout.

Well, let me say, before we get started, that we expect this to be the beginning point of an activist effort to reach out and touch the lives of children whose parents are incarcerated. So, this will be a beginning point

today. And we will be following up with, possibly, legislation or establishment of liaisons with the Department of Human Services, Corrections, faith-based groups to reach out into the community to make a difference in the lives of these youngsters today. So, this is not a one shot deal, be assured of that.

I sat next to a teenager yesterday in my center. We were working on our student newspaper, which you have. You should understand that I used to be an English and Journalism teacher, and I produced this Camden County Youth Center student newspaper called *What's Happening!*, with the teenagers, so that I can keep my finger on their pulse. And the youngster sitting next to me said, "I was seven years old the day that the bounty hunters came and went upstairs in my house, snatched my mom, brought her down in handcuffs, and walked her out the door. And they held me till they could get my mom out the door." And he said, "I did not see my mom again till I was five -- five years after that."

I relate to that. I was snatched and separated from my father and mother for five and a half years during World War II and did not see them. And I can testify that the absence of a father and mother in the life of a child is a life changing experience. And that is why we are here today.

Incarceration is a family matter. Experts tell us that having a parent behind bars is the single largest factor in the making of juvenile delinquents and adult criminals. Children whose parents are locked up are likely to be jailed themselves.

In America today, half of jailed youth have a parent who has been locked up too. The problem is huge. Estimates say that some two million children have parents who are incarcerated. Another five million have parents

who have been incarcerated and are now in probation or parole. By every measure, these children of prisoners are the most severely at risk youth in America today. Many will spend their childhoods in foster homes, with aging parents or with relatives or friends. They often bounce from one short-term caregiver to another. They are at risk of abuse and neglect, illiteracy, drug and alcohol abuse, teenage parenthood, crime, violence, incarceration, and premature death.

In the child welfare system, as many as 90 percent of the children stuck in foster care have a parent who has been arrested or incarcerated. Someone has called it the largest separation of families since slavery. With America's war on drugs, the number of women in prison has tripled in the last decade. Two-thirds of these women in prison have children under the age of 18. A majority of these children are younger than 10 years old. So, America's mandatory sentences, particularly for nonviolent drug offenses, have had the unintended consequence of locking millions of children into troublesome lives.

This nation cannot afford, either economically or in terms of human costs, to ignore the fact that the very criminal justice policies we've enacted to address one set of social problems are creating another set of problems that place the children of inmates at risk for becoming the next generation of criminals.

Parental abandonment, whether voluntary or enforced by the courts, exact a high price. It shatters relationships. It damages souls. It makes children unable to connect with love or to trust the world around them.

This forum will look at these issues. Our experts today will tell us about the promising efforts to focus on these children and to address their problems. And we will use this forum as a springboard of action.

Our first guest is going to be Charlotte Blackwell, who is the Administrator here at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility. And I know you can just recognize from the look of the place that she has created a model program for, today, about 1200 women who are inmates here. We thank you, Charlotte, and we welcome hearing from you.

**CHARLOTTE BLACKWELL:** Well, thank you very much.

As an initial point, I would like to personally extend my welcome to the Assembly Committee members today, as well as the special guests and interested parties for their attendance at the meeting. I would also like to identify the interest and support of the Department of Corrections, as evidenced by the attendance of other administrators, corrections staff, Director Plantier, and also by the representation of my Board of Trustees members, Nancy Fitzgibbons and Stephen Domovich.

Those in attendance today, regardless of the areas from which they come from, represent diverse groups of interest, as well as agencies and organizations interested in the welfare of children.

I would, however, out of a sense of pride, identify, for a moment, to the Committee some of the historical perspective of this particular facility that has been chosen to hold this meeting. As most you're aware, this facility represents the only facility for State sentenced female offenders. And on that basis, it serves as the reception and intake facility from the County jurisdictions.

Founded in 1913, it was a direct result to the 19th century's Women Reformatory Movement. By the end of the 19th century, this Movement had challenged the picture of depravity that was painted of the female offender and identified that women could not be redeemed in men's prisons. They called for separate facilities for women.

In 1903, a Commissioner was appointed by Governor Murphy as an outreach and outgrowth of the National Prison Congress of 1870 to study the need for a reformatory for women. And in 1910, the Legislature passed an act to establish a State reformatory for women within New Jersey. Twenty thousand dollars was allocated for this purpose in 1911. It was certainly less than what was asked for and expected to establish a reformatory, but did allow for the purchase of over 300 acres on a rural farm in Clinton.

In addition to their concept of a rural community serving to instill a sense of moral character in the women, the area was originally selected for its moderate climate, implementing farming and, to an extent, economic independence, as well as access to rail transportation.

When opened in January, 1913, there were four staff, three farm houses plus barns and small outbuildings. The larger of the two farmhouses was renovated to accommodate 24 inmates plus staff. Original cottage-style housing was intended to provide a room for every woman and to promote appropriate moral character in terms of homemaking skills with each inmate having a job assignment and each cottage, independent, in terms of having its own kitchen and dining space.

At the current time, we have a capacity of over 1100 inmates. There are currently 195 women in the county jail facilities waiting for bed

space at Edna Mahan. We have 14 housing units with various support buildings within 3 housing compounds. One of those units referenced is specific to those with special emotional and mental needs.

In reference to today's topic, there is no question of significant impact on the status of the family structure and the lives of children of the men and women in New Jersey correctional facilities. I would estimate that a significant number of those in the juvenile justice system are young men and women who have experienced the loss of a parent to incarceration. We, in fact, have women whose mothers were incarcerated here, and, of recent note, one who was born here during her mother's term at Edna Mahan.

Information reported through various studies identifies the fact that while the female offender comprises a small proportion of any state's incarceration population, the rate of her incarceration has increased at a rate surpassing that of the male offender.

An informal study conducted at Edna Mahan, which was self-reported in 1999 with 1100 inmates being received, identified that 80 percent of the women, of that 1100 received that year, had children upon their admission. Thirty-five percent of them recorded having more than three children. A Bureau of Justice statistics special report that was issued in August of 2000, identified that 64.3 percent of female inmates who were parents lived with their children prior to admission, versus 43.8 percent of the male population. Males reported that in 89.6 percent of the cases of their children, they lived with the other parent. Only 28 percent of the women made that same report of their child living with another parent. It is clear that a definite void exists in the lives of children when parents are incarcerated, but with the

increase in the female rate of incarceration, the numbers of children affected would stand to be similarly affected.

Administrators of correctional facilities cannot directly impact on the issues faced by these children on a daily, monthly, and yearly basis. We do, however, face the issues of the inmates who are parents, which impact on their ability to adjust within the correctional environment and to a great extent on their ability to transition into the community in a constructive and productive manner.

We can, through programming, expose those in our custody to parenting programs and programs geared to promote independence, acceptance of responsibility, sound decision making, and self-esteem. We can further, through visitation programs and social servicing intervention, facilitate the maintenance of family ties. Incarcerated parents, who were the head of household or who had custody of their children, were not or are not necessarily good parents or know how to parent. All of us who are parents have experienced the times when we question our own judgment and how well we are doing with the rearing of our children.

The profile of a female offender identifies significantly more dramatic issues. They impact on her ability to parent. A higher percentage of women grew up without a full family structure and are likely to have grown up in a single parent household themselves. They have poor interpersonal relationships. Disproportionately from men, they have experienced more abuse, trauma, and violence in their lives.

Because females are more likely to be the principle caretaker of young children at the time of their arrest, children, in turn, are more likely to

go into state care if their mother is imprisoned. They have a lack of direction and goal setting and poor coping mechanisms. Self-management skills and problem solving skills are also weak. There are greater mental health issues involving the women, which include depression and anger management. Significant portions suffer with issues of addiction and addiction in conjunction with mental health conditions.

In terms of the offender and, most specifically, the female offender, recognition by the facility must be made of the needs of this unique population in terms of the programming and interaction provided. Mental health screening and services must be in-line with those identified as needed. The female population has different needs in terms of emotional dynamics and characteristics presented based on the past issues of violence in their lives. And intervention needs to take place and commence upon their intake into the institution.

Educational and vocational programming is significant in terms of interacting with this population who have an average sixth grade educational level. A majority has not been employed and has relied on social services programming in the community or criminal activity to support their addiction and their families. Life skills, inclusive of personal interactions, need to be addressed, as well as their attitude, their deportment, and their appropriate expectations of life.

Diversity in this program and in its skills training needs to be made available. While many are desirous of traditionally viewed female occupations, expectations should not be limited by a narrow scope of programming exposure. Programming offerings, in terms of addiction and

treatment, are essential. The majority of offenders are incarcerated for issues of addiction. And if not sentenced for illegal drug activity, support of their addiction is an additional need for the activity. Sentences for neglect are due, in many instances, to their addictive behavior when caring for their children.

Visitation programs intended to realistically meet the scheduling needs of the family in the community are significant. Due to the disproportionate numbers of male offenders, there is, in instances, only one female state facility in various states. Location is often distant from the county of residence prior to incarceration and limited in terms of public transportation. Based on the expansion of beds for the male offender, newly designed facilities often reflect more innovative design to facilitate training or educational opportunities, as well as treatment, recreation, counseling, and visitation space. Administrators of female facilities are often faced with more limited space opportunities for space by design that limits the programs to be offered in-line with the transit community.

Assessing community services and volunteers provides a valid administrative resource in terms of program offerings and expanded hours of offerings. And it's one that I am most grateful for. Additionally, such individuals, based on the nature of their interest -- that they come voluntarily with their enthusiasm -- they provide new role models and sources of insight for the women of this institution.

Parenting skills have to teach, coach, and counsel those who are mothers as to what realistic expectations and problem solving skills are. The importance of sharing a child's interest and in setting realistic goals and expectations is also discussed and covered with the women at this institution.

Many are parents who have never been exposed to positive parental role models themselves and have been involved in a cycle of having incarcerated parents.

Provision of programs to develop self-esteem and self-worth, as well as having recognition of a level of trust being placed in them, is extremely important and significant in their transitioning. A sense of accomplishment for activities is often limited but rewarding. For the women of this facility, voluntarily initiated donations to causes such as the March of Dimes, donating time to make cancer pillows, making blankets and winter apparel for a local women's crisis center are all short-term projects that bring great reward and self-respect to them.

Inclusive and long-term instances of learning to give of themselves are programs such as the Puppies Behind Bars, community service details, and tutoring of one another. While it may not be recognized by the women themselves, all of these are tools of nurturing and individual growth, as well as a repayment to our community.

Administrators recognize that transitional services and discharge planning are the avenues for the realistic reestablishment of the individuals' successful reentering to the community and establishment of family ties in the family unit. Unlike a significant portion of male offenders, the female has, in many cases, not had an intact family unit maintained during her incarceration. Children are placed with family members and, at times, separated amongst more than one. In other cases, foster care has been initiated, and the issue of parental rights is significant in their case.

Women, upon release, are faced with finding the economic resources for an employment, which is potentially, for them, the first time accessing agencies for Social Services, health care, and treatment providers, as well as living arrangements. A heightened concern is the resentment often faced from the family members and the children over the circumstances in which they have been placed during a woman's period of incarceration.

Community interest and church organizations have recently, through their awareness of the isolation of the child from the parent and the reunification process, been actively expressing their interest and willingness to help. With their membership, they have the resource of experience and expertise to provide varied services to the family unit. The provision of programs to these children, as a unit, eliminates a stigma yet provides daily normalized and productive growth activities in the community. Upon release, these same individuals can service a mentoring support and sponsoring source for the women as they transition.

In summation, today's administrator job is more challenging and broader in scope. All of us must take into consideration the necessary issues pertaining to the security of the facility, as well as the safety and well-being under their care and employ. However, within these parameters, they need to be creative in terms of utilization of resources, to meet the programmatic need of the offender and the transition through discharge planning into the community. The latter is the responsibility taken seriously, and we all seek access to initiatives and resources that are available to us.

I would stress, however, that in line with the increased special mental health and medical needs of the offender that is being released, relevant

transitional community-based programming needs to be increased in response to this need. Contacts with community-based agencies and resources are more difficult to find for this segment of the population, which is more difficult to service and more in need in order to retain appropriate community replacement and avoid reentry into the criminal justice system.

I've taken the liberty to provide the Committee with a listing of programs at this facility. And additionally of note is a recently issued report from the National Institute of Corrections pertaining to a national survey conducted on the assistance of families of inmates.

I thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Committee on behalf of the Department of Corrections and the women at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility.

