



Department of Justice

STATEMENT OF

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BEFORE THE

**COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT REFORM AND OVERSIGHT
SUBCOMMITTEE ON FEDERAL WORKFORCE, POSTAL SERVICE, AND
THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
UNITED STATES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES**

ENTITLED

**“HALF WAY HOME TO THE DISTRICT: THE ROLE OF HALFWAY HOUSES
IN REDUCING CRIME AND RECIDIVISM IN THE NATION’S CAPITAL”**

PRESENTED

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**Statement of Louis Eichenlaub
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Workforce, Postal Service, and the District of Columbia Subcommittee
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Good morning Chairman Lynch and Members of the Subcommittee. I appreciate the opportunity to appear before you today on behalf of Director Lappin to discuss the role of Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs) or “Halfway Houses” in meeting the reentry needs of offenders from the District of Columbia.

The mission of the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) is to protect society by confining offenders in the controlled environments of prisons and community-based facilities that are safe, humane, cost-efficient, and appropriately secure, and provide inmates with a range of work and other self-improvement programs that will help them adopt a crime-free lifestyle upon their return to the community. As our mission indicates, the post-release success of offenders is as important to public safety as inmates’ secure incarceration.

The BOP is responsible for the incarceration of more than 208,500 inmates. This figure represents primarily offenders who have been charged with or sentenced for committing Federal crimes and, based on the National Capital Area Revitalization Act of 1997, also includes felons convicted of violating District of Columbia statutes. (This latter group represents 2.7% of the total inmate population). Specifically, we have 5,782 inmates who were sentenced in D.C. Superior Court (we also have 1,000 inmates who were sentenced in U.S. District Court). Approximately 82 percent of the total inmate population is confined in Bureau-operated institutions, while 18 percent are under contract care, primarily in private sector prisons.

We have experienced significant increases in the inmate population in the last 2 decades. While we are no longer experiencing the dramatic population increases of between 10,000 and 11,400 inmates per year that occurred from 1998 to 2001, the increases are still significant and include average annual net increases of 5,000-7,000 inmates per year for the last 5 fiscal years (from 2003 to 2008). We expect these increases to continue the next several years, reaching a total of 220,000 by the end of fiscal year 2011.

Our agency has no control over the number of inmates who come into our custody or the skill deficits they bring with them. We do have control, however, over the programs in which inmates participate while they are incarcerated that increase their opportunities to succeed when they return to the community. Virtually all of our inmates will be released back to the community at some point. Most need job skills, vocational training, education, counseling, and other assistance (such as drug abuse treatment, anger management, and parenting skills) if they are to successfully reenter society. Each year, approximately 50,000 inmates release from federal prison and return to our communities, a number that will continue to increase as the inmate population grows.

Inmate Reentry

Preparation for reentry begins in the first days of an inmate's incarceration. Every Federal prison offers inmate programs that stress the development of work skills and life skills needed to enhance employment upon release and to help inmates maintain a crime-free lifestyle. These programs include work, education, vocational training, substance abuse treatment, observance of faith and religion, psychological services and counseling, release preparation, and other programs that impart essential life skills. We also provide other structured activities designed to teach inmates productive ways to use their time.

Rigorous research has found that inmates who participate in programs are less likely to commit future crimes; inmates who participate in Federal Prison Industries (FPI) are 24 percent less likely to recidivate; inmates who participate in vocational or occupational training are 33 percent less likely to recidivate; inmates who participate in education programs are 16 percent less likely to recidivate; and inmates who complete the residential drug abuse treatment program are 16 percent less likely to recidivate and 15 percent less likely to relapse to drug use within 3 years after release.

Inmate Work Programs. Prison work programs teach inmates occupational skills and instill in offenders sound and lasting work habits and a work ethic. All sentenced inmates in Federal correctional institutions are required to work (with the exception of those who for security, educational programming, or medical reasons are unable to do so).

FPI is the BOP's most important correctional program because it has been proven to substantially reduce recidivism and is self-sustaining. FPI provides inmates the opportunity to gain marketable work skills and a general work ethic -- both of which can lead to viable, sustained employment upon release. It also keeps them productively occupied; inmates who participate in FPI are substantially less likely to engage in misconduct.

Education, Vocational Training, and Occupational Training. The BOP offers a variety of programs for inmates to enhance their education and to acquire skills to help them obtain employment after release. All institutions offer literacy classes, English as a Second Language (ESL), adult continuing education, parenting classes, recreation activities, wellness education, and library services.

