Testimony before the Senate Legislative Oversight Committee

By John J. Clancy

July 19, 2012

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, my name is John Clancy and I am pleased to be here this afternoon to explain why New Jersey has the best community corrections system in the country, how it evolved and what it takes to keep it the best in the nation.

For myself, I have spent my professional career working with individuals and families afflicted with alcohol and drug addiction and related behavioral disorders both in the public and private sector. So at today’s hearing, I believe it is important to realize that, despite recent press reports to the contrary, New Jersey’s community corrections system is the leader in reentry services in America. I joined the system in the mid-1980s when the state’s prison population was exploding with 1,200 additional inmates per year. At that time, Department of Corrections Commissioner Bill Fauver realized that the prison population was becoming a crisis and so he began to seek alternatives. Together, we began a nearly ten-year dialogue to avert the looming prison crisis and the terrible cost that would mean to taxpayers and to the men and women caught in the revolving door of incarceration.

Commissioner Fauver and I immediately recognized that there were a number of major obstacles in our way. First, the State of New Jersey had no money to invest in building or renovating facilities to accommodate large amounts of offenders. In addition, the state did not have the time to go through the long and arduous process of public acquisition and siting of facilities. And, even if the state was able to get past the usual “not in my back yard” syndrome, the Department did not have the expertise to provide the assessment and treatment needs of the offenders who needed preparation before returning to the community.

On a literal handshake, Commissioner Fauver and I agreed that I would seek to site, develop and open a 500-bed treatment center to prepare offenders for the reentry process. The Commissioner made it clear that all the risk was mine, and that I would have no contract without extensive negotiations with the Attorney General’s Office. Those negotiations took place and resulted in the contractual relationship between the non-profit company, Education and Health Centers of America and its subcontractor, Community Education Centers, Inc. For the record, those contracts were reviewed by the Attorney General’s Office in 1994, re-reviewed in 1996 and again last year subsequent to the report from the State Comptroller.

But here’s the point – Commissioner Fauver saw the prison crisis coming and acted. With the support from several different governors, and annual appropriations from the State Legislature, the decision was made to embark on a public policy away from building more prisons and to develop a more robust community corrections system and process. Our vision at
the time included a multi-disciplinary approach to reentry, meaning a blend of security personnel with educators, psychologists and other treatment focused staff.

Let me quickly just list some of the other major milestones in New Jersey’s effort to make that public policy shift a success:

- In 1998, with a focus on assessment services meant to evaluate offenders before their release to community programs, Talbot Hall opened as a 500-bed assessment center. For the record, I’d like to point out that no other private facility has been opened by us for the NJDOC since 1998.

- Between 1996 and 1999, the number of community beds jumped from 765 to more than 2,100 as the Department’s vision for community corrections and its related services began to be implemented. The total grew to 2,700 in 2005 and today, seven years later, stands at 2,742. Public bidding for the work was instituted in 1997.

- In 2004, the first study of the effectiveness of the community corrections system was conducted in conjunction with NJ DOC and Drexel University. Despite the fact that the study group had higher risk factors than the DOC control group, the Drexel study found that the New Jersey system reduced recidivism, re-arrest and re-incarceration rates by nearly 30%.

- In fiscal year 2005, the State Legislature increased funding for community corrections from $58 million to more than $61 million. Since 2005, that funding was unchanged until the legislative package sponsored by Assemblywoman Bonnie Watson-Coleman was passed and signed into law by Governor Corzine. That funding level has remained unchanged at about $64 million under Governor Christie.

- In 2009, the state prison in Camden County was closed and bulldozed as a result of the declining prison population.

Along the way, other enhancements and improvements have been added to the system. For example, in 2004, Commissioner Devon Brown added the requirement that community corrections facilities meet the accreditation standards set by the American Correctional Association and/or the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitative Facilities. And as you know, Commissioner Lanigan has significantly increased inspections and fines since taking office.

By the way, this impressive track record has taken place without any increase in the per diem paid to us since 1994/1998. NO INCREASES. And, that per diem includes providing full medical care for offenders, all medications, as well as food, lodging and treatment services.
Based on these policy decisions made by the State Legislature, the Department of Corrections and the State Parole Board, the New Jersey prison system receded from its near overcrowding crisis. Since 1999, the prison population in New Jersey has dropped from a high of 31,000 inmates to under 24,000 today – the most dramatic decline of any state in the nation. Today, New Jersey’s incarceration rate is the 10th lowest in the country. In addition, the Pew Center on the States last year published a study on recidivism rates and found that New Jersey’s rate dropped by 11.4% for the period studied, the best in the Northeast and the 5th best in the country.

The point of all this history is that the New Jersey system did not happen by accident, nor was it created by private industry in secret or recently. The New Jersey system is successful precisely because it was well thought-out and formed in a public-private partnership – well monitored and studied.

The reason for the success?