Thank you. (audience applauds)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I'd like to recognize Assemblywoman Rose Heck, who has arrived.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you, Mary.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Thank you, Assemblywoman.

As you can see from our program, we've divided the afternoon into three separate parts. The first part is defining the problem. The second part is going to be programs for children, and we will be giving you an opportunity to ask questions when we have finished the section on programs for children who have parents who are incarcerated. So, if you would be preparing your thoughts and questions for our experts when we get to that. And then the last and third part of the program this afternoon will be programs for parents who are incarcerated and, of course, have children who are on the outside.

Our first guest speaker, as far as setting the programming in the research area, is Dr. Jane Siegel, who is an Assistant Professor at Rutgers University, who is in ongoing research right now on the issue of what is the impact. And there is very little research, so she is doing groundbreaking research as we speak. Dr. Siegel, we welcome you. (audience applauds)

**J A N E S I E G E L, Ph.D.:** Thank you very much, Assemblywoman Previte and members of the Committee. And thank you for inviting me to speak to you today about the children of prisoners, which, as you have already said and Ms. Blackwell as well, is a very significant problem for us.

And let me begin by noting that there are many important issues related to children of prisoners and those kinds of issues arise as soon as a parent is arrested, as you so movingly described by that one man who had told you about his experience. And it is at that point that, at least, temporary provisions must be made to care for the person's child.

The parents who are eventually incarcerated, longer term arrangements are then required and new issues present themselves such as visitation and other means of contact during the parent's incarceration; parental rights, which are particularly a concern for women offenders; interventions with children; support for the children's current caregivers; programs for parents; planning for reunification of a parent and child; and post incarceration services to the parent and children as the attempt to reestablish their family.

Time, unfortunately, does not permit a review of all of these issues. So, in the time allotted to me, I'm going to focus instead just on what is known about the impact of parental incarceration from a research point of view. I'd

like, first, to talk about the estimated number of children in New Jersey who have an incarcerated parent and, therefore, may be affected by this, and then discuss what research has found about the effect of parental imprisonment on children, and conclude by pointing out what remains to be learned about these children.

During my remarks, I will on occasion refer to my own research. I'm currently engaged in a study of children of female offenders, in which I am interviewing the children and their mothers, both before and after the mother is tried, in order to better understand what their lives are like before the mothers go to prison. Some of the mothers are sentenced to probation and some to prison, which will enable me to compare the impact of incarcerated sentences with non-incarcerated penalties on the children. And I should add that the research is in its earliest stages, and most of the women have not even yet been sentenced. However, as part of my investigation into the impact of parental incarceration, I have also spoken with children of prisoners in focus groups and also referred to findings from those discussions as I speak.

Turning first to the estimates of the size of the population affected by parental incarceration, we can look for guidance on this issue to the national estimates that have already been mentioned, which are based on the most recent survey of prisoners in this country, which is conducted by the United States Department of Justice. And that survey found that nearly two-thirds, or 65 percent, of women and more than half, 55 percent, of men held in state and Federal prisons were parents to minor children in 1999. At the national level, that meant that approximately 1.5 million children had a parent in prison. If we assume that the proportion of jail inmates who are parents is

similar, then approximately 700,000 more children would be included in that figure, bringing the total number of children affected by parental incarceration in a year to more than 2.2 million children, or approximately, 3 percent of the nation's minor children.

Of course, the racial distribution of this population of children is not that of the general population as would be expected. Due to the overrepresentation of African Americans in prison in this country, African American children are almost nine times more likely to have a parent in prison than white children. As a result, seven percent of minor African American children have a parent in prison compared to only eight tenths of one percent of white children. Hispanic children are three times as likely as whites to have a parent who is incarcerated.

I have used the national figures to estimate the number of children in New Jersey whose parents may be in prison or jail. According to the most recent figures available, approximately 46,700 men and women were incarcerated in New Jersey's prison and jails. Assuming that similar proportions of New Jersey inmates are parents to minor children, as is true nationwide, that means that slightly more than 51,700 children in the State had a parent either in prison or jail between June 1999 and December 2000. Of these, approximately 45 percent of them resided with that parent before their incarceration, meaning that more than half were living apart from the parent. This sizable number of children of prisoners should not be ignored, particularly if we know that parental incarceration has negative consequences for them. So, this forum is an important step in casting light on these issues.

Now, before discussing what's known about children of prisoners,

it's important to note some caveats, at the outset, from a researcher's point of view. The term children of prisoners, which is what everybody uses to refer to them as, suggests a homogeneity that does not exist, as though all offspring of prisoners are similarly situated. In fact, they are not and their experience of having their parents sent to prison or jail will vary as a function of those differences.

There are three quite basic areas of a child's situation that can affect their reaction to the separation from their parent. First is the gender of the imprisoned parent. Second is the living situation of the child and parent both before and during the parent's incarceration. And finally, there is the age of the child. And I would like to speak about each of those just briefly.

First, with respect to the gender of the imprisoned parent, children of women prisoners are much more likely to have been living with them before the women went to prison than are the children of male prisoners. Nationally, among inmates who are fathers, less than half, 34 percent, reported that their children were living with them prior to their incarceration, whereas 64 percent of incarcerated mothers reported that they were living with their children before their imprisonment. Thus, to the extent that the change in living situations that results from parental incarceration is a factor in any adverse consequences that the child experiences. Then, children of incarcerated mothers are at greater risk than children of incarcerated fathers.

In addition, it is possible that other's reactions to parental incarceration may vary depending on whether a child's mother or father goes to prison. A mother's imprisonment may be more humiliating and stigmatizing than a father's because it is much more rare. Conversations that

I've had with children of prisoners in my own research bare this out. Young children whose mothers are incarcerated routinely make up reasons for their mothers' absence to tell friends and school mates -- "My mother moved to California, my mother went away for work" -- something other than explaining that their mother, in fact, is in jail. They admit this is because they feel ashamed that their mothers are in prison. As one young boy said, "Moms don't go to jail." He then explained that it would be less shameful to have a father in prison because that is far more common and that there are several children in his school whose fathers are incarcerated, but none, or at least none who admit it, who have a mother in prison.

The economic impact of the family of a prisoner can also vary by gender. If the child is living in a two parent household where the father is the principle wage earner, and he is incarcerated, the family will suffer more adverse economic consequences than if the mother is incarcerated. Certainly, there is evidence that male imprisonment has severe financial consequences for women and the children they leave behind.

On the other hand, women who go to prison are often single parents not living with their children's father and were poor before they went to prison. In those cases, the financial situation of their children is one in which they are either dependent on the state or on the income of the person caring for them during the mother's absence.

One final area in which there is potential for differences, depending on whether the mother or father is incarcerated, is that of visitation. While most prisons are not easily accessible, especially by public transportation, visitation can be especially challenging for children of female

inmates because most states have so few prisons for women, and they are often located very far from the urban centers where a majority of offenders live. For instance, although I would wager that many of the women incarcerated here in Clinton are probably from Camden, there is no public transportation between Camden and Clinton. Children whose mothers are incarcerated here therefore have to rely on adults willing to transport them. And having just driven up, I can tell you, it's a very long drive from Camden to Clinton.

Although visitation can help mitigate some of the adverse consequences of parent-child separation, the relative isolation of women's prisons often prevents children and their mothers from enjoying the potential benefits that come from continued contact between them. Again, in my own research, several children have spoken of being able to visit their mothers only on rare occasions, some as infrequently as once a year.

On the other hand, since children usually must rely on their caregiver or another relative for transportation to the prison, children whose fathers are incarcerated may be prevented from seeing them because the mothers no longer have ongoing relationships with the fathers and have little desire to travel significant distances to see them. Whatever the reason for the obstacles to visitation, the effect is quite significant. Surveys of prisoners have found that half of male and female inmates reported never receiving visits from their children during their incarceration. Although some prisoners maintain that they choose not to have their children visit, the system certainly should do more to facilitate visitation for those that do want to see and maintain contact with their children.

Now, let me speak to the next issue that I said was the caveat and that's with respect to their pre-incarceration living arrangements. The living situation of the child will certainly have an effect on the degree to which the child might feel the impact of a parent's incarceration, at least from a purely material point of view. The effect that having a parent sent to prison will vary depending on whether the prisoner and child were living alone together, were already living apart, or were living with another relative who could care for the child after parental imprisonment such as an aunt, grandmother, wife, or husband.

Children in the first category, in other words, who are living alone just with their mother or father, will experience the most disruption in their physical living arrangement since they will more than likely be required to move and possibly to change schools as a result. And I should add here that most of the children, after their parent goes to prison, in fact, end up living with a relative. Only about 10 percent of them end up in foster care. In addition, these children who were living alone with their parent will have to become integrated into a new family arrangement and living situation, which is very difficult oftentimes.

Children in the second and third categories, those in other words who are already living apart from their parent or who were living with somebody else in their family, as well as with their parent, they by contrast have a much higher probability that they will be able to continue living in their current household, assuming the incarcerated parent did not provide the financial support needed to maintain their residence.

In all three cases, however, the child will still have to put up with the emotional and psychological consequences that may accompany their separation from the parent.

And last, with respect to the age of the child, parent-child separation will have differential affects on children with different ages. The developmental needs of an infant and their level of attachment to their parents are quite different from those of an eight year old or a sixteen year old. Furthermore, the demands of caring for children of different ages may make placement during parental incarceration more or less difficult, which in turn will effect the consequences of the parental incarceration for the child. And there is a whole host of different problems that arise that I don't have time to go into, depending on the age of the child. But, certainly, infants pose a special problem for women offenders in terms of allowing them the opportunity to remain with the children and have a chance to develop an attachment with them.

Now, having noted these caveats, let me turn now to what we know about the children of offenders. And as Assemblywoman Previte said, there has been relatively little research that's been done on the children, but there has been some that has taken place. Most of these are largely descriptive studies of families and children of prisoners, and they are based primarily on reports by the parents and caregivers. Virtually, no one has bothered to go and talk to the children themselves, which is what I'm trying to do in my own research.

These studies and others have reported that children of incarcerated parents appear to suffer a variety of negative psychological and

behavior consequences as a result of separation from their parent. Effects for many children can be as observed as early as the time when their parent is arrested. Some children are present at the time of the arrest, and observing that can be extremely traumatic for the child. Some researchers have noted that children who observe this event report at least short-term effects such as fearfulness, sadness, and sleep disturbances.

My own research also finds that children experience anxiety between the time of the parent's arrest and the parent's sentencing due to concern that their mother will eventually go to prison. The anxiety is heightened each time the mother goes to court, which in some cases can be several times, because the children worry each time that she will not come home. The extent to which this anxiety interferes with the child's functioning is unclear, but the anxiety is real and consistent.

Some of the mothers I have interviewed, who are awaiting trial, report that their children began having difficulties in school as soon as their mother's situation began. Similarly, guardians and teachers surveyed in several studies report that children of prisoners experience academic difficulties such as classroom behavior problems, truancy, and poor performance during a parent's incarceration. Other parents and guardians have reported that children appear to experience sadness, withdrawal, and other internalizing behaviors during the parent's imprisonment, as well as symptoms of traumatic stress.

Among the possible consequences, of most concern for both the children and society is the idea that children of prisoners are themselves placed at risk of delinquency because of their parent's incarceration. Several studies

based on interviews with parents or guardians indicate that children demonstrate conduct problems including aggressive behavior during the time their parent is incarcerated. Some have concluded that the children of prisoners are a very high risk of self-evolved intergenerational incarceration. Apparently, at least in part on the basis of statistics, showing that many delinquents have a relative who has been imprisoned.

And here I'll put on my researcher's hat and depart a little bit from the assumptions here about that. Although there is evidence that many juvenile delinquents have a relative who has a history of imprisonment, concluding on that basis alone that parental incarceration creates a risk for transmission of vulnerability to crime and subsequent imprisonment may be a fallacy.

Similar assumptions, for example, have been made about children who have experienced maltreatment. Many have asserted, on the basis of data from prisoners in which a substantial number report a history of child abuse, that child maltreatment causes delinquency and crime and that victims of child abuse almost inevitably end up as criminals. Longitudinal data however, which follows the children overtime, show that most children who are abused are, in fact, more resilient and, in fact, do not become criminals, even though they are at increased risk of criminality relative to non abused children. Thus, absent such longitudinal data on children of prisoners, which we currently do not have, we should not assume that they are somehow doomed to follow in their parent's footsteps.