With a few exceptions, inmates who do not have a high school diploma or a General Educational Development (GED) certificate must participate in the literacy program for a minimum of 240 hours or until they obtain the GED. The ESL program enables inmates with limited proficiency in English to improve their English language skills. We also facilitate vocational training and occupationally-oriented higher education programs. Many institutions offer inmates the opportunity to enroll in and pay for more traditional college courses that could lead to a bachelor's degree.

Occupational and vocational training programs are based on the needs of the specific institution's inmate population, general labor market conditions, and institution labor force

needs. On-the-job training is afforded to inmates through formal apprenticeship programs, institution job assignments, and work in the FPI program.

Substance Abuse Treatment. The BOP's substance abuse treatment program includes drug education, non-residential drug abuse treatment, residential drug abuse treatment, and community transition treatment.

Drug abuse education is available in all BOP facilities. It is designed to motivate appropriate offenders to participate in non-residential or residential drug abuse treatment, as needed.

Non-residential drug abuse treatment is also available in every BOP institution. It primarily targets inmates with relatively minor or low-level substance abuse impairment and inmates whose sentence does not allow sufficient time to complete the residential drug abuse treatment program. Non-residential drug abuse treatment is based on the cognitive behavioral therapy model and focuses on criminal and drug-using risk factors such as antisocial and pro-criminal attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors and replacing them with pro-social alternatives.

The BOP is required by statute to provide residential drug abuse treatment to all inmates who volunteer and are eligible for the program. The foundation for residential drug abuse treatment is the cognitive behavior therapy treatment model, which targets offenders' major criminal and drug-using risk factors. Residential drug abuse treatment is provided toward the end of the sentence in order to maximize its positive impact on soon-to-be-released inmates. The residential drug abuse treatment program is available in 62 BOP institutions, including the Rivers Correctional Institution that houses 542 D.C. Superior Court offenders, 179 D.C. District Court offenders, and 17 offenders serving both Superior and District Court sentences.

Drug abuse treatment in the BOP includes a community transition treatment component to help ensure a seamless transition from the institution to the community. The BOP provides a treatment summary to the RRC where the inmate will reside, to the community-based treatment provider who will treat the inmate, and to the U.S. Probation Office before the inmate's arrival at the residential reentry center. Participants in community transition drug abuse treatment typically continue treatment during their period of supervised release after they leave BOP custody.

Specific Pro-Social Values Programs. Based on the proven success of the residential substance abuse treatment program, we have implemented a number of other programs to address the needs of other segments of the inmate population (including younger offenders and high-security inmates). These programs focus on inmates' emotional and behavioral responses to difficult situations and emphasize life skills and the development of pro-social values, respect for self and others, responsibility for personal actions, and tolerance. Many of these programs have already been found to significantly reduce inmates' involvement in institution misconduct. The positive relationship between institution conduct and post-release success makes us hopeful about the ability of these programs to reduce recidivism.

Life Connections. The Life Connections Program is a residential multi-faith-based program that provides the opportunity for inmates to deepen their spiritual life and assist in their ability to

successfully reintegrate following release from prison. These programs are currently underway at FCI Petersburg, USP Leavenworth, FCI Milan, USP Terre Haute, and FMC Carswell. We have found a reduction in serious institution misconduct among program participants. We will assess the effect of the program on recidivism, once a sufficient number of graduates have been released for at least 3 years.

Inmate Skills Development Initiative. The Inmate Skills Development initiative unifies our inmate programs and services into a comprehensive reentry strategy. The three principles of the Inmate Skills Development initiative are: (1) inmate participation in programs must be linked to the development of relevant inmate reentry skills; (2) inmates should acquire or improve a skill identified through a comprehensive assessment, rather than simply completing a program; and (3) resources are allocated to target inmates with a high risk for reentry failure. The initiative includes a comprehensive assessment of inmates' strengths and deficiencies in nine core areas, and allows us to meet the important reentry goals required by the Second Chance Act. This critical information is updated throughout an inmate's incarceration and is provided to probation officers as inmates get close to their release from prison so as to assist in the community reentry plan. As part of this initiative, program managers have been collaborating and developing partnerships with a number of governmental and private sector agencies to assist with inmate reentry.

Specific Release Preparation Efforts. In addition to the wide array of inmate programs described above, the BOP provides a Release Preparation Program in which inmates become involved toward the end of their sentence. The program includes classes in resume writing, job seeking, and job retention skills. The program also includes presentations by officials from community-based organizations that help former offenders find employment and training opportunities after release from prison.