From my perspective as a treatment provider having spent many years working with offenders, the focus on assessment and addiction services, adequately addressing an offender’s behavioral problems, decision-making, providing educational programming, developing strong linkages with community and church groups, establishing an alumni association, along with a focus on preparing offenders for job readiness near the community where they will return are the keys to the New Jersey success.

In addition, the success has been the result of private sector innovations to go above and beyond the state contract requirements. Our facilities instituted the ACA accreditation measures mentioned previously before they were required. Our facilities provide an extensive network of Family Services programming to offenders and their families, including partnerships with the National Fatherhood Initiative, and programs for incarcerated mothers and weekly family gathering sessions. These extra programs are conducted with masters and doctorate level interns from Rutgers, Seton Hall, Fordham, Drexel and Columbia University, among others.

I don’t need to tell anyone here that running a prison is expensive. The Pew Center on the States estimates that America spends $601 billion annually to build, staff and equip prisons. I have always believed that is not money well spent. And while I know that there are dangerous criminals who need to be incarcerated, we all also know that 98% of the people we send to

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prison come home to live in our communities. They will drive trucks on our streets, work in our communities and serve food to our families. To me, the key question is: “What are we doing to prepare these individuals before they get back into the community and at what cost?”

I am extremely proud to have dedicated my professional career to building a reentry system that helps offenders and their families and which has proven successful. So allow me just moment to comment on the grossly inaccurate reports of late regarding our facilities and staff. First, the claim that the facilities are understaffed or poorly trained is false. Employees receive extensive training before starting a position, plus on-the-job training and in-service training as well. In fact, with the exception of Talbot Hall, all our New Jersey facilities are unionized with employees represented by 1199J of the National Union Hospital and Health Care Employees or CWA Local 1040. I’m pleased to include in my testimony a statement from both unions but let me read in part from the CWA statement which says, “The reports of inappropriate employee conduct referenced by the New York Times do not accurately reflect the efforts of our Union members and their positive and meaningful experiences working in side Bo Robinson during Local 1040 and CEC’s two year relationship.” I am also very proud of our employees.

In addition, today Community Education Centers has an excellent relationship with our lending institutions.

And last, the inaccurate reports left the reader with the false impression that I or the company did not care or took no action in the face of some tragic events inside our facilities. To the contrary, although we work with a difficult population and tragic incidents have and will occur, each and every incident is investigated, reviewed with the referring agency and/or the appropriate law enforcement agency. And, a corrective action plan is always submitted for review and implemented.

Again, I appreciate the opportunity to be here today to work with you to explain the track record of community corrections in New Jersey, and I pledge my commitment to work with you to implement any improvements that may come as a result of your hearing. My recommendation for the future is that ALL offenders leaving prison should be passing through the reentry system. Today most inmates simply “max out” their prison terms and return to the street. If every inmate passed through the reentry system, New Jersey’s recidivism rate would fall further and it is my hope we’d close another state prison.

In closing, I extend an invitation to all the members of the committee to tour any of our facilities to see us for yourself. Thank you.

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COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTERS

Statements From CWA and 1199J:

Communications Workers of America (CWA) Local 1040
For the past two years, the Communications Workers of America, Local 1040 has represented Employees working at Community Education Centers' Albert "Bo" Robinson Assessment and Treatment Center. Over these two years, the hard work, honesty, integrity and dedication, of our union members has made a strong difference in our communities by improving the lives of the individuals, with whom we work. The reports of inappropriate employee conduct referenced by the New York Times do not accurately reflect the efforts of our Union members and their positive and meaningful experiences working inside Bo Robinson during Local 1040 and CEC's two year relationship.

Carolyn C. Wade
President, CWA Local 1040

CWA Local 1040 members work at The Albert M. Bo Robinson Assessment and Treatment Center in Trenton, NJ

District 1199J National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, AFSCME/AFL-CIO
District 1199J, National Union of Hospital and Health Care Employees, AFSCME/AFL-CIO, believes that the recent allegations made by New York Times are not an accurate reflection of its experience with the Company and do not reflect the meaningful work provided by the Union's hardworking men and women, who every day are making a difference in our community. We proudly stand behind our 300 union members working inside four CEC reentry facilities whose efforts provide people with a second chance on life and make our communities safer.

Susan Cleary
President, District 1199J

District 1199J members work at Delaney Hall, Logan Hall, The Harbor, Tully House all located in Newark, NJ.

35 Fairfield Place • West Caldwell, NJ 07006 • Tel: (973) 226-2900 • Fax: (973) 740-1793
www.cecinfl.com
CEC Admissions and Escapes/Absconds by Jurisdiction 2005-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>2008</th>
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<td>4923</td>
<td>5285</td>
<td>5496</td>
<td>5941</td>
<td>5214</td>
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<td>24</td>
<td>34</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>26</td>
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<td>2332</td>
<td>2834</td>
<td>2868</td>
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<td>2842</td>
<td>2478</td>
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<td>109</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>85</td>
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<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
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Notes:
- Total escapes/absconds 2005-2012: 881 out of 127,074 admissions (A rate of 0.69%)
- Total NJ DOC escapes 2005-2012: 200 out of 38,593 (A rate of 0.53%)
- Total NJ Parole absconds 2005-2012: 677 out of 20,513 (3.3% abscond rate)*
- Total County escapes 2005-2012: 4 out of 67,968 (A rate of 0.005%)

The national average for parole absconds is 7% or double the CEC abscond rate in NJ.