The literature does provide evidence that children of criminals, as distinct from prisoners, are indeed at an increased risk of delinquency and that

criminal offending is strongly concentrated in families. But it is important to note that parental criminality is not as strong a predictor of a child's criminality as other family factors such as poor parental supervision, disharmony within the family, poor or inconsistent discipline practices, and parental rejection. What is less clear is what specific aspects of parental criminality may create this vulnerability. And what role, if any, the response of the criminal justice system to that criminality may play?

Thus, one of the most important questions that needs to be addressed is whether children whose parent has been imprisoned are at increased risk of delinquency relative to other children whose parents are criminal but not imprisoned, or if all children of criminals are at equal risk? In addition, it is important to investigate whether children of prisoners differ from other children who experience either parental separation for other reasons than incarceration or who experience the kinds of trauma common in the backgrounds of offender's children?

Almost none of the research to date has considered these factors, which means that it does not enable us to conclude that parental incarceration is the cause of the effects observed among children of prisoners. These questions are critically important because of what we know about the lives of offenders and therefore can surmise about the backgrounds of the children. We know that many are growing up in environments that put them at risk of involvement in the sort of life events such as school dropout, teen pregnancy, and delinquency that can make it harder to have a productive, more comfortable adult life.

What are the characteristics of these environments? First, the majority of offenders are from low socioeconomic status backgrounds, which means that children of offenders are living near or below the poverty level. Many of their parents, as Ms. Blackwell as already pointed out, have serious substance abuse problems, which can affect the quality of parenting, which in turn will be the mechanism that puts the children at risk. Many are exposed to violence both within their own households and in their communities. Most female offenders report a history of violent victimization, at least some of which the children are exposed to. Many male offenders are perpetrators of domestic violence, which the children may have witnessed as well.

Children in my research routinely talk about the amount of violence in their neighborhoods. It may be that these factors, common to children of many offenders, whether in prison or not, account for some of the negative outcomes observed in the children of prisoners.

Nevertheless, having said that, having a parent in prison differs in significant ways from living with an offender. First, of course, is the issue of parent-child separation. Such separation has potentially different impacts at each developmental stage of a child's life, but it is never unimportant. Second, is the issue of stigma that is attached to having a parent in prison which can have negative consequences for the child. Third are material and practical consequences that may ensue and that I have already mentioned.

Having noted the potentially adverse consequences of parental imprisonment for their children, we should ask, what can be done to address these issues? And I know we're going to hear more about this from the providers this afternoon. First, as you might expect to hear from a researcher,

there is a critical need for solid research on the impact of parental incarceration on children. Such research should look at various measures of the impact, both behavioral and psychological, which should follow the children overtime and it should compare them to similar children whose parents are not in prison. And I'm happy to report that that is exactly what I plan to do if I can get the funding for it.

Second, we should assess the extent of the need for supportive programs and determine what services exist in the state for the children, their parents, and their caregivers, beginning with law enforcement policies that address how to deal with children at the time a person is arrested and including practices of child protection service agencies with respect to promoting contact between children and their parents and helping them to plan for reunification.

Programs and services in correctional facilities are of special importance. Facilitating and encouraging visitation can be beneficial to the children and parents. Providing programs that would help prevent recidivism is especially important so the children do not have to experience the repeated trauma associated with the parent going to prison. There are several programs and services in use throughout the country and locally that can serve with models for many of these needs. Although I should point out, again, that there is a dearth of evaluation on the efficacy of such programs.

Finally, a critically important matter of public policy to consider involves our sentencing practices. The last two decades have seen unprecedented growth in the prison population with the concomitant increase in the number of children experiencing parental incarceration. Much of that growth is attributable to practices such as mandatory minimum sentencing,

policies that require that prisoners remain in prison for longer periods than was previously the case, and an overreliance on incarceration as punishment even for nonviolent offences. As a matter of public policy, we should consider more alternatives to incarceration that would enhance parent-child contact and potentially mitigate the adverse impact of a parent's involvement in the system. Failing to take such steps may contribute to ensuring that our prison cells will remain full for generations to come.

Thank you for your attention and for your concern about the children. I hope that your investigations would lead not only to additional services for the people affected by parental incarceration, but also to more research about the effects on children and evaluation of the programs available to them. And I look forward to continuing this dialogue with you all.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Thank you.

Thank you, Dr. Siegel. (audience applauds)

And when we get to the question part, Dr. Siegel, I would definitely like to have you return to the table because there may be those that would like to address questions to you.

DR. SIEGEL: Certainly. Thank you, Assemblywoman.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Moving into the section of our program that addresses what is being done for the children of incarcerated parents, we invite our next guest, Dr. Wilson Goode, formerly the Mayor of Philadelphia, who is leading a program in Philadelphia in a face-to-face mentoring program.

Welcome to our forum, Dr. Goode. We welcome your telling us all about the Amachi Program and how we can replicate it.

**REVEREND W. WILSON GOODE, SR., Ph.D.:** Thank you very much.

I appreciate this opportunity to be here, and I want to congratulate you and this Committee for having this forum. It is a rarity around the country to have state or local officials willing to concern themselves with this issue. It is an issue which for decades has been ignored and unrecognized by public officials and public policy makers. So we thank you for taking this important stuff forward. And we hope that other states and cities across the country will follow suit here.

Let me just say a couple of introductory remarks, if I could, and to try and link in the whole research piece with what I'm going to say. We work from a basic assumption. The assumption is that children of incarcerated parents are the most at risk children in America. And although we know that there is between 2.2 million and 2.5 million children whose parents are currently in local, state, or Federal jails, we believe that if you look at those who've been released from jail and look at those who are on probation and parole, that number could exceed 20 million. And I know that there is probably no firm research on this, but according to the U.S. Senate report, recently, they projected that 70 percent of those children will follow their parents into jail. But we believe that the single most predictor of whether a child will go to jail or not or will end up in jail in the future is if that child's parent had, in fact, gone to jail.

In fact, research does show that a child of an incarcerated parent is six times more likely to engage in negative behavior than those who are not. So it is with that backdrop that we, in December of the year 2000, in

conjunction with Big Brothers and Big Sisters of America and the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society at the University of Pennsylvania, undertook a planning to respond with crisis among children of incarcerated parents, a crisis we regard as the most severe of all for those children who are involved.

The Amachi Program -- and it's spelled A-M-A-C-H-I -- was born out of a desire to intervene and therefore, redeeming the lives of these children and alter their future corruption. Amachi is a Nigerian word that means "Who knows what God has brought us through this child?" We know what God has brought us through this child. And we've adopted a slogan for the program: "People of faith mentoring children of promise." Our goal is to rescue as many of these children as possible by providing mentoring support to them.

The models seek to combine the best model of mentoring, which we believe to be the model of Big Brothers Big Sisters, in order to attack this problem. We sought to combine with the model of mentoring with the untapped resources of local congregations located in the areas with the highest concentration of children of inmates.

We know from research that in 1989 and the year 2000 that children who grew up mentored are less likely to initiate drug use, less likely to initiate drug and alcohol abuse, less likely to engage in acts of violence against someone else, and less likely to skip school. And we believe, therefore, less likely to end up in jail. This same research also found that those children that had a mentor develop a stronger relationship with the parent. And we know that local congregations have the most resources of any institutions in those communities that those children reside.

Therefore, we organized four clusters of churches in four sections of Philadelphia: the Southwest section, the South section, North Central, and West Kensington, which is about a third of the city. But those areas had the highest concentration of children of inmates. Each church -- and we organized them into 10 clusters -- 4 clusters, rather, with 10 churches per cluster, and asked each of the churches to provide us with 10 volunteers who would agree to spend one hour per week for 52 weeks with the child whose parent is incarcerated. And I told them that we have 168 hours in a week and 8860 hours in a year. So, spending one hour per week is not really a big deal.

Each church did, in fact, provide 10 or more volunteers. And we ended up with 43 churches involved in this program. In order to qualify for mentoring, each volunteer from these churches had to go through a criminal background check and a child abuse history check and clearance. Once that process was complete and references were verified, and one of the required references is a reference from the pastor of the volunteer in the program.

The volunteer then became ready for orientation. Many of these volunteers had never mentored before and never engaged in working with children before. So we gathered them all together to tell them what is involved in the mentoring process. After that is done, we then take them through a training program where they go through role playing in order to begin to get a good feel for the kinds of issues that will come up.

Much of this orientation and training is conducted by the staff of Big Brothers Big Sisters, who have nearly a century track record in this field. The volunteer then is interviewed for about 45 minutes to a hour by a staff member in order to begin to delve into real issues and concerns that this

volunteer may have and to ascertain whether or not this particular volunteer is suited to be a mentor. After the successful completion of the criminal background check, the child line clearance check, orientation training, and interview, then that volunteer is certified and is ready to become a mentor.

The next issue we face is where do we find the children. And we spent some time trying to sort that out. We talked first to the chaplaincy at the prison system and spent a few weeks and a few months trying to work through the chaplaincy of the prisons. We then talked with the social workers and discovered that the social workers were probably the best source we had of collected information about who had children. And finally, we simply went to the executive management of the prison and said, we would like to come into each of the jails in the city and talk directly with the inmates and tell them about this program and ask them whether or not they would permit their children to have a mentor and be mentored by one of these volunteers.

Over a period of about five months, we collected over 2000 names of children whose parent signed a piece of paper and said, I want my son or my daughter to be mentored. And once that was done, we also asked them to tell us who the caretaker was and to give us a possible phone number and an address for the caretaker. We then notified the caretaker that we've been requested by the parent to find a mentor. About 75 percent of the caretakers said yes, 25 percent said no for various reasons. I will not get into that at this point unless there are questions on that point.

But once that process is done that we've interviewed the caretaker, interviewed the child, we're now ready to begin to bring together these children and the mentor in that situation. We started with our first match in March of

the year 2001, and to date we have collected over 2000 names of children, collected volunteers of over 600, and we have, to date, been able to match 530 men and women with children whose parents are incarcerated. That number of matches doubles the size of the Big Brothers Big Sisters agency in the city, which means that this is the largest program of this kind in the country, I guess, in terms of mentoring children of incarcerated parents.

Now, what conclusion can we reach from our work? First of all, children of incarcerated parents, in our viewpoint, are the most vulnerable of all at risk children in our society. Secondly, congregations are rich with people who are willing to help if they're asked to do so.

Let me just make a couple of points about why we go to churches? Why congregations? First of all, they have the location. They are, in fact, where the problems are. Children live in and near their church. Second, they have the buildings, they have the space. Third, they have the human resources. They have talent. They have skills. They have people who can, in fact, volunteer. And fourthly, they have the monetary resources, to some extent, to begin to match what we can provide in order to help. And finally, they have the, what I call, prophetic mandate. And that is to use their faith to lift someone else up. So congregations, therefore, are rich and are willing to help if they are asked to.

Third, parents who are incarcerated want help for their children. We went to women prisons in the city, and, literally, the mere mention that we were there to talk about their children, they stood up with a standing ovation and applauded us because we've come in to do so. They've got nowhere to start. They want help, but don't know where to start. We must go to them

and tell them about the resource that we're in in order to have them to get the help.

Fourth, mentoring is a proven intervention tool. It can alter the lives of those children who are at risk. The fifth conclusion that I've reached, that even with the success of our program, of the Amachi Program -- and it has, in fact, been successful -- it is only a drop in the bucket in terms of the total problem that we are faced with in our society. But we know this. We know that there are major pockets of resources out there within the faith community that can be accessed for the purpose of intervening in the lives of children, that can alter the direction of their lives and, I believe, can change their lives forever. Research proved that through other mentoring processes.

The final point that I would make is this, that what you're doing here is so terribly important, in terms of bringing light to a problem that has been in darkness for a long time. This issue of children of incarcerated parents is a forgotten issue. The fact that we are here and talking about it would help people think anew about how to respond to it. The Amachi Program is one model. It is our belief, a workable model. It is a proven tool which can, in my view, if taken to scale -- and we believe the scale in Philadelphia is about 2000 to 3000 mentors working out of all the churches mentoring children of prisoners.

New Jersey is a rich State in terms of faith communities. From Camden to Newark to all of the places in between, there are many communities of faith. In fact, we've been engaged for the past two months with a group of pastors from Camden who are very much interested in the Amachi Program for South Jersey. And we know that they have, what we call,

the Angel Tree children, through prison fellowship, already on the list. And there are hundreds of children already identified who -- all they need, in my view, is to begin to have some resources and have them matched with loving, caring adults. And people of faith can mentor these children of promise.

One final, personal note I will make to all of you here, my father was incarcerated. My father was incarcerated, and when I moved from the south to the North, my father was in jail in North Carolina. What helped me to move beyond who he was and to come out the other end was a minister and his wife in my local church who said to me that I could do anything that I wanted to do in life. They mentored me. They gave me money to go to college. I ended up becoming mayor of the fourth largest city in the country.