Release preparation includes a number of inmate transition services provided at our institutions, such as mock job fairs where inmates learn job interview techniques and community recruiters learn of the skills available among inmates. At mock job fairs, qualified inmates are afforded the opportunity to apply for jobs with companies that have job openings. Our facilities also help inmates prepare release portfolios, including a resume, education and training certificates, diplomas, education transcripts, and other significant documents needed for a successful job interview.

We have established employment resource centers at all Federal prisons to assist inmates with creating release folders to use in job searches; soliciting job leads from companies that have participated in mock job fairs; identifying other potential job openings; and identifying points of contact for information on employment references, job training, and educational programs.

RRC Placement Process

The RRC placement process begins at the institution where an inmate is housed. Seventeen to nineteen months prior to an inmate's release (or at initial classification if the inmate has less time to serve), the inmate's unit team (consisting of the unit manager, case manager, and other staff), conduct an individualized assessment to determine if an inmate should be released through an RRC. Consideration is given to many factors, including the inmate's willingness to participate in programs, his/her conduct, and the likelihood that he/she will avail him/herself of the opportunities that RRCs provide. The RRC Director is afforded the opportunity to review the referral material to determine if the inmate is appropriate for his/her facility, and if so, if a bed is available on the requested placement date.

Residential Reentry Centers

The BOP places 80% of all inmates in community-based programs for the final portion of their term of imprisonment to help offenders gradually re-adapt to their community environment. These programs are a critical component of a comprehensive reentry strategy. Many of the programs and treatment that offenders receive in the correctional institutions are reinforced during their stay in the community-based programs. These programs provide an important opportunity for offenders to find a job and a place to live, save some money, complete drug treatment (in some cases) and strengthen ties to family and friends. In other words, these programs contribute to public safety.

The BOP does not operate any RRCs, rather all of them are operated by private providers under contract with the BOP. Prior to awarding a contract, the BOP inspects the proposed site and conducts background checks on all proposed contract staff. The BOP carefully monitors performance under such contracts, conducting regular (scheduled and unscheduled) site visits. Repeated findings of deficiencies lead to withholding funds, contract modifications and even contract termination on occasion.

The BOP is committed to ensuring that its programs, including RRCs, build upon the body of knowledge about what is effective in reducing recidivism. For RRCs, these evidence-based practices are articulated in our statement of work (SOW). RRCs must:

1. conduct an assessment to identify the crime-producing behaviors to target;
2. develop an individualized case plan based on the assessment;
3. offer effective interventions; and
4. implement the program consistently.

BOP staff conduct regular oversight of our DC RRCs. We contract with three RRCs in DC to provide reentry services: Fairview (for female offenders), and Efforts for Ex-Convicts (EFEC) and Hope Village for male offenders. Our contracts at Hope Village, BOP's largest RRC, are performance-based. Performance-based contracting allows contractors to reach reentry program

goals and outcomes through interventions tailored to the specific population they house. A further requirement of performance-based contracts is that the contractor must conduct quarterly self assessments. In this process, Hope Village must assess its own program integrity, quality assurance, evaluation efforts, and fidelity to program interventions. These quarterly reports form the basis of BOP's monitoring efforts at Hope Village, as we check to see that the contractor has identified and corrected weaknesses and is effectively self-monitoring.

The BOP complements its use of RRCs with home detention. Some inmates are placed in home detention for a brief period at the end of their prison terms. They serve this portion of their sentences at home under strict schedules, curfew requirements, telephonic monitoring, and sometimes electronic monitoring. The supervision is provided by staff at the RRCs. After release from the RRC or from the institution (for inmates not released through a RRC), most inmates have a period of supervised release under the supervision of the U.S. Probation Office, or in the case of DC offenders, by the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency.

Closing

Chairman Lynch, this concludes my formal statement. Again, I thank you, Mr. Chaffetz, and the Subcommittee for your support of our agency. As I have indicated in my testimony, we are being challenged significantly in our ability to meet our mission based on very tight budgets over the past several years. We desire to expand inmate programs that have been demonstrated to reduce recidivism as expressed through our mission. We can provide more inmates with the opportunity to avail themselves of beneficial correctional programs by reducing our crowding and adequately staffing our facilities as funding permits. I would be pleased to answer any questions you or other Members of the Subcommittee may have.