



## GOVERNOR'S COMMISSION ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE & SENTENCING REFORM

YMCA – Youth Safety Office  
1608 W 21<sup>st</sup> Street  
Chicago, Illinois  
Tuesday September 8, 2015  
1:00 pm – 5:00 pm

**Attendees:** Pam Rodriguez, Michael Connelly, Kathy Saltmarsh, Michael Pelletier, Kathryn Bocanegra, Elena Quintana, Michael Tardy, David Olson, Greg Sullivan, Gladys Taylor, Kwame Raoul, Rodger Heaton, Samantha Gaddy, Kwame Raoul

**Call In:** John Baldwin, Jerry Butler, Brendan Kelly, Andrew Liepold, Howard Peters, Elizabeth Robb, Brian Stewart.

### **The Fine Line Between Perpetration and Victimization**

*Dr. Elena Quintana, Adler University*

- Our main concern in the commission is to reduce the number of those in prison without affecting public safety
- In order to promote public safety we must address and understand trauma and through this we may reduce victimization
- Complex trauma
  - Ongoing, very deep trauma
  - Results from physical/sexual/emotional abuse
  - Very prevalent in the court system
  - Impedes in executive functioning capability as well as attachment
- Trauma has a large impact on brain development
- Epigenetics-large, stressful impacts in our life (like incarceration) can imbed itself into our genetic code and impact future generations
- All trauma experiences affect brain development as well as brain mass and the brain's ability to adapt
- PET scans of the brain show huge disparities between children who have experienced trauma and those who have not
- Trauma is hardwired into our brain
- Viewing/experiencing trauma can impede your vision, long term memory, abstract thinking, abstract hope, executive functioning
  - Brain is trying to adapt to the environment you have continually been exposed to
- Those who have experienced a lot of trauma are quick to get upset and slow to soothe because how their brain has developed around their experiences of trauma
- ACES (adverse childhood experiences) Study shows a cluster effect of adverse childhood experiences
  - Those who experience one, are likely to have experience others as well

- People with numerous (6+) adverse childhood experiences tend to die earlier than those who have low ACES
  - Due to health disparities throughout their lifetime
- Higher likelihood of being raped with higher ACES
- Juvenile offenders
  - 84% of girls 81% of boys have experienced family violence
  - 68% of girl and 65% of boys have had a household member who has been incarcerated
  - 31% of girls and 7% of boys have been sexually abused
- Adult offenders
  - Have 4x the number of ACES
- Trauma of correction officers
  - 34% of correction officers suffer from PTSD
  - Suicide risk for correction officers is 39% higher than all other positions
- Trauma Informed Care
  - “What happened to you?” NOT “What’s wrong with you?”

## **The Prison Letters**

*Dr. Elena Quintana, Adler University & Ray Robinson*

- Surveys sent out to 25 penitentiaries throughout Illinois
- Over 1200 letters/surveys were sent back
- Responses pertain to healthcare, education programs, length of sentencing, family programs
- Length of sentencing
  - Long sentences debilitate prisoners
  - “Start giving sentences of goals”
  - 94% did not believe sentences were fair
  - Accountability laws unfair
  - Racism plays large part in length of sentencing
  - Did sentencing improve community?
    - Many responses indicated that the same behavior is ongoing in the community
  - Many long sentences fail to acknowledge ability to rehabilitate
- Many denied basic programming or educational support
- Healthcare access?
  - 94% said they have had access to healthcare
  - Very long wait times for treatment
  - Ibuprofen given for almost all ailments
  - Some conditions may go untreated for years
- Programs?
  - Want more education, mental health, substance abuse programs
- Planning for return to community?
  - 31% say yes, 59% no
  - Need to prepare inmates for re-entering or they will quickly recidivate
- Family programming?
  - Most have not participated in reunification programs
  - Belief that IDOC tears families apart
    - Do not facilitate visits with family members

## **Criminal Justice Reform and the Perspectives of Victims**

*Vicki Smith, Executive Director of Illinois Coalition Against Domestic Violence*

- Speaking on the experiences of victims of domestic violence
- Topic of domestic violence began to gain prominence in the early 1970s
- Domestic violence is used as a control mechanism over their victims
- 1980s-Mental health services has been shifted to community based programs, however this is difficult to access, especially for those in domestic violence shelters
- 1990s-Welfare reform has eliminated the safety net victims need to be independent from their abuser
- Black women who are victims of domestic violence often do not report black male abuser because they do not want to add to the number of black men in prison
- Jail and prison have *not* been effective for domestic violence cases because:
  - System doesn't take domestic violence seriously, little understanding that this IS a serious crime
  - Focus is usually on minority populations
  - There are few programs within prison that hold abuser accountable
- Children need to be educated on domestic violence so that they not commit it when older
- What rehabilitative efforts are available/needed?
- Only model used to combat domestic violence is for male abusers against female
  - Duluth model: groups of batterers brought together to speak on responsibility, accountability
    - Lack of cultural sensitivity within the program
    - Many other shortfalls of this program
- Those who have experienced trauma throughout their life need different type of programming/education regarding domestic violence