I say to you that intervention through mentoring is a process by which we can rescue these children. And I urge you to give some thought to providing lots of money for this purpose. That's a purpose, isn't it? ( audience laughs)

Thank you all very much. (audience applauds)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Thank you, Dr. Goode.

And we will absolutely have you come back to the table when we get to our question period.

I thought I heard you say that the houses of faith were the ones that had the resources that we should turn to. (audience laughs)

And by the way, let me especially spotlight and introduce that Assemblyman Alfred Steele, who is here, is a pastor of an urban church in Passaic County. So he comes, obviously, with some extra interest in this topic,

and we hope that he will be one of the front runners to pick up the ball on this issue.

ASSEMBLYMAN STEELE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Our next guest is Marilyn Siegel, who is involved in an innovative program called Girl Scouts Behind Bars. And that's right here at the Women's Prison.

So we welcome Marilyn. If you will be kind and talk to us about your program. (audience applauds)

**MARILYN SIEGEL:** Good afternoon.

I'd like to add my thanks to all of you for having this wonderful event, giving people like me and so many others an opportunity to discuss and to learn from each other significant facts about an under recognized and undervalued population. I thank you.

Actually, Assemblywoman, we call it Girl Scouting Beyond Bars because the picture of girl scouting or girl scouts behind bars got to be a little troublesome, so we're calling it Girl Scouting Beyond Bars. Usually that gets a laugh. Obviously not with this group. (audience laughs)

I thought first, I should give you a brief history of the Girl Scouting Beyond Bars Program. It was initiated by the National Institute of Justice and first tried with the Girl Scout Council in Baltimore, Maryland. I happened to be home sick one day and was watching CNN, and I saw a piece on CNN about it, went back to work the next day, right here in New Jersey, and said, we're doing this. And Edna Mahan Prison was right within our jurisdiction, and we are going to do this program. And lo and behold, we did.

We started our program in 1995. We started with 10 girls who were making visits. We were bringing them in to make visits with their moms. Since 1995, over 300 girls have gone through the program. What we found is that we always have a small population that comes in once a month to visit with their mothers, but very often moms are paroled. We established a second meeting per month, which we call a community meeting, so that the girls who have been in this troop with their moms can remain. So we have a larger group meeting at a later time in the month. So there are two meetings a month that bring the girls together.

Funding was the big issue. The big stalling point for us when we started the program. We were very fortunate to have a high level of enthusiasm about what we were doing, and I really think that that really helped us sell our case. We went to the Prudential Foundation, and they very generously started providing funding for us. Now, we received funding from them for five years, but then, as it's so with many, many foundations, their interests shifted, and we are looking at and faced with finding additional and continuing funding for our program, which we really fight hard to do.

The value of the program seems to us to be immense. And Dr. Siegel made such a valid point by saying that there really has not been any empirical study of the impact of incarceration on children, but we have gathered and amassed a great deal of anecdotal evidence. What we're seeing is that children who have been denied the opportunity to visit with a mother for periods of three to five years, and the first meeting that we provide for them with their mother is so emotional. In fact, every meeting is so emotional.

The girls come in, the mothers are here waiting. We don't do any program activities for at least 15 minutes because there's holding and crying going on. These are significant events to have the physical contact with your mother. For a mother to be able to reach out and touch their child is incredibly significant. Then we roll into the body of the meeting. And the mothers do most of the planning for the meeting, which we think is very, very important.

So they will follow through the format of a Girl Scout meeting. There's a flag ceremony, we pledge allegiance. The girls and the mothers say the Girl Scout promise. And I'm going to say it for you just because I want you to understand what's inherent in the program: On my honor, I will try: to serve God and my country, to help people at all times.

It's very important then to see that when the girls leave, another highly emotional time -- how do I describe this? When the girls leave, the moms, of course, have to go to prison, the girls have to get on a bus. We provide buses for our children. We pick them up at their home, we go door-to-door, based on the fact that the neighborhoods that some children live in are not safe. We can't ask a child to walk three blocks, wait on a street corner for a school bus to come and pick her up. Some children are picked up as early as 6:30 on Saturday morning so that they may come out here and have this visit with their mom.

Currently, we're serving girls in Essex County, Mercer County, and Union County. And the distances beyond that, in some of the other counties, kind of preclude us having other girls come in, as for instance, Camden County or Atlantic County where there is a huge population. But reasonably speaking,

we can't ask those children to sit on a bus for five or more hours just to get here for that visit. So, the girls go home then they come back for another meeting and, again, it's an expanded population.

And I wanted to give you an idea of the kinds of things that have happened just this year. Our Girl Scout Council, of the Rolling Hills Council -- we do a family fun day event out of our camp in Neshanic, New Jersey. And this year, all of the girls in the program, as part of their meeting, came up with that family fun day, which is a great way for them to be integrated with other troops, to be involved in all of the activities intended for that day. It was a great day. The girls won prizes. They had a wonderful time.

In November, the Essex and Union County girls attended a basketball game of Kean University and met with the women's basketball team. A very inspiring time for them. The Mercer County girls attended a sports workshop with the women's basketball at the College of New Jersey, also known as Trenton State, is my note. In January, they had a holiday party and a lot of the significant things that came their way through the holiday party were because of the generosity and largesse of local churches. And I have to say, to honor what the Reverend Goode has told us, that up until now it really has fallen on churches to handle the bulk of the kind deeds, the good works, and all of the ministering that happens to incarcerated people has really happened because of the goodness of people in churches.

In February, the girls went to the Liberty Science Center, and they completed the Girl Scouts Against Smoking Badge, which I thought was pretty significant and pretty great. In March, they're going to Bloomfield College, and they are going to see the Dreamcatcher Repertory Theater to see a play

called *The New Kid*, which is about fitting in and maybe being different in lots of other things.

So we try to fill their time with skill building, as we do with all Girl Scouts, that leads to earning badges, which raises self-esteem. At the same time, we run with the parenting class, that's right here at Edna Mahan, for the moms who are incarcerated. And it is mandatory for them to stay in the program, that they attend these classes. We see that as a significant aspect in helping them rear their children in a different way, build some confidence, and self-esteem for themselves.

We have a long list -- and I won't give you the whole list but -- of goals that their moms have developed themselves when we implemented the program, to teach mothers the importance of communicating with their daughters positive messages in a variety of ways, to teach them listening skills. They all want to help with that to help their daughters understand the reasons why they're incarcerated and to give voice to the distress that they know their daughters are going through because of that incarceration. We worked greatly on issues related to discipline to be able to assert to a child that you are not happy with the behavior to provide instruction and that does not include violence or name calling or emotional abuse. And these address some of issues that Ms. Blackwell discussed when she gave you a profile of many of the problems that the women, who are incarcerated, bring with them when they come into prison.

We try to help the mothers find ways to build self-esteem in their daughters, and we use a variety of activities. And what you have to always notice at the end of the meeting is that the mother is always saying to the

daughter, “Good job, you really did a good job with this activity. We were so happy to see you.”

One of the things that we’re beginning to notice is that we have girls who have been in the program now for as long as five years because the term of their mother’s incarceration is that long and has not ended yet. And what we’re seeing is that we have a very dedicated core of volunteers who implement this program every time the girls come to prison. And we see that the long-term daughters, who are visiting over this long term, are beginning to role model after the volunteers. They’re becoming serious helpers to the program. They’re not only interested with their mother, they’re interested in shepherding younger children who are coming in. They help clean up. We don’t have to ask them to do that. We don’t have to ask them to carry boxes back out to the car or the buses. They do it on their own. So we see a tremendous change, a tremendous growth in positive attitude from these young women.

We do a lot of goal setting just for the mothers. And I brought with me a sheet that one mother wrote. She said, “My goal is to go home and to be a mother to my children, to live a clean and sober life,” and for my daughter, I will be sure she finishes school, maybe goes to college to be successful.”

I think that’s highly significant and very, very moving. Many of us are here who are mothers understand, all of us here who are fathers understand the goals and the love that we have for our children. And when children and their parents are separated through incarceration, the impact on the child is just huge.

So the Girl Scouts -- we plug away at it. We involve the girls and the mothers in service projects so that -- just as we do with all of our Girl Scouts -- so that they understand that giving back to the community is an integral part of a well-balanced life. It isn't just all about you. It isn't all about programs coming to you because -- just because. We feel that payback to the community is a very, very important part of what we do.

We hear from the guardians of the girls, and they tell us some very positive things as well. They tell us that participating in the programs provided them with some leverage so that girls who were -- I originally remember this story. One youngster just didn't want to go to bed at night. You know how kids are. They want to stay up, one wants a TV program, one wants this, one wants that, but the leverage became, well, if you don't go to bed, if you're not rested, if you're not doing the things you're supposed to do, and the bus comes out in the morning, and you're not ready, you don't get to see your mom. We saw a turn around in behavior. Overall, we've seen improvement in grades in school, more attentiveness to chores at home, less negative behavior, more positive behavior.

I can give you this information anecdotally. I don't have that study. I'm really eager for Dr. Siegel to continue her work so that we can all, perhaps, find out and accurately describe the benefits of enhanced parental visits between children whose parents are incarcerated.

The costs for programs like this are dear. Transportation for us, of course, is the highest cost. We were lucky at the first round. We were able to go out and find private funding. Other groups, perhaps, are not quite that fortunate. But I think that the variety of people who are here today all need

to be together, to put our heads together, and to think of ways that we can fund these kinds of programs into the future and, perhaps, effect some change so that we do see less recidivism and, we do see less children, fewer children, following in their parent's footsteps that land them right here.

Thank you so much. (audience applauds)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Why don't you stay right there.

MS. SIEGEL: Sure.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: And Ms. Blackwell, are we going to have a lady speak to the program? One --

MS. BLACKWELL: (speaking from audience) No. I mean, that wasn't for the (indiscernible) issue. The issue was that the media have access to (indiscernible).

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Okay.

MS. BLACKWELL: (speaking from audience) She got very nervous about coming in front of everyone.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Okay.

Dr. Goode, if you would come back to the table. And, Dr. Siegel, if you will.

There are going to be questions from our panel, and there may be questions from the audience. If there are those of you that have questions, from the audience, we have a microphone at the podium over here, and we absolutely welcome your spotlighting a question to our panels and certain members of our Assembly panel here.

Assemblyman Payne.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Yes. Good afternoon.

Thank you very much for your presentations. We've heard a lot about some of the problems that exist among the children of incarcerated parents. One of the problems, it seems to me a very basic problem, is that we need to -- and I think it was pointed out that a lot of these youngsters, a lot of the inmates come from communities where there is a low economic -- you know, lower socioeconomic level, that there's a poverty level, etc., that there's all kinds of violence in the community. All the kinds of negative indices that exist that create these problems.

So, what we're talking about, you know, is something that is a result of those conditions that exist in these communities. And, of course, the resolutions to these problems we're talking about is so much more far-reaching that they go right back to the community where we could prevent -- I'm curious to know about the programs for recidivism, to prevent recidivism. We've talked -- we're here and, hopefully, we'll be able to do something, you know, from a public policy standpoint, about the problems that we've heard here today. And the area that I think that we certainly need to look into, from public policy, are alternatives to incarceration. I think that's one area that the Legislature needs to look at to try to find ways to have alternatives to incarceration.

Some of the other things, of course -- and I don't know whether or not I would like to see this. I've heard an awful lot about the difficulty of transportation of getting the people -- children and relatives being able to visit inmates. That there's simply, as you pointed out, no public transportation, and it's an extremely serious problem. And I would certainly hope that,

perhaps, from a State or public point of view, that we might be able to provide some funding for that because that is a major problem.

And then another situation I've heard of is sometimes administrators at some of the facilities -- and I don't know about here, but some of our county facilities are not necessarily as cooperative with some of these community organizations and programs as they need to be. I've had personal experience myself in Essex County attempting to visit and have dinner with some female inmates at the urging of Ms. Veronica Taylor. And her organization up in Essex County -- an organization called OAR -- invited us to have dinner on Thanksgiving evening with the children, who had been invited up and with the inmates. And arriving at the prison and being refused to be let in by the administration, the guards refusing to let me in because I was "a politician" and not a legislator. And it took a great deal and many phone calls that evening, to get in to finally have dinner with these people.

So the cooperation of the administrators, the cooperation of the administration, and the creativity of a lot of administrators, it's my hope that some of these groups that are trying to do these things will, in fact, be able to have the full cooperation of the administration in these areas, but I know that that's a major problem, the transportation and allowing the youngsters, the people, to visit.