Improvements in all areas from 2010-2012

<table>
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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2010</th>
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<th>Total</th>
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<td>Total Admissions (DOC/Parole/County)</td>
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<td>52</td>
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<td>13394</td>
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<td>Total NJ DOC Escapes from CEC NJ Facilities</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>57</td>
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<td>Parole Admissions to CEC NJ Facilities</td>
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<td>2478</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
<td>County Admissions to CEC NJ Facilities</td>
<td>10119</td>
<td>9197</td>
<td>6352</td>
<td>25668</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total County Escapes from CEC NJ Facilities</td>
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<td>0</td>
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<td>0</td>
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New Jersey's "Continuum-of-Care" Approach to Offender Reentry is a National Model

New Jersey Department of Corrections Prison Population
1997-2009

Source: NJ DOC/Federal Bureau of Justice Statistics

Fewer repeat offenders

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National rank</th>
<th>Percentage change in decline in recidivism</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Oregon</td>
<td>-31.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Kansas</td>
<td>-22.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Utah</td>
<td>-18.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Michigan</td>
<td>-18.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. New Jersey</td>
<td>-11.4%</td>
</tr>
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</table>

Neighboring states

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>State</th>
<th>Percentage change</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pennsylvania</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ohio</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York</td>
<td>0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Illinois</td>
<td>-0.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wisconsin</td>
<td>-0.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indiana</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Pew Center on the States
The Detroit News

*Recidivism Rate is defined as the proportion of persons released from prison who are rearrested, reconvicted or returned to custody within a specific time period.

Since the opening of NJ's offender assessment centers in 1998, the state's prison population has dropped 19%, second only to New York State. www.sentencingproject.org

The Pew study finds that the recidivism rate has dropped by 11.4% thanks to NJ's offender reentry services and a robust community corrections program (comparing groups released in 1999 vs. 2004) www.pewcenteronthestates.org

Together, both studies find NJ's reentry system is cost effective and produces better outcomes.
Sensational Claims of "Escapes" Ignore Legal Definitions

The New York Times claimed that 5,100 inmates had "escaped" New Jersey's halfway houses since 2005 knowing that their 5,100 included parolees that absconded from community programs who cannot be legally charged with an escape. The New Jersey Criminal Code clearly defines the difference between an escape and a parole abscond.

New Jersey Criminal Code 2C:29-5. Escape

2C:29-5. Escape. a. Escape. A person commits an offense if he without lawful authority removes himself from official detention or fails to return to official detention following temporary leave granted for a specific purpose or limited period. "Official detention" means arrest, detention in any facility for custody of persons under charge or conviction of a crime or offense, or committed pursuant to chapter 4 of this Title, or alleged or found to be delinquent, detention for extradition or deportation, or any other detention for law enforcement purposes; but "official detention" does not include supervision of probation or parole, or constraint incidental to release on bail.

b. Absconding from parole. A person subject to parole commits a crime of the third degree if the person goes into hiding or leaves the State with a purpose of avoiding supervision. As used in this subsection, "parole" includes participation in the Intensive Supervision Program (ISP) established pursuant to the Rules Governing the Courts of the State of New Jersey. Abandoning a place of residence without the prior permission of or notice to the appropriate supervising authority shall constitute prima facie evidence that the person intended to avoid such supervision.

A person in the custody of the New Jersey Department of Correction ("DOC") or a person awaiting trial or serving a misdemeanor sentence under custody of a county are detained under lawful authority of the State. If such people leave custody without permission, they "escape." The DOC broadly defines "escape" so that it includes not merely those persons who flee from a restricted facility, but also those near the end of their sentence and who have qualified for release into a community transitional facility and/or work-release program and who fail to return after a day at a work-release job. The latter class of "escapees" are known in the field as "walkaways," and for obvious reasons, a walkaway is generally regarded as far less serious than an "escape" in the common understanding of the term.
INDEPENDENT DATA SHOWS THAT OFFENDER REENTRY PROGRAMS HELP NJ LEAD THE NATION

24% ↓ Prison population 1999-2012
BEST IN THE NATION
Source: BJS Prisoners in 1999 and NJ DOC 2012 Report

Regional Assessment Center (RAC) technical parole violator programs "made a significant contribution to the overall decrease in New Jersey's prison population." - 2010

11.4% ↓ Recidivism Rate Reduction
BEST IN THE NORTHEAST
- Pew Center on the States "State of Recidivism" - 2011
Recidivism rate reduction was best in Northeast & 5th best in the nation

27% ↓ Assessment centers contribute to halfway house Walk-Away reduction
- New Jersey Department of Corrections Study - 2006
"Seven Year Analysis of Walk-Away Rates of New Jersey Halfway House Programs"

CLOSED 630-bed Riverfront State Prison in 2009

Reentry Programs Save Taxpayers Dollars
$49,000: Est. annual incarceration cost state prison
vs.
$25,813: Est. annual individual cost reentry program
Source: NJ Administrative Office of the Courts

Statewide Offender Reentry Capacity Stays Flat
2,700 Total residential beds FY 2003
2,742 Total residential beds FY 2011
Source: State of New Jersey Annual Budgets
# CEC Operated NJ Facilities Safe and Secure
Less than 1% (0.006%) Escape/Abscond Rate 2005-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total Admissions 2005-2012</th>
<th>CEC Escape/Abscond</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOC: 17,337</strong></td>
<td>1 (0.006%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOC: 14,745</strong></td>
<td>5 (0.003%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parole: 6,309</strong></td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County: 2,868</strong></td>
<td>2 (0.06%)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>DOC: 4,360</strong></td>
<td>127 (2.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parole: 5,092</strong></td>
<td>26 (0.52%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County: 49,921</strong></td>
<td>2 (0.003%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>DOC: 2,151</strong></td>
<td>67 (3.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>County: 15,179</strong></td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Parole: 9,112</strong></td>
<td>651 (7.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total: 127,074</strong></td>
<td>881 (0.69%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

7-10% National escape/parole abscond rate*

*Source: Bureau of Justice Statistics and comparable data from various state Department of Corrections

Data based on 881 total escape/absconds compared to 127,074 total admissions to CEC NJ facilities in 2005-2012
NEW JERSEY REENTRY SYSTEM FACT SHEET

Fact: New Jersey is a national leader at providing effective community corrections programs.

- New Jersey’s prison population reduction of 24% (7,000 inmates) since 1999 is best in the nation.
- Independent report from Pew Center on the States found that New Jersey’s 11.4% recidivism reduction is best in the Northeast.
- New Jersey has the 10th lowest incarceration rate in the nation.
- Community corrections in New Jersey have played a major role in the prison population reduction.
- New Jersey’s foresight to embrace smart and cost effective community corrections programs in the late 1990’s has made it a respected national leader in the field.

Fact: New Jersey Department of Corrections and Parole community release programs are safe and secure.

- Over 95% all inmates will be released at some point—better to provide them with reentry treatment than just release them into our communities.
- From 2005-2012, CEC’s total escape/abscond rate was less than 1% compared to national rate of 7%-10%.
- Total CEC NJ DOC escapes 2005-2012: 200 out of 38,593 (A rate of 0.53%).
- Total CEC NJ Parole absconds 2005-2012: 677 out of 20,513 (3.3% abscond rate)*.
- Total CEC County escapes 2005-2012: 4 out of 67,968 (A rate of 0.005%).
- While CEC houses the majority of the NJDOC work release participants over the past seven years, only 8% of the walk-aways reported by all vendors were from CEC facilities.
- Regarding Parole absconders, again, CEC houses the majority of parole violators from the State Parole Board but just 25% of the absconders from all providers were from CEC facilities.

Fact: Community corrections have significant fiscal benefits.

- $25,813 estimate annual cost reentry program vs. $49,000 annual cost state prison.
- New Jersey community corrections system has seen minimal increases in funding or bed expansion since FY03.
- From FY2003 to FY2011 the statewide community corrections funded beds increased from 2,700 to 2,742 which is a 1.5% increase.
- Funding for community beds remained flat from FY04-FY09 at $61.5M and increased minimally in FY10 to $64.5M due to new legislation.
COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTERS

Statements From CWA and 1199J:

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www.cecintl.com
CEC Response to the New York Times series

Sadly, the New York Times has chosen to ignore the facts regarding CEC and the system's effectiveness and success as well as the opinions of many independent policy experts. Instead they have chosen to rely on allegations of disgruntled former employees and the Times' own policy ideas about what is right and wrong.

The facts:
- We are in compliance with our state, county, and federal contracts.
- All CEC facilities in New Jersey have earned a 100% accreditation rating from the American Correctional Association for all non-mandatory standards.
- Audits by NICOC have found CEC facilities to be consistently in compliance with more than 95% of all categories reviewed.
- All of CEC's sub-contracts in New Jersey have been awarded as the result of public bidding.

CEC is very proud of its central role in helping to reduce New Jersey's prison population and doing so in large part by reducing recidivism.

Click here for CEC's full statement and links to additional data and information.

Nationally Syndicated Radio Show Interviews Dr. Robert Mackey

Dr. Robert Mackey appeared on the nationally syndicated radio program "The Brian Lehrer Show" to refute the allegations reported in the New York Times.

"I think what the public should believe are the facts."
- Dr. Robert Mackey

Click here to listen to the interview
on the nationally syndicated Brian Lehrer Show from June 15, 2012.

Letter from Delaney Hall Counselor Colleen Smith:

"We are attempting to counter what for some is a lifetime of mistrust, low expectations, and prejudices. Now you should see why classifying the men I work with as "hardened criminals" directly undermines the treatment impact you so readily dismissed."

Click here to read the full letter.
COMMUNITY EDUCATION
CENTERS

Newspaper Ads placed in the following:
The Star-Ledger
The Jersey Journal
The Trenton Times
The Bergen Record
To our fellow New Jersey residents:

The recent NY Times series regarding charges of drugs and violence at New Jersey's halfway houses has brought us much sadness and disappointment. We have seen firsthand the successes of these facilities for so many offenders.

We are formerly incarcerated citizens who have turned our lives around in a New Jersey reentry center. We are living proof that New Jersey's reentry system is working and, despite what recent sensational headlines indicate, can continue to be successful in reentering offenders into New Jersey's communities.

Our experiences in New Jersey's reentry facilities were positive and life changing. For all of us, the kindness, insistence, or understanding of a reentry facility staff member helped us to see that a life of criminality and drug use was not all there is. These reentry programs opened our minds to the possibility that the way we were living could change, and that change had to come from inside ourselves. Inside these facilities we were given many useful tools and it was up to us to use those tools to change our lives.

Our lives are challenging, but they are our lives now and we have families, children and grandchildren, we have jobs, and we have something to be proud of.

And so does New Jersey.

Alumni of CEC's New Jersey Programs:

Arthur Townes, Newark
Dennis Percival, Newark
Lynne Holley, East Orange
Crystal Johnson, Irvington
Timothy Dobson, Bellville
Patty Coss, Trenton
Melvyn Johnston, East Orange
Alice Hayes, Trenton
Abdul Jalal, Bayonne
Atuwab Livingston, Newark
Ethel Brooks, Trenton
Lisa Lopez, Trenton
Michael Robinson, Newark
Judy McClintock, Trenton
Tony Burke, Trenton
Dorothy Barlow, Trenton
Alan Szur, Middlesex
Jenette Thomas, Newark
Karla Stokes, West Orange
Anthony White, Plainfield
Glosheen Salaam, Newark
Altorice Frazier, Elizabeth
Shakir Griffith, East Orange
Anthony Wiggins, Newark
Leonard Eutsey, Trenton
Karl Deadwyler, Jersey City
Jamila Clark, Newark
Kenny Green, Trenton
Kenya Eulsey, Trenton

(With the exception of Arthur Townes, no one is employed by CEC)
To our fellow New Jersey residents:

The recent NY Times series regarding charges of drugs and violence at New Jersey's halfway houses has brought us much sadness and disappointment. We have seen firsthand the successes of these facilities for so many offenders.

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Allorice Frazier, Elizabeth - Talbot Hall/Tully House
Shakir Griffth, East Orange - Talbot Hall
Anthony Wiggins, Newark - Delaney Hall/Logan Hall
Leonard Eulse, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Karl Deadwytler, Jersey City - Talbot Hall
Jamila Clark, Newark - Delaney Hall
Kenny Green, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Kenny Eulse, Trenton - Bo Robinson

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Delaney Hall Saved My Life!

Jenette Thomas
Delaney Hall
Resident: 2003

"I come from a background of both criminal behavior and drug addiction since my experience at Delaney Hall, I have been clean ever since."

Ms. Thomas credits the change in her lifestyle to the treatment she received at Delaney Hall. A mother of five and an accountant in her own business, Ms. Thomas has accomplished several goals since her reentry to society nine years ago.

New Jersey's residential reentry programs save lives.

TALBOT HALL, KEARNY • DELANEY HALL, NEWARK • TULLY HOUSE, NEWARK
THE ALBERT M. "BO" ROBINSON ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT CENTER, TRENTON
THE HARBOR, NEWARK • LOGAN HALL, NEWARK

COMMUNITY EDUCATION
CENTERS
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Timothy Debbas, Belleville - Delaney Hall
Patsy Con, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Mervyn Johnshon, East Orange - Delaney Hall
Alisa Hayes, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Abol Halil, Bayonne - Talbot Hall
Atsawab Livingston, Newark - Delaney Hall
Elsie Brooks, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Lisa Loper, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Michael Robinson, Newark - Delaney Hall
Julie McClellan, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Terry Burke, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Dorothy Barklow, Trenton - Delaney Hall
Asha Rene, Middletown - Talbot Hall/Tully House
Jesenia Thomas, Newark - Delaney Hall
Kara Smith, West Orange - Logan Hall
Anthony White, Plainfield - Tully House
Gladene Siskam, Newark - Delaney Hall
Althea Frazer, Elizabeth - Talbot Hall/Tully House
Sk пят Griffin, East Orange - Talbot Hall
Anthony Wiggins, Newark - Delaney Hall/Logan Hall
Leonard Easley, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Karl Dauahele, Jersey City - Talbot Hall
Jamila Clark, Newark - Delaney Hall
Kenny Green, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Kenza Eslary, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Adam Burrell, Jersey City - Tully House
Alvass Brew, Jersey City - Tully House
Kash Holloway, Newark - Delaney Hall
Leslie Richardson, Atlantic County - Bo Robinson
Paul Mesella, Trenton - Bo Robinson
Quail Brown, Elizabeth - Logan Hall
Mervin Fourch, Newark - Delaney Hall
Tashemah Randolph, Jersey City - Bo Robinson
Rose Phillips, East Orange - Delaney
Artins Hunt, Newark - Delaney
Joseph Moses, North Carolina - Bo Robinson
Christopher Manzienski, Ham wireless - Delaney
Gerald Munson, Allentown, PA - Talbot Hall/Tully House
Carl Reeve, Egg Harbor - Talbot Hall
Richard Boyeret, South Carolina - Talbot Hall/Tully House
Abram Robinson, Old Bridge - Tully House
Robert Covington, Irvington - Tully House
Terence Knight, Newark - Talbot Hall
Tennell épson, Newark - Delaney Hall
Terrence McClery, Paterson - Bo Robinson
Omar Bilal, Irvington - Talbot Hall
Taker Wilt, Elizabeth - Talbot Hall/Tully House
Cindy Lavel, Elizabeth - Logan Hall
William Will, East Orange - Talbot Hall
Glen Tutt, Newark - Delaney Hall
Troy Weeks, Irvington - Delaney Hall
Vernon Burre, Newark - Delaney Hall
Stevie Ross, New York - Tully House/Talbot Hall
Dorine Emming, Durham, NC - Talbot Hall
Yvonne Epps, Sussex Plains - Delaney Hall
Yvonne Lyke, East Orange - Delaney Hall
Gary Golman, Newark - Delaney Hall
Jeffery Kears, Newark - Delaney Hall
Rashid Jhal, East Orange - Talbot Hall/Logan Hall
Roberta Allen-Nelson, Hillside - Delaney Hall
Warren Green, Plainfield - Tully House
William Perry, Plainfield - Tully House
Bruce Campay, Newark - Delaney Hall
Movin Asford, Newark - The Barbier
Tawakkal Bland, Newark - Delaney Hall
Kevin Robinson, Newark - Delaney Hall
Rashem Hines, Newark - Delaney Hall
Venesa Riley, Newark - Delaney Hall
Donnike Jackson, Newark - Talbot Hall
Gary Skalos, Newark - Delaney Hall
Steve Yoll, Newark - Delaney Hall
Shaid Guyton, Newark - Delaney Hall
Alfrii Lowy, Irvington - Delaney Hall
Adjeckola Bileen, East Orange - Delaney Hall
Amar Holm, East Orange - Delaney Hall
Abissia Level, Irvington - Bo Robinson

(With the exception of Arthur Townes, no one is employed by CEC)
A New Jersey Success Story

Here's what the recent New York Times series failed to tell you about New Jersey's offender reentry system:

From the late 1970s through the mid-1990s, New Jersey’s costly prison system grew by about 1,200 prisoners per year. New Jersey's foresight to embrace innovative and cost-effective offender reentry programs at that time made the state a respected national leader. As a result, over the past fifteen years community corrections centers in New Jersey have played a major role in prison population reduction.

24% Prison population 1999-2012  
BEST IN THE NATION  
Source: U.S. Department of Justice statistics and NJ DOC Reports

Regional Assessment Center (RAC) technical parole violator programs  
"made a significant contribution to the overall decrease in New Jersey's prison population." - 2010

11.4% Recidivism Rate Reduction  
BEST IN THE NORTHEAST  
- Pew Center on the States "State of Recidivism" - 2011

Recidivism Rate reduction was best in Northeast & 5th best in the nation

27% Assessment centers contribute to halfway house Walk-Away reduction  
- New Jersey Department of Corrections Study - 2006  
"Seven Year Analysis of Walk-Away Rates of New Jersey Halfway House Programs"

CLOSED 630-bed Riverfront State Prison in 2009

The result: Independent analysis shows NJ a national leader in offender reentry programs - helping to turn lives around.

At CEC, we are proud to have been part of NJ's success

TALBOT HALL, KEARNY  •  DELANEY HALL, NEWARK  •  TULLY HOUSE, NEWARK
THE ALBERT M. "BO" ROBINSON ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT CENTER, TRENTON
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COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTERS
www.cecintl.com
We are proud to work at Bo Robinson!

Proud to be part of changing lives and helping others

We are the staff of the Albert M. “Bo” Robinson Assessment and Treatment Center in Trenton, New Jersey. Since 1997, Bo Robinson has provided residential treatment services to a wide variety of offenders referred from state and county organizations. Our mission throughout the years has always been clear and we take great pride in our daily efforts to provide offenders with second chances. We also find Bo Robinson a safe place to work.

Our days are challenging as we work with individuals whose lives have been defined by addiction and crime. Change for these individuals is never easy, but our work provides these men and women with the tools they need to break free of these past unproductive lifestyles. Change is also hard work, and we applaud the many offenders who have come through Bo Robinson and done just that, taken the information we have provided them and turned their lives around.

65% of all offenders in prison get released at some point, 100% of the men and women at Bo Robinson will be coming home to our communities. Our work is on the frontlines of their futures and we aim for each of their successes.

We are the staff of the Bo Robinson Assessment and Treatment Center, are proud of the work we do, and have freely volunteered to sign this letter.

Mohamed Abdelghani, Food Service Supervisor
Robert F. Adams, Program Counselor
Ricardo Alvarez, Operation Counselor
Calvin Anderson, Facility Manager
Janell Asene, Program Counselor
Miguel Arnold, Food Service
Karen Bailey-Davis, Operation Counselor
Amber Beneke, Program Counselor
Stephanie Bostic, Program Counselor
Vincent Butts II, Program Counselor
David Clement, Program Counselor
Thomas C. Cotley, Shift Supervisor
Khadijah M. Davis, Operation Counselor
Minnie Davis, Operation Counselor
Thomas Davis, Food Service
Timothy Davis, Operation Counselor
Jessica Darlinger, Lead Assessment Counselor
Monica Elzati, Program Counselor
Sandrell Foreman, Operation Counselor
Matthew Furr, Assessment Manager
Khalil Miller, RN, Health Services Administrator
Rosalie Grant, Operation Counselor
Michael Good, Operation Counselor
Marline Hoffman, Shift Supervisor
Kenneth Kitts, Unit Supervisor
Alonzo Larry, Operation Counselor
Yvonne Lee, Operation Counselor
Jonathan Lettieri, Assessment Counselor
Amanda Lettie, Program Counselor
Monica Lewis, Classification Supervisor
Latisha McDougald, Program Counselor
Donald Mullings, Unit Manager
Shonda Mullings, Program Counselor
Kevin Nichols, Program Counselor
Abdul J. Muhammad, Program Activity Coordinator
Kadim Qunnuti, Unit Supervisor
Emmanuel Ozokwah, Assessment Counselor
Theresa Patterson, Assistant to the Director
Yetessia Perez, Program Counselor
Tara Pfieffer, Program Counselor
Rebecca Rogers, Unit Supervisor
Elvin R. Ruiz, Classification Coordinator
Gregory Roberts, Operation Counselor
Mark Salaze, Director
Sajee Stephens, Program Counselor
Andish Stone, Unit Manager
William Taylor, Program Counselor
Donald Terrill, Lead Counselor
Casandra Turpele, Unit Supervisor
Carmen Voss, Program Counselor
Jessica Walker, Program Counselor
Darrell Wallace, Food Service
Tina Washington, Operation Counselor
Albert C. White, Food Service Manager
Martin Whiting, Property Counselor
Wanda Williams, Administrative Assistant
Rachel Zascone, Program Counselor

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A New Jersey Success Story
The recent New York Times series failed to tell you the truth about
New Jersey's offender reentry system:

Below are just a few samples of what real New Jerseyans, working everyday
to actually help offenders change their lives, have to say about
CEC facilities and programs

June 28, 2012
Mr. Michael Oliver
Harbor House
200 Frelinghuysen Ave.
Newark, NJ 07114

Dear Mr. Oliver:

On behalf of the Newark Gospel Tabernacle family and our community, I
want to express our gratitude to you, your associates and Harbor House
for your support. As you know, we were able to give fulltime employment
to two of your residents.

Because your organization is located in our city, we see your residents as
part of our community. We are therefore honored to expose them to our
format and informal mentoring programs, and the men are loving it. We
hope to have a continued relationship with the Harbor House.

[Signature]

Dr. Audley L. Bengey, Senior Pastor
تكوب Hall, Kearny • Delaney Hall, Newark • Tully House, Newark
The Albert M. "Bo" Robinson Assessment & Treatment Center, Trenton
The Harbor, Newark • Logan Hall, Newark

www.cecint.com
Testimony to the New Jersey Senate Legislative

Oversight Committee

Thursday, July 19, 2012

Senator Robert Gordon, Chair
Senator Barbara Buono, Vice Chair

State House Annex Committee Room 4
Trenton, New Jersey

Presented By
Daniel L. Lombardo, President & CEO
Volunteers of America Delaware Valley
235 White Horse Pike – Collingswood, NJ 08107
Phone: 856-854-4660   Fax: 856-854-0651
Email: dzippy@voadv.org
Volunteers of America Delaware Valley is the regional affiliate of a national organization whose main priority is serving peoples’ needs in their community. In 1896 our founders based their mission on serving those coming out of prison. Ballington and Maude Booth were the pioneers of the halfway house system and made it their life’s mission. Today we are a full service organization providing for the needs of the homeless, the addicted, the aged, the mentally ill, in addition to the criminal justice population.

114 years later, Volunteers of America Delaware Valley is still providing halfway house services, building on the legacy of our founders. We run small programs, managed by highly trained staff using best practice strategies that identify risk factors and use research programs to address individual client needs. We began serving New Jersey offenders under contract in 1972 with what was then called the New Jersey Department of Institutions and Agencies, now the Department of Corrections.

It is because of halfway house programs that New Jersey is a safer place today. New Jersey has received national acclaim for aggressively managing prison growth and reducing its prison population by 24% over the last decade. This is a direct result of legislative vision, and the creativity of the Department of Corrections and the State Parole Board.

Considerable research was done throughout the 1980’s and early ‘90’s on incarceration rates and how to best return people back into society. Before risk/needs assessment became vogue, Volunteers of America pioneered risk assessments and cognitive behavioral interventions to manage risk, address needs, and enhance public safety. Volunteers of America began the
assessment process in 1993 to evaluate the risk of reoffending and level of antisocial behavior. That was the beginning of the redesign of community based corrections programs. Policy makers in the mid 1990’s had to make a choice between expanding prisons or investing in community based alternatives. They chose to invest in community corrections and we are now seeing the fruits that legislative vision.

Since 1999, the male prison population has dropped by 24% and the female population by 34%. This is not a coincidence. It is a direct result of increased usage of re-entry style programs for both state inmates and parolees starting in the mid 1990’s. The last decade has seen gradual increases in community correctional program usage and with each increase there is a marked positive effect on the correctional system as a whole. By contrast, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has gone in the opposite direction. During that same period of time, the Pennsylvania prison population grew by over 30%, requiring the construction of several new prisons. Their corrections costs continually increase using their methods of mass incarceration. While New Jersey utilizes all tools at their disposal and closes prisons, Pennsylvania was building more prisons to address their increased population. We are working with Pennsylvania, encouraging them to use the same strategies used here in New Jersey. Legislation is moving to address Pennsylvania’s corrections and re-entry issues on a broader basis and we hope to help them achieve their goals by achieving similar success like those of New Jersey.

According to the Pew Center on the States within 3 years of release 4 of every 10 offenders return to prison which only serves to increase prison
populations and drive up cost. Nationwide states are now spending upwards of $50 billion annually on corrections alone on a prison population that, according to the Sentencing Project, has increased 500% over the past thirty years. Risk assessment drives effective correctional programs in terms of offender placement and targets for change. It is all done with public safety being at the forefront. The ultimate goal is to enhance public safety. These proven policies and programs are used in other states like Ohio, Hawaii, Virginia, California, among many others. Matching offenders with appropriate programs is critical and using risk assessment tools we can dramatically cut prison populations. This has been done in New Jersey and is the main reason for the reduction in the prison population over the last decade.

It is very important to note that the providers of community programs have been the backbones of this success story. Before we even open a program, considerable community engagement and capital expenditures are made to ensure success. We must first negotiate with communities to make sure we will be accepted. We have to secure millions of dollars in financing to renovate a building or build a new facility to house clients. We have to show the zoning and planning boards along with the policy makers in the town that we are a benefit to the community. This is all done with private dollars and at zero expense to the taxpayers.

We take exception to the assumption that our programs are not monitored or there is little to no control within the facility. This is simply not true. Volunteers of America Delaware Valley operates three separate and distinct programs in the City of Camden – two for men and one for women. Our
largest facility is 175 beds for men and the smallest is 47 beds. We offer specialty programs for parolees with mental illness. The notion that there is an underlying criminal element plaguing programs does not make sense to us. We serve on average nearly 1,400 ex-offenders a year returning to the community. We place more than 600 people in jobs a year. We have assisted thousands of ex-offenders in reuniting with their families, pursue educational opportunities, enter college and vocational training, and otherwise become productive members of society. Clients tell us every day that they turned their lives around due to the assistance provided in our programs. To castigate all halfway houses as poorly run, ineffective, and a harm to the community is flatly untrue and unfair.

It is important to note that given the type of clients served, there will be a certain level of inappropriate behavior. However this can be mitigated through intense supervision without creating an atmosphere of an institution. Volunteers of America does this through several ways and has had consistent success. We do hourly, round the clock tracking of clients. All clients wear an ID at all times which is scanned hourly. We perform hourly perimeter checks. We have cameras and monitor them. If an instance of inappropriate behavior is reported, we work in partnership with the Department of Corrections to quickly respond to such behavior. All clients that leave our building for work, school, or family visits must maintain contact with the program and the program performs random checks to confirm location and activity.

We strive each and every day to ensure that public safety is the number one priority. Our mission is to provide evidence based interventions to offenders
to reduce the risk of reoffending while promoting public safety. Let me be clear – if a program or intervention with a client does not work we do not do it. We are proud of our ability serve people better, lower the recidivism rate, and create cost effective alternatives to incarceration. The positive major changes we have made in the past twenty years cannot be ignored just to support an agenda and create havoc where it does not exist.

The recidivism rate for an inmate leaving a state prison hovers between 50 – 60%. Clients leaving a community corrections program