## **Using Public Safety Dollars to Promote Public Safety**

*Dr. Dan Cooper & Kathryn Bocanegra*

- Million dollar blocks
  - Spending millions of dollars incarcerating people from one block
  - Investment in removing individuals from communities and placing them in prisons
  - 851 blocks in Chicago where over 1 million dollars was committed to incarcerating people in one year
    - Consists of average cost of incarcerating 1 person/year in prison
- Neighborhoods themselves can have criminogenic effects
- Incarceration rates have negative health effects on neighborhood
  - Increased levels of stress have longstanding effects
- Social Capital
  - Measures the density of community organizations and non-profits within an area
- High incarceration rates can also make neighborhoods more dangerous in million dollar blocks
  - Incarceration disrupts informal social controls which undermines public safety
  - Lack of male leaders in the area, as they are in prison
  - Need to look at informal social control networks in order to make communities safer
- Importance of Community
  - Reinvestment strategies
    - Critiques of Justice Reinvestment Program

- Little evidence that data is being used through mapping to make reinvestment back into the community
    - Money instead goes back into law enforcement and probation
    - Many financial incentives for locking people up, but little incentive for doing something different
  - Think smaller!
    - Find strong community programs to do small comprehensive projects within the community
- Courts
  - How can courts address quality of life within the community
  - Community prosecution
    - Prosecutors located within high risk neighborhoods
  - Community sanctioning
    - Prioritizes needs of communities and restores the community from the losses it has incurred from the crimes
- Corrections
  - Supervising probationers and parolees where they live
    - Satellite offices within neighborhoods
  - Community supervision
- Evaluation of Programs
  - Need to divert corrections, housing, social services, education, community services money into the community structure
  - Gauge the communities want in terms of public safety
  - Importance of prioritizing programs for spending money on children in order to avoid spending more money in the long run for incarceration.

## **Commission Discussion**

- Focus on the high incarceration areas for reform measures
- Should offenders return to the communities from which they came? Will this cause the same cycle?
  - Community members want these people to return rehabilitated and as a changed person
- There is no shared understanding of a goal for public safety
  - There is a need for a mission statement of some sort so that all are accountable for the same goal
  - Numerous different groups need to be included in on this goal
    - Law enforcement, community members, housing, corrections, etc.
- The Commission needs to create a mission statement that will include performance measures
  - “Reducing victimization by increasing functionality”
- Discussion of million dollar blocks in Chicago
  - Looking into these blocks and seeing what is there in terms of law enforcement
  - Belief that there is an overreliance on law enforcement on these blocks
- Too much reliance on corrections for several different functions
- We need to provide grants for workshops for judges, law enforcement, leaders in community and social service programs to collaborate with each other to promote public safety
  - Incentivize collaboration
- We need to get beyond just talking about the issues, we need to begin making recommendations

- We need one case manager per offender/parolee to map and track their progress, not case managers for every different aspect of their reentry
- We need to implement a spoke model of community justice programs
  - One central community service program located at the center
- Focusing on Cook County and Chicago is important
  - Start out small with the highest crime communities
- Getting OMB involved will be of the utmost importance
- Addressing to the public that probation and other alternatives are actually harsher and harder than life in prison
  - We are trying to make people accountable and rehabilitate into society

## **Public Comment**

- Creation of a “Marshall Plan” to help provide money and support for high crime/high incarceration communities
- We need to implement new and innovative programs for these million dollar blocks
  - Place investment back into community members, stop studying the problems and work to fix the programs
- Idea that offenders are worth more in prison than they are walking down the street
  - Many say that if they had been making from their job what DOC spends on them, they would have never gone to prison
- Safe from the Start Program
  - Works with children, 0-5, who have been exposed to domestic violence in their homes on these million dollar blocks
  - Wanting to expand this program throughout the whole state
- We need to invest in people
- Most people leaving from prison do not have the support of friends and family when they get home
  - Community support and programs are so important in ensuring people stay on the right track and do not recidivate
- Prisoners need the ability to learn computer programs like Word and Excel in order to be more marketable once they are released