Let me just touch on a couple of other things, if I may. Mayor Goode, you mentioned about mentoring, how extremely important it is. And that the State of New Jersey -- we need to, you know, look into that and, perhaps, provide more opportunities. I might point out to you and those who are assembled here that, some years ago, I was a director of a program called

One to One NJ, whereby we had school-based mentoring programs for youngsters starting out of the city of Newark. It's extremely effective. And I'd tell you that that's one of the things, if I had all my money, I'd direct it towards providing mentors for at risk youngsters.

We have gone beyond that and, in fact, we recently, in the Legislature, passed a bill that enables State funding for school-based mentoring programs for at risk youngsters, and there are six school districts right now, including Paterson, New Jersey, which is starting and implementing this school-based at risk program. And we were able to get some \$750,000 to fund this program, and so we're starting up. That's something. If we could provide mentors for youngsters in these communities, not only youngsters of incarcerated parents, but for all at risk youngsters, we could probably solve the problem.

Lastly, I'd like to say, that you mentioned Big Brothers Big Sisters. We recently, in the city of Newark, merged a program called 10,000 Mentors and the READY Foundation with the New Jersey Big Brothers Big Sisters to try to increase the number of mentors in our programs. But mentoring seems to me to be, probably, one of the most effective ways to rescue our children, keep them from being lost to our society.

But the question I want to ask of you, Dr. Siegel, is the alternatives to incarceration. Could you, briefly, suggest some of the areas that we, as legislators, might look at as a possible way to implement some of these alternatives?

DR. SIEGEL: Well, there's a number of different kinds of intermediate -- is this on? (referring to the microphone)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I think you're going to need to get --

DR. SIEGEL: There's a number of different sorts of intermediate sanctions that are available and that are probably available in the bag of sentences that are available, but just not made use of, in large part, because of mandatory minimums and things like that, with the judging, the constraining hands of the judges, in terms of what they can do. But certainly -- first of all, there's probation, of course, and then there are other kinds of work release programs, day centers where people come and go to check in and still be under supervision.

Something that we don't use here, but is used extensively in Europe as an alternative to incarceration, is something called day fines where people are actually fined as if -- the fine is proportional to their income, and they use that successfully as an alternative to incarceration for nonviolent offenders. Electronic monitoring is another way to keep people at home, yet keep them under supervision when they need to be.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I have to interrupt, Madam Chair, because I don't know what you mean by day fines?

DR. SIEGEL: Day fines are -- they're a program that's used, as I said, extensively in Europe, but not very much over here. It's -- you know that we -- for some offenders we fine them, we impose a monetary penalty on them.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: F-I-N-E?

DR. SIEGEL: F-I-N-E. Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

DR. SIEGEL: And for --

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: I thought you were talking about F-I-N-D. I got lost. And I debate find. (audience laughs)

DR. SIEGEL: Oh.

And, of course, with poor people, one of the reasons why people don't use it very much is that poor people can't afford them and most offenders are poor. So, what's the point of fining them \$1000 if they don't have \$1000? But if you could help them get a job, if they can have a job where they earn \$200 a week or something, and they pay a fine that's equivalent to \$20 a week, 10 percent of their salary, that's significant for them. Maybe not to people who are earning \$2000, but --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Commensurate with the crime.

DR. SIEGEL: Exactly -- well, no. It's not commensurate with the crime. It's commensurate with their means to pay. The fine --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No, I mean the fine --

DR. SIEGEL: The fine is commensurate with the crime --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes.

DR. SIEGEL: -- as well, but then the -- it's calculated as a proportion of their salary, of their income. It doesn't have to be salary income. It could be welfare income. But they have to pay some portion of it. And it's been used --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: No training programs are attached to that?

DR. SIEGEL: Well, they're not --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: To make a difference in their lives?

DR. SIEGEL: Right. There are some alternatives -- some variations of that that they're using in Europe where there is some training.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm sorry, Madam Chair, if I'm overstepping.

DR. SIEGEL: There are some --

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: What's being used in New Jersey? I want to know what's being used in --

DR. SIEGEL: In New Jersey? I couldn't tell you if they're doing that in New Jersey or not.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Well, I'd like to know of any kinds of alternatives to incarceration programs --

DR. SIEGEL: Here in New Jersey?

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: -- that are being utilized in Jersey now. I know there are some that we may look at, but are there any in New Jersey at the present time?

DR. SIEGEL: Unfortunately, I really can't speak to that. I'm fairly new here.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Could someone here speak to that? Maybe help me out, you know?

**CAPTAIN KEITH ALI:** Pardon me interrupting. My name is Captain Keith Ali, from Essex County jail.

And I'd like thank Administrator Blackwell for inviting me to come down.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: You weren't on duty the night I was refused to enter?

CAPTAIN ALI: No, and I definitely want to apologize (laughter from audience) for any inconvenience you were caused. And we don't have a record of treating those type of problems. Unfortunately, there wasn't a registration set up similar to what we all went through coming in here today.

But I've been in corrections for over 19 years, and all of those 19 years I've worked along with the OAR organization, presently directed by Veronica Taylor. And where we're at now, we have, with their assistance -- there are several alternatives to incarceration programs that we have that exist in Essex County.

One, of course, you're aware of Delany Hall. We presently house about 200 inmates at a state of the art treatment center that gives life skills, monitoring, and rate of recidivism is being studied now. Presently, it is low. I don't have any numbers to share with you now, but if you contact our Administrator, Director Hobson, or Warden Stabinski, at some time, some later point, we'll provide that information.

We also have a relationship with the Assembly. We've worked with Former Assemblywoman Ms. Ogden back in the '80s, trying to create a forum such as this so that some of these programs can go along with sentence modifications. We weren't able to get that underfoot, but it is definitely well documented that the mentoring programs we actually ran through OAR, supervised by them, had a direct effect and correlated on the violence that occurs within a facility from inmate to inmate. And, also, it was targeted towards family rebuilding.

We found that 90 percent of our inmates, at that time -- these figures, certainly, have changed. We're dealing with a younger population

now. But they had fathered children. And we recognized that they had a disenfranchised type of relationship. As we went and partook in this program, I, myself, as a parent, sat in the back room and actually took notes on many of the tools of the trade in mentoring and parenting that I actually took back home and used.

The significance of the program was that we had successes with even job placements with many of these individuals, but the downside of it is our facility was a temporary facility, and these things have to be incorporated in a long-term basis. We found that if you're a parent, and you have a five year old child, and you're going to jail for 10 years, you've been Monday morning quarterbacking all through the last 10 years. And many of these individuals base what they experience and share with their children and their family -- based on how they were raised. And we found that that's where the disconnect lies. And it disconnects them a degree that when you consider alternatives, such as vocational skills, what types of jobs are available when they get out of incarceration, they still haven't rebuilt that family connect that makes them want to take that type of a setting.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Are there any other programs, alternatives -- I know there is, but I really want to point --

CAPTAIN ALI: Well, we have a slap program. We have a bracelet program. We have about, perhaps, under 100 individuals now that are presently on bracelet monitoring, and we're in discussions with the Superior Court, Judge Falcone, to implement some type of bail alternative to incarceration. And they would work through our slap program, which would

mean they would go to certain facilities and work with the municipalities to retrieve and to do work within that area.

Our difficulty is; one, many of the municipalities are unaware of these. I've found that Belleville and Nutley utilize the program more than East Orange, Newark, and the inner cities that actually contribute more populations to our facility.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: We are on a timeline, and I see about three people that want to question our guests here, if --

CAPTAIN ALI: Well, thank you, Assemblywoman.

And I will close with just letting you know that we do have those alternatives to incarceration. And this -- I did want to point this out, but while we were trying to seek funding for the OAR, an organization from California came into the State, and they were funded with about, I think, \$6 million. That was the Jim Brown Amer-I-Can Program. And we took your exception to that because all of the programs that they provide, the OAR has been doing for close to 20 years or better. And we hope that you take that into consideration.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Excuse me, Madam Chair.

The Jim Brown Program, wasn't that about four or five years ago?

CAPTAIN ALI: I thought it was still in existence.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I'm not sure.

But wasn't that Trenton based?

CAPTAIN ALI: Yes, it was.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Yes, it was.

CAPTAIN ALI: Yes, but he actually started in California with the program.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Oh, okay.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Right.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Okay.

CAPTAIN ALI: But I thank you and I--

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: But we would like to find out more about this organization.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: And it may be that there are those that would like to use the break to direct questions and get further information.

I'll recognize the lady that's here, that's been waiting to ask a question. And we'll need to be really brief and direct to one of our experts because we need to keep on schedule.

**ROBERTA KNOWLTON:** Thank you, Assemblywoman.

I direct the School-Based Youth Services Programs for the State of New Jersey, and we --

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: What's your name?

MS. KNOWLTON: My name is Roberta Knowlton.

And the Department of Human Services provides the School-Based Youth Services Programs in 44 different schools. I have paper here for you, if you like.

The important thing is that we work with these young people in school as they struggle with the questions that the criminal behavior or the

incarceration or the unfair incarceration, whatever it is, that has happened with that family. The young person is caught in two different places. One of them is that -- who's to be angry at most? The people that did it to my family? The people that my -- things that my family did? And so and so and so forth.

The concrete developmental stage of our young people is, shall I then cut myself from my family? Shall I listen to my family giving me directions when that person, or persons, are in jail? These are very difficult questions for young people to wrestle with. So, what we do in this particular program is to wrestle with them one-on-one in the school setting as we talk with them.

The thing that I would like to ask the help of Reverend Goode and Marilyn Siegel and so on for, is this: I know that our staffs would much appreciate a training time, a conference time, when we could talk with other people who have also been working with these heart and mind and soul questions that we work with, as social workers and as friends, to young people in high school. We're working with a high school population primarily. So what I'm thinking about is, I would like to offer the school-based programs a connection to you all, and I would also like whatever you all can offer us in terms of training and conversation.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: And the gentleman, I think you were next. And we'll -- were you -- okay.

The lady, and we'll make it really quick.

**VERONICA TAYLOR:** Yes.

Veronica Taylor, the Executive Director of Offender Aid and Restoration of Essex County. I would just like to comment on Assemblyman Payne's question about, is there any other programs in the State that's providing any kind of vocational training for ex-offenders?

Basically, commenting on what Captain Ali said, we just have institutional programs, meaning community therapeutic programs, halfway houses. What OAR did about a year ago was propose a comprehensive development center for ex-offenders returning to the community which will provide training, entrepreneur programs, as well as jobs. We had manufacturings, we had businesses that wanted to partner with the agency -- with the center. But our big problem, since we are talking to the New Jersey Assembly, who could probably assist us in getting this project off the ground, is, because when it comes to the planning board in the cities, the local inner cities, there's little opposition with these types of projects coming in thinking that we will be centralizing a center for ex-offenders, which would pose questions for candidates that's running for office.

So, if you're really serious about addressing these issues and making an impact with them transitioning back into the community, it has to be a noninstitutional transitional project. We have a model that we put together before you've been marketing it. And I would like to have some help from the Assembly, as well as Dr. Goode. We have been working with the churches, Statewide, as many as 1200. We've made presentations to try and to get a help --

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER FROM AUDIENCE: (Indiscernible.)

MS. TAYLOR: Okay.

We had -- so, we need a little help in getting some participation with the faith-based organizations. Maybe we are not promoting it properly, but we are saying, what does it take for this type of project to be implemented into an inner city? How does it fit into the agenda of the inner city mayors, elected officials? All of you are elected officials here. What do we need to get your support because none of these projects would be implemented?

As Captain Ali says, we are a 20 year old agency. The only one in the State, according to Governor Whitman, that has a children's program that provides transportation to the county jails. And we have some various success stories. Some of the young ladies and men are in college, private schools. But, again, lack of funding.

But the key thing with the ex-offenders -- I'm going back to that with Assemblyman Payne because we have the model. At this present, now, we have onsite a national consultant from the Department of Justice who's taking that model, which is a vocational training model, because without a job it's going to be very difficult for them to transition into the community and to connect back with their families.

So, if you're really serious about this issue, you're going to have to think about that they're noninstitutional. And my agency is serving 250 to 300 ex-offenders per month coming out of the correctional institutions in New Jersey, transition back into the community. Since we are, basically, the only noninstitutional aftercare agency in the State we are importing ex-offenders into Newark, New Jersey. So, I think there is a great need for this type of forum that you're having today.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: We're going to take a 10 minute break. We will be back at 4:10 to start up on Programs for Inmates who are Parents.

**(RECESS)**

**AFTER RECESS:**

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I have a couple of important announcements. Our Travel and Tourism Group has giveaway bags for you who have participated today so don't even think of leaving without taking your goodie bag. And don't even think of leaving without giving your visitor badge back today.

Starting up, our next guest this afternoon is the Administrator of the State Correctional Institution at Chester, Pennsylvania, Mary Leftridge Byrd, who has a -- how many years, Mary, were you the Administrator of the Women's Prison in Pennsylvania?

**MARY V. LEFTRIDGE BYRD:** Seven years.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Mary is a dynamic administrator, outstanding speaker, author, and she is going to be talking about an innovative program that she is doing with the inmates who are parents at her correctional institution.

Superintendent Byrd. (*sic*)

MS. LEFTRIDGE BYRD: Thank you very much, Assemblywoman Previte, members of the Committee. I appreciate the opportunity to share

some time with you this afternoon. It has been my experience that wardens are more often talked about than as to come talk. So, I really do appreciate the invitation.

I am Mary Leftridge Byrd, Superintendent of the State Correctional Institution at Chester in Chester, Pennsylvania. It's an 1100-bed minimum security men's state correctional institution. One of 27 in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania to include 2 state prisons, housing women inmates. The State Correctional Institution at Chester represents the fourth wardenship in my 24 year career, having also served in the District of Columbia, the state of Maryland, and my home, Pennsylvania. I should mention that I wardened MCIW, the Maryland Correctional Institution for Women, where the Girl Scouts Behind Bars, and now Beyond Bars, was originally situated.

I consider it a privilege to be able to speak to the critical issues and appreciate being asked to do so. Having wardened correctional institutions housing men and women and a statewide pre-release system, I've been witness to the issues we've discussed today from a number of views. I have often said that a warden's career is incomplete unless he or she has had the unique opportunity to manage institutions that house women. However, having wardened a men's prison, now, for four years, I've realized, of course, the art of managing prisons can only be fully stretched when one has had the challenge of working with incarcerated men and incarcerated women.

Charlotte and I share some interesting beliefs on, I think -- four years ago, when I was asked to -- actually the Secretary of Corrections said that I was coming on a promotional transfer to the men's prison. He told me on

Thursday that he needed me in Chester on Monday. Of course, I suspected he wanted me to do training or taking an official tour through this new concept, through this new prison and he said to me, "Mary, you don't get it do you?" He said, "You are being promotionally transferred to this institution." So, I moved in three-in-a-half days from the 73 year old women's institution in rural Pennsylvania, with all of its charms and challenges, to a then 8 month old men's institution situated on an urban intersection. It's been very, very interesting, to say the least.

I must say, though, that I have learned more than I could hope to teach from my work with women offenders. One of the most significant factors, obviously, connected to this population is one of the unintended consequences of incarceration, the resultant estranged relationships with women from their children. While the same, I believe, is true for men, surely, most would agree when handcuffs hit his wrist, he asks for his lawyer, when handcuffs hit her wrists, be assured she's asking for her children.

I have watched women make valiant and, frankly, sometimes contrived efforts to mother inside out. So many treating their confinement as a continuation rather than an interruption of their lives. For the most part though, I must say clearly, the focus on children is absolute and real on the part of the inmate moms.

The Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report, issued in August 2000, entitled "Incarcerated Parents and Their Children," which the Committee now has a copy of, tells us that in 1999, an estimated 721,000 state paroled prisoners were parents of nearly 1.5 million children under the

age of 18. We, I believe, have a huge obligation to these children, their parents, and communities.

While, thankfully, there has certainly been increasing notice paid to women offenders, finally, we're also now seeing emergent data and information speaking to men as parents. In his annual program policy guidelines determining Commonwealth goals for 2002 to 2003, the Commonwealth's Governor provided the framework for determining priorities, which focus on improving the quality of life for all Pennsylvanians to benefit from the Commonwealth.

Among those guidelines is the strengthening of families to include addressing the protection of homes and communities. Comprehensive and cooperative approaches to addressing crime, restore safety, and security for our families and neighborhoods. Significant principles supporting this goal are to provide for and ensure the security of Pennsylvania's most vulnerable citizens and continue efforts to provide state offenders with the support and services needed to facilitate reintegration into the community.

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, DOC, realizes that during incarceration, we have the opportunity to provide inmates with the knowledge, skill, and abilities they will need to increase the probability of success upon release. Because research has shown that an offender's reintegration to their family is a key element of successful reentry, the DOC has made parenting programs a core program element for inmates and is currently offering the following parenting programs: Long Distance Dads, which is a character-based program using inmates as peer instructors and a standardized parenting curriculum. The Long Distance Dads Program is

currently available at 20 of the 27 state prisons, 2 included at the 2 women's prisons, and at the SCI-Chester. This program is managed by DOC staff.

Parenting programs services the Department of Corrections' contracts with the Pennsylvania Prison Society, and at the Bethesda Family Services Foundation, could provide parenting instruction in all of the DOC institutions. Parents Anonymous is a program utilizing a curriculum based on self-help strategies to aid in the development of parenting skills and continues when the ex-offender returns to his or her home community. The Parents Anonymous Program utilizes staff and volunteers.

Read to Your Children, which is one of my favorite programs -- this program is currently available in all institutions and encourages children to read while strengthening the bond between parent and child. Inmates select books appropriate to their children's interests and reading level, videotape the reading of the book, and then send both the book and the videotape reading of the book to their children. The program is managed by staff. Books and tapes are purchased through the Inmate General Welfare Fund.

Family Virtual Visitation, no doubt a particular interest to the Committee, the Family Virtual Visitation Program uses videoconferencing technology to provide inmates, whose families are unable to commute to the institution, with the opportunity to visit with their family members. To facilitate these videoconferences, the Department of Corrections has installed the necessary equipment at the Pennsylvania Prison Society's offices in Center City Philadelphia. It is currently available in four institutions, two include the two women's institutions, one particularly remote from urban centers in

Pennsylvania. Now, that program is funded through a grant awarded by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

*I Love You This Much* -- and this is a handbook to further aid active parenting. We've developed this handbook at the State Correctional Institution at Muncy. And I'm happy to say that that happened when I was wardening there during those seven years. It's a simple workbook. It's a 150 page workbook for children, in this edition, between the ages of three and five. There's another edition for children between the ages of six and twelve. What actually happens is that children and parents complete lessons and letters and other writing that goes back and forth between the parent and the child. Through our Creative Writing Program at SCI-Chester, I'm happy to say, that the men there draft me their first version of *I Love You This Much*.

I Am Your Child is another program emanating through the Governor's Office. Our department is pleased to participate in the I Am Your Child initiative for early childhood for the education for parents with children up to age three. State departments, under the leadership of the Governor's staff, include the Departments of Health, Education, Public Welfare, Community, and Economic Development. And Community Partnerships for Safe Children have established a method of making available instructional videos and family wellness guidelines in booklets.

The Department of Corrections will continue to work with the I Am Your Child Program to develop videotapes appropriate to the unique needs of inmates. At our department parenting staff, we use the videos and guides to augment our current parenting programs. Among the videos available

currently: *The First Years Last Forever*, *Quality Childcare*, *Discipline: Teaching Limits with Love*, *Ready to Learn*, and *Safe from the Start*.

Looking through a prison where the majority will not reward us with a solution or salvo for women offenders whose specific, not special, needs should be addressed based on best practices. As well, a steady look at what works for female offenders is an untapped wellspring for replicating certain initiatives with a population of men and boys.

Please trust me when I tell you that my career has been enriched by having the opportunity to work with men and women offenders and inmates. Through this, I have learned that what works for men does not necessarily work for women, but you can bet that what works for women works for men.

At the State Correctional Institution at Chester, we do have in place the programs earlier discussed. As well, we have developed several other initiatives, the Youth Awareness Program. Originally, staff wanted to refer to this as the Youth At Risk Program, and I put the kibosh on that, which is the technical term for saying, no, we're not going to call it Youth At Risk. Let us instead start positively and call it the Youth Awareness Program, which provides an opportunity for adolescent males from surrounding communities to meet with incarcerated offenders.

The program typically runs for six weeks and covers the following issues: the perils of substance abuse, gang involvement, the realities of prison life, violence in the media and music, and quality of life issues. This is not a Scared Straight Program. There is no abusive language used nor any intimidation permitted. We carefully select the inmate participants who are

sufficiently mature, as we assess them, who have a keen desire to help others. Our next group of youth will be working with the Youth Awareness Program is La Congreso de Latinos Unidos, which is a social service agency in Philadelphia.

Now, if you hear the rumor that there are babies in the State Correctional Institution at Chester, it is not a rumor. In fact, the Baby Think It Over Programs are programs that we initiated a year-and-a-half ago, which is intended to help prepare fathers for the care of infants by providing a simulated childcare experience and can foster a deeper experiential understanding and tolerance for actual infant behavior and care.

When you come to visit us at SCI-Chester, if you're able to, and I hope that you are, you will see inmates living throughout the institution with infants in their arms. During this time, actually twice a week for five weeks is when they meet, they learn firsthand of needs that children have, particularly for infants. These are computerized babies who, from a distance, look entirely real. You may have seen them in high school programs, as an example. These babies simulate hunger, in a very demanding way, they simulate fatigue, a need to be cuddled, and even wet diapers -- all in demanding ways.

The men learn how to respond to the various needs of these infants. After the completion of the classroom sessions, the inmates carry the babies with them to work, to school, to the yard, and all their appointments and activities during the day and evening. Do not be surprised if on our 10:00 p.m to 6:00 a.m. shift, you hear a baby crying. And I hope you will not hear that baby crying for very long because the father has gotten up from his bunk to cuddle his baby or figure out what to do next.

The computerized babies record their experiences, which is remarkable, and this information is downloaded for review by program facilitators with the inmate dads. A final group decision and review is had with all participants. If you don't mind it, I want to let you know that I'm referring this to Baby Snitch-A-Lot because it will tell the facilitator exactly how many times it's been held, for what length of time, what it's been fed, when it's been fed, etc..

Through the Garudencia, Incorporated, we provide a Family Support and Recovery Program that begins in the institution and continues when a man leaves SCI-Chester. The program provides the inmate and his family members with an environment to amend welcomeness, working towards reconciliation. The major components of the family program are dealing with substance abuse and co dependency, adult children of addicts, chemical dependency as a family disease, and relationship communication. As I said, the program begins inside and continues when the man goes home.

SCI-Chester also provides an annual Children's Day, which brings children in to participate in a day of structured activities with their dads. This is something we did at SCI-Muncy and have brought to SCI-Chester. During this Children's Day, kids participate with their dads in projects such as art, video games, photo essays, flower arranging, and age appropriate reading and discussion groups. The five hour day, which admittedly seems sometimes longer, includes caregivers who meet with institution staff, counseling, drug and alcohol, medical, chaplaincy, and administration, that caregivers meet in a separate area while children and their dads play and interact. Available in the caregiver's area are TV monitors where the concurrent activities can be

viewed by caregivers at any time. Thus, as far as I said, this has been an annual event and we do hope to increase the frequency of this undertaking.

I mentioned that SCI-Chester is located on an urban intersection. We are between two rail lines, both operating, we are under the direct flight path with the Philadelphia National Airport, we're situated on Route 291, which runs parallel to Route 95. There are four Septa buses that stop on the intersection in front of our door, and there are a number of rail lines that are local that run to the institutions. So, we take advantage of our location, which, I admit, is unusual for a state prison, by opening up and using our visiting room during the morning hours with programs rather than to permit visits during the morning. Visits occur then only between 2:30 p.m. and 8:00 p.m.

The Department of Corrections has developed a reentry plan that provides for an individualized, targeted approach based on known risk factors. It is the core program. The Community Orientation and Re-entry Program, which has really been developed to address the fragile adjustment period between incarceration and return to the community, it is not a treatment program. It is, instead, the bridge between institutional and community corrections programs and aftercare and parole.

We're learning that reintegration in the family begins with developing a relationship with both the caregiver and the children, ideally, prior to release. A consistent caring and supportive relationship with the caregiver will often open doors to becoming an accepted part of raising one's children. We believe there's such a great need for inmates to be active parents while incarcerated, that we would recommend, highly, participation and

parenting skills programs as soon as the opportunity arises, shortly after commitment is probably a good idea.

Policy issues that cut across the needs of mothers and fathers, around which local and state agencies might collaborate and attend to more effectively, include child support -- will then make a parent -- parental duties for the care and well-being of the inmate's children; the tracking of problematic parents as they enter the institution and exit the system; the sharing of information among and through agencies, where there is a need to protect children, working together in partnership.

Building and nurturing collaborative relationships among agencies is absolutely critical. Systematic approaches helps bring together probation, the courts, parole, crime commissions, the Legislature, victim's advocacy representatives, public welfare and housing officials, academicians, researchers, county and state corrections administrators, public defenders, district attorneys, religious leaders, employment program representatives, educators, and the media. And the list can go on, but these are among those who should be actively engaged and working towards their challenge that has been defined and responded to today.

These children, nor their parents, belong to Corrections. They belong to each of us. While children deserve our absolute support, let us not neglect building and rebuilding centered around their relationships with parents. We must continue to follow the work and the focus of the Assemblywoman and her colleagues, ensuring that we demonstrate that child incarcerated parent initiatives is not about providing warm and fuzzy programs or perks for undeserving inmates.

Women and men do not cease to be moms and sisters and grandmoms, dads, grandfathers, brothers, and uncles as a result of being locked up. This is about strengthening children and communities, which has included combining resources across agencies; across jurisdictions; across philosophies; balancing priorities; facing realities, budgetary and otherwise. Understanding that the more we spend from Corrections, as it has been known, the less we can invest on initiatives that, in a sustained way, positively impact the quality of life.

Childcare, education, health, and nutrition, each of those things that we see in inmate bars over and over and over again has having been lacking or, at best marginal, in their life journeys. While the cost of building and rebuilding and tending our foundations can be expensive, in terms of our community and children, the cost of not doing so can be irreversibly fatal. We are in a position to decide. Will we spend, or will we invest?

I thank you, again, Assemblywoman, for this opportunity today.  
(audience applauds)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: And now we would like to have our New Jersey Initiative that is addressing our --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Madam Chair, before the Superintendent leaves, may I congratulate you on such a fine presentation and a program, I think, we'll all be interested in.

MS. LEFTRIDGE BYRD: Thank you very much.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I especially appreciated the list of specific activities. There may be others that can pick up on this and replicate.

MS. LEFTRIDGE BYRD: Sure, I wanted to bring along some of that so that it could be accessible. Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Our New Jersey Initiative, we have Alisha Griffin, who's the Assistant Director of a program that is starting as a collaboration between the Human Services Department --

**ALISHA GRIFFIN:** Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: -- and the Department of Corrections to address that.

We welcome you.

MS. GRIFFIN: Good afternoon, Assemblywoman Previte and Committee members. I really appreciate the opportunity to sit before you and talk with you about the work that we have just begun. I want to thank you, certainly, for your leadership and your recognition of this issue and your willingness to address it as we move forward.

The Department of Human Services and the Department of Corrections have recognized this need and are in the process of developing programs to, hopefully, comprehensively begin to look at services for parents, families, and children as we move forward in this process.

The statistics that have been talked about here today and, certainly, have added to your collection of information on the statistics and research done are, certainly, monumental. The impact on the numbers are staggering. Families are diverse, communities are diverse, and we're going to

need everyone to be working together to provide the kinds of services that the parents and children, that we've talked about this afternoon, need.

In 1996, you're all familiar with the Welfare Reform Legislation that had a monumental impact on the way that the Department of Human Services began to look at its programs. We really started to reexamine parental responsibility and how our services were being provided. The intersecting points that existed within our own Department were, certainly, significant, but we also began to see much greater clarity the intersecting points that exist in the communities around us and the need to start to think differently about how we provide those services. Looking at and helping families avoid or lessen their time on public assistance, to strengthen fragile families, to help their self-sufficiency, and to provide for independence.

Child Support, which is the program that I administer through the Department of Human Services, is one of those programs. And in that program, we service over 700,000 children annually who depend on, New Jersey alone, the Child Support Program for income and parental support. We began three years ago to build a program talking about parental responsibility to engage noncustodial parents to support differently and support the custodial parents and kin who were caring for children. In our work in that area, it became clear to us that we needed to think differently about how we would engage them, the parents, whom we owe responsibility and service.

We began by cohosting a forum on incarcerated parents and began to look at the efforts to provide and facilitate work, for noncustodial parents, in particular. And I think that many of you have seen some of the National

work that's being done on the issue of dead broke versus deadbeat dads. And, I think, the belief in the community is there are many more of noncustodial parents who are unable to support their children -- are, truly, unable to support, and they're unwilling to support, who do not have the resources or the skills or the wherewithal to bring that support to the table.

So, in looking at that population, certainly, the intersection with Corrections became significant to us. And we began, two years ago, to sit down with the Department of Corrections and begin to really look at what were the programs that were going on. There were small programs, and I think that you've heard about some of the programming here. There are a lot of good programs throughout the State of New Jersey who have begun working with this area here and working this area for awhile and for whom we need services and connections to build a better network for services to help parents and children.

As I said, we began to catalogue the services, and we began to look at what was available. And it was clear to us that there were a lot of programs. We, certainly, have begun to look at the work of superintendents and other state programs, like those in Pennsylvania, which you just heard about from Ms. Leftridge (*sic*), and began to really figure out what we wanted to do here in New Jersey.

There are, as I said, over 700,000 children in the Child Support System, and you heard the numbers earlier about the size of the population, here in New Jersey, that is in the correctional setting. The intersection of those populations became clear to us that we're talking about over 10,000 parents that we knew about in correctional settings that were also part of the Child

Support System, and how could we begin to design a program to meet their needs and to really effect change for those children?

The program we've designed started, certainly, from looking at Fatherhood services that has become, now, the responsible parenting initiative. And it is our intent to build that as a comprehensive service for engaging all parents in corrections and to really look at providing a plethora of services that would be available for them. The main program focuses on parents transitioning out of the program. So, transitioning out of the correctional setting. So, the parents would then be given the opportunity to work on engaging and assessing their skills, their ability to return to gainful employment, to have a steady job, to have a place in the community because, I think, as you've heard earlier, as well, it's important for a parent to feel good about themselves, engagement in the family, engagement in the community, engagement in the child are all things that start from feeling good about ourselves. Then it makes it much better if they have positive beliefs in their self, probably, ready to contribute to both their family and their community.

So, we're targeting assessing the individuals, and we're doing this jointly with staff from the Department of Labor, and the Department of Education is providing resources to help us in looking at assessing the individual, teaching them skills, and then working with Labor so that the individual, upon leaving the facility, will have work resources in their community, or in a community, for which they can return.

In addition to that, we're working on nurturing fathers, curriculum enriching, parenting curriculum, and we are training the staff within the

assessment centers to deliver that training and to be part of the comprehensive team that will be aimed at supporting the family.

Working, again, on creative visitation and access programs, some of the models that you've heard about, most recently from SCI in Pennsylvania, are models that we are intending to replicate because we believe that those types of engagement programs with children are very positive. We've seen the effects of them in their states and in those facilities.

One of the other areas that we are engaging people in is the health community, so that we're beginning to look at parent's health. It's a very important thing that we believe that a positive, healthy parent also helps mental health, addressing depression, and issues that are important to their relationship with their children and relationship with the other families; building the relationship and their capacity to interact with the other parent on their release from the facility and to incorporate back into the community by providing mentoring services once they leave the institution.

Those are the core components of the main program. In addition to that, one of the things that we have been working on with the Department of Corrections has been a revamped intake and identification system because one of the things that we have heard here this afternoon, but we became very much aware of, is that most of us do not collect good information. Who is a parent in each of our centers, and where those parents are? So, it became crystal clear to both of us that we needed to revamp and really think about how our information collecting systems mutually needed to interact, and how we could better, from the point in time, the individual goes into the institution, identify them as a parent, and begin to tailor services to support them. Not

just when they're leaving the institution, but while they're in the institution. To maintain their access, their visitation issues, to look at ways to support both their role as a parent and their connection with their children.

And, I think, it brings us back to, for the Department of Human Services and for Child Support, in particular, that parentage is a very important piece. You need to build life long connections. Not every child and not every parent will be able to maintain their ability to live together and have a type of connection that we would wish for them. But that doesn't mean that they can't have some kind of connection, and it means that we need to establish their roots, their parentage, and support their position in that child's life as the parent.

So, we're really looking forward to it. We're looking forward and we're delighted to hear the resources that are out there from this hearing today. And we're looking forward to adding more researchers to our network as we build this program over the next several months, years.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Thank you.

Well, I can guarantee your effort will be hearing from us --

MS. GRIFFIN: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: -- because we have, lately, been taking the role of holding people's feet to the fire to find out what happens on down the line after these hearings.

MS. GRIFFIN: Good.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Now, Warden, or Superintendent Byrd, we would love to have you come back to the table.

There may be those that have questions. If you will just come back to the table.

And I'm going to give Assemblyman Barnes an opportunity to speak up for a moment.

ASSEMBLYMAN BARNES: I just wanted to mention that -- I don't know whether the people in the audience realize that Assemblyman -- Assemblywoman Previte was incarcerated herself. She was the daughter of missionaries in China. And when she was eight years old, the Japanese invaded China and took Mary and her brother and put her in a concentration camp for four years. So, we have a person here who not only got the experience, but also, under very trying circumstances, who's also now in a very important position in the Assembly to really do something about this problem.

And, I think that Mary brings a real heart and a concern to the issues because she's been there. And that one of the individuals that saved Mary was a former FBI agent that I was able to bring to Trenton where we reunited with Mary after 50 years. She wanted to meet him, she wanted to touch him. He was her savior.

So, I just wanted the people here to know that they have somebody who's chairing this Committee that has a concern about these issues because she lived them. (audience applauds)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I want to ask people in the audience if you are running a program that is touching the population we're talking about, either the children of incarcerated parents or incarcerated parents, we welcome giving your name to our staff, the folks that are seated back here, over on the side, because I think what will probably come from this

session today is some sort of a listing of programs that are being done so that we can pass the word and put contact numbers. So, if you're doing something worthwhile, innovative in the area, let's get that information to our staff and we, in turn, can pass it out to people who are participants today. All right.

We welcome questions to our panelists, and, specifically, we are looking at questions dealing with programs for incarcerated parents. And we have our microphone right over here. And if you'll just identify yourself by name and program.

**A N N E L. H U N T:** My name is Anne Hunt, and I'm from Reconciliation Ministries, Incorporated. We do the parenting skills workshops here at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility.

My question, for the Superintendent is -- I'm agreeing with your statement that what's good for the men may not be good for the women, but for the women, it's good for the men. We've tried for the last two years to convince the powers to be that the men do need parenting skills. We also, for the last two years, have tried to convince the men that they need parenting skills, also.

My question is, which program was started in Pennsylvania? Was it with the women first, then the men? Or how did you get inroads into effective programming with the men?

**MS. LEFTRIDGE BYRD:** How much time do we have Assemblywoman? (audience laughs)

Parenting programs, to some degree, have always been available in women's prisons, based on what I've read and what I've experienced.

Probably, the most effective inroad is to talk about these parenting programs in terms of relationships.

MS. HUNT: Okay.

MS. LEFTRIDGE BYRD: And then talk about unintended consequences, most often, initially, in a fiscal way.

We talked about that today because, as I've said, if we continue to start Corrections, in short cuts, investing in programs, that can make a sustained difference. I think, we figure out through relationships, our professional relationships, what costs what. And then decide how intersects can occur, in terms of sharing resources. For a lot of people, and for obvious reasons, we have to start with the bottom line and work from there.

In terms of encouraging men, one of the things I say when I go through the prison, which is everyday, much to their chagrin -- a couple of times a day sometimes -- I say to them that I'm going to make women out of you men, yet. (audience laughs) And they're relatively tolerant. They're also, not crazy. So I don't expect a response to go too far, but what we have done, what the staff has done -- and then take you along on this trip everyday -- is create an environment where men can make choices and changes if they want. I can't change anyone. I can't rebuild anyone. But I'm responsible, in a leadership role, which exists on all levels in this organization, to provide an environment conducive to change.

MS. HUNT: Okay.

MS. LEFTRIDGE BYRD: So, I think it comes from persistence and every bit of experience and intellect and compassion that you have about it, will market successfully through you.

MS. HUNT: Thank you.

I have one question for Ms. Griffin, also, that some of the issues that I've found in dealing with this population is that there's a concern with dealing with the professionals that encounter the children. We've talked about the mentors and our caretakers. There's also the professionals, the social workers, the teachers, the medical field that they have contact with these children also, and they don't know how to approach a child who has a parent incarcerated. Are there efforts within the State government to help train the professionals to get them to visit and other things?

MS. GRIFFIN: I think that your point about the need for training is really very, very good. There is a dearth of I think integrated training when we put programs together. And, I think, that one of the areas that we really do need to pay a lot of attention to is that there are a lot of folks who touch a child's life, and we need to empower them and engage them productively and sometimes build programs in which we look at just the individuals who we're delivering that service directly and not the ancillary people who touch. But, certainly, I think it's something we need to all keep in mind and look at ways to build back a coordinative piece around training.

We've started to do some of that in, not in particular to this population -- but our experience in Child Support was that we needed to go out and work with all of our community agencies about the Child Support System because when I came to the Child Support System it was clear, to me, that people did not understand it. And I'm not sure they still understand it holistically, but we've made a lot of effort to go out and speak to community agencies, community forums.

We've been here, in the Department of Corrections, talking about the system and how it works. And we have to keep that up. The continual outreach and engagement is very important, very critical to moving us all forward.

MS. HUNT: Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I have a question for you, Ms. Griffin.

Could you tell us which Department of Corrections and Human Services' programs are -- which institutions, in the DOC, this program will be implemented? And what exact areas the parenting --

MS. GRIFFIN: We're starting in the Kintock Centers, which are the assessment and treat out that -- the centers that begin the assessment and the reintegration into the community. The way that I understand it is that once an inmate comes in, they go into a particular institution, but then if they are identified to be on that track to leave, then they go through the assessment centers and into the Kintock Placement Centers . So, that we've -- we've begun -- (feedback from the PA system )

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Here he comes. (referring to maintenance employee)

(maintenance employee pushes back microphone; laughter and applause from audience)

ASSEMBLYMAN BARNES: A little magic there.

MS. GRIFFIN: I guess I didn't push it back far enough.

We just began in January. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed in January so we have had several meetings, and the population

we're focusing on is the Kintock Centers, which will get us to about 1000 individuals within the first year and then moving on out from there. We couldn't do it comprehensively throughout the system so we wanted to build on and start.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Assemblyman Payne.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Yes, thank you.

Thank you both for your presentations.

The public hearings and other kinds of public forums, etc. are very helpful in learning a lot about what's planned and what's in place, etc.. I like to be a little bit more proactive and direct. I like to see things happen. It's good to hear about all of the problems and what the things we have in plan, you know, on the drawing boards, etc., and I was going to ask a similar question.

When will these things be implemented? For instance, you mentioned, Ms. Griffin, before about the health of inmates is very important, etc., that there will be programs addressed to that. Have any of them started? When will they start?

You mentioned mentoring programs. I mean, are there any in place actually? And if they are, where?

MS. GRIFFIN: There are some in place in Corrections now through Parents Anonymous. So, they've had some small mentoring programs going on. And, I think, as you heard from the woman who stood from Reconciliation Ministries, she's been doing work here at Edna Mahan, but there have been other smaller programs operating in some of the facilities throughout the Department of Corrections.

And, I think, when we started to sit down and talk with them, what we saw was we had little programs here, there, and everywhere. And so our agreement between Human Services and Corrections has been -- we needed to then start at a locus point and begin to build out and integrate those programs into a larger cooperative.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Yes, when would that happen? I mean, what --

MS. GRIFFIN: Well, we have purchased the parenting curriculum, we are training staff to start delivering the parenting curriculum, and we are expecting to begin to start transitioning individuals through the program within the next month. So, we're, just really, at that jumping off point in which we've begun to identify some of the mentoring services that would be available and then build those out as we move along.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Yes, but what happened -- you know, I'm very glad to hear that. And I'm glad that we have a new Administration that, hopefully, will be supportive of these kinds of innovative programs we're talking about, you know. What happens is time goes by. People go in prison and out of prison. And we have these programs that will one day be implemented, or we'll have a little one here, a little one there, and then we lose people, we lose the children, etc..

You know, an example being the *Abbott* school problem in the State of New Jersey.

MS. GRIFFIN: Right.

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: For 32 years, we kept fighting to try to improve the parity for 32 years. We finally got it. So my concern always is not, you know, when are we going to implement these things?

The programs are fine, for instance. We haven't heard very much about the horror stories today. We want to concentrate on the filling the void, addressing the needs of children with incarcerated parents. One of the major problems is, of course, transportation -- visitation that I -- I've heard -- we haven't heard the horror stories that exist now in many of our institutions where they're simply impossible to visit. And then, when they get there, the kinds of conditions that people go through.

The reason I mentioned before about some of the administrators not being cooperative is because, sometimes, I've heard of examples where people ride for hours on a bus to get somewhere, and then they're turned away when they get there. And simply because they didn't wear the right colored pants or something like that, I mean.

And so we can talk all of these things we want to, but, if, in fact, we don't have the right attitude on the part of those that are running these programs, we are going to be in serious trouble. There are horror stories out there. And I would like to see some of these things corrected and addressed.

Last thing, I was interested in all of your programs, Warden. The Family Virtual Visitation Program, for instance. If, in fact, people cannot get there, this seems to me to be a marvelous way to, kind of, supplement that or substitute for the visitation, and that might be something that we here in New Jersey might look at. If, in fact, they could do something like that, I think that's very exciting and very -- if that could be implemented here, we could

resolve the problem of people being unable to physically get to these places. Maybe we could get some insight from you.

MS. LEFTRIDGE BYRD: If I might respond to that, sir, it -- any information that we have, we would, obviously, be glad to share with you around the Virtual Visitation Program.

I do want to say, as well, we employ a very high number of single parents in our institutions, which is a good thing. The sad news about Corrections is this is recession proof, and so people will be able to work at these positions for years on end.

I am considering installing computers in one of our training rooms because when single parents -- and I'm thinking about single moms at this point -- are mandated to work overtime, it becomes a very, very difficult balancing act around childcare. If a person is able to visit a childcare facility through virtual visitation, I'm thinking that may help, relative to any budget issues around overtime. If we could reduce anxiety amongst staff, simply because they'll be able to see their children for the next four or eight hours, additional to their first shift, and that may be a good thing.

So, there are a lot of applications for that technology, you know. I hope that it's beneficial.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Assemblywoman Heck, would you like to comment?

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: I just wondered, with so many private programs out there that are doing a good job, have you incorporated in your budget a grants program or a way to work public/private with them?

MS. GRIFFIN: We're subcontracting or looking for subcontractors in the community, particularly --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Have you noted people --

MS. GRIFFIN: Yes, absolutely. We've traded cards with several of them.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Have you notified people, some of who are here today --

MS. GRIFFIN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: -- that they have an opportunity to do that?

MS. GRIFFIN: Yes.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Would you let us know what those opportunities are so we can spread the word, so to speak?

MS. GRIFFIN: Sure, we will.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: I think I saw this -- oh, I'm sorry. (referring to Assemblywoman Heck)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: One of the other things I wanted to talk about was transportation. And, I think it is important for us, and, perhaps, you, because you're working with the other groups in New Jersey. They do have programs where they have an excess of older buses, I don't mean bad buses, but buses they take off the road on a daily basis, and they will donate to groups. So catch somebody in Transportation. They're perfectly good buses, and, perhaps, we could also arrange to have special visits or a special bus to come to this facility or other facilities, at least, a couple of times a year. I don't see where that would be an impossible task.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Mr. Baselice, you have, like, one mouthful of a question. And the other gentleman has one mouthful of a question.

**ROBERT P. BASELICE:** Thank you for inviting me.

My name is Bob Baselice, I'm the Co-chair of the New Jersey Association of County Youth Service Commissions and from Hudson County. I've had a pleasure of working with a few of the Assembly people, up there, over the years.

Actually, there are two issues I want to touch upon. Assemblywoman Previte was a part of funding a program, prior to you becoming an Assemblywoman, through the JJDP Committee for an effective parenting program, which was for adolescents that are parents that are incarcerated. There is a population of adolescents in detention centers, juvenile detention facilities, that are also parents that we -- in your foresight, the Committee that voted on the program did fund a program in Hudson County, in which we continue to fund.

The New Jersey Association of County Youth Service Commissions -- each county has a Youth Service Commission, and what they do is they plan for the Juvenile Justice Commission, at the State level, for programs and funding within the communities.

Transportation. I want to touch upon two key issues. I think everyone wants to work together, and one of the things that we want to have happen though is, more often than not, we, the Juvenile Justice people, need to plan for the kids in the Juvenile Justice System that need to -- get to or at risk of -- and I don't like the "at risk" either -- getting to the facilities -- the

facility where their parents may be. So, a lot of time provisions need to be made for transportation within the programs.

Transportation that isn't provided by a program -- and we are a transportation, somewhat, rich state, but if we do not get the people that need to get there that can afford to get there -- if you're talking about someone coming from Hudson County to this facility and paying for their own transportation, many kids, they can't. So, there has to be other alternatives for them to get to the facilities we're talking about.

Secondly, I would offer the Association to the panel, as well as to the Committee, as well as to all of you, every county has a Youth Service Commission. We plan, and we're in the process of planning, this year, for all of the funding that comes through the Juvenile Justice Commission. It's important that we be a partner in the Corrections/Human Services' model, with the Juvenile Justice Commission, in providing and planning for these types of services because we fund the programs that deal with the kids. And we try to stop those kids from getting where they need to get.

My second question of the Committee would be, can you get us the numbers, the county's numbers, as to the number of parents in the State facilities? Because that would be a difficult task, as is getting into the facility might be a difficult task, also, giving the number of parents for each county that have parents in the facilities would be a difficult task. And that, I think, would help the Youth Service Commissions in identifying those kids that need to be linked up to a service to get there.

Thank you.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Thank you.

And the other gentleman has a --

**D O N N Y B E L L A M Y:** Good afternoon.

My name is Donny Bellamy, I'm the Assistant Director of Parents Anonymous of New Jersey.

Our name has come up a few times because we do a number of services in Corrections and also in JJC. We have and are still running a program right here in Edna Mahan. We've been here at least 15 years. We do a program in the POSSE program, as well, H.O.P.E.S., a survivors program. We do a number of programs in Kintock, in Tully House, and Mid-State, OIA in Camden County. So, we have touched Corrections in a number of different directions.

We not only focus on, say, the men or just the women, we focus on the family, as well. This again, we try to get that whole net together. Without them working as a team, eventually, they come back into Corrections. We've found that if the parents have a good sense of bond with their child, they avoid trying to come back here because it's something that's important to them. When that bond is broken, when they do come to Corrections, it doesn't get relocated, maintains being severed, you're going to lose those parents over and over again.

We are currently in partnership with Juvenile Justice. We do a PAP program, a pilot program, right now in Atlantic County and Camden County where we actually have -- for the youth offenders, basically. And we have brought their parents in alone with them to do a program, and we have a support group and an education group together.

That has been very successful thus far, but as we all know what happens, you run successful programs, and then the funding gets cut and goes away. So, I don't think we can continue to do this revolving door situation. You have something that is successful, you get rid of it, and then you start all over again. When do you start putting out money at the programs that have been successful and will continue to be successful?

Thank you. (audience applauds)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: May I just recognize a couple of people here today. The Assistant Commissioner of Corrections, Jeff Burns, and we thank Jeff for being here today for his --

ASSEMBLYMAN PAYNE: Raise your hand, Jeff. Let people see who you are.

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Well, maybe he was here shortly before. (audience laughs) He must have sneaked out on the break.

And the Acting Commissioner, or the Acting Executive Director of the Juvenile Justice Commission, Howard Beyer, is here today. (audience applauds)

And George Yefchak, the Assistant Executive Director of the Parole Board. George. (audience applauds)

And I know the Commissioner of Human Services has somebody. Where is --

ASSEMBLYWOMAN HECK: Right there. (identifying location of the Commissioner of Human Services' representative)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: Ray Castro, thank you. (audience applauds)

Howard, did you want to say something? You have half a mouthful.

**HOWARD BEYER:** I'll just give you one-half.

I just want to say that the issue of children incarcerated who have children while incarcerated is a real problem. Some of our superintendents from our facilities where we have young girls who are having babies, and we have to get them into the hospital to have the baby, and we can't get their mothers to come stay with them when they have the baby. I mean, it's heartbreaking.

And just to answer your concern, Assemblyman Payne, we are working with one of the faith groups out of Paterson to work out funding, the Transportation Program, to get loved ones to the facilities, ours, as well as DOC's. So, we are working on it.

Thank you very much. (audience applauds)

ASSEMBLYWOMAN PREVITE: We have started. And I hope all of you that are here today will be part of our effort as we move ahead. Thank you so much for coming. We look forward to working with you again. (audience applauds)

**(MEETING CONCLUDED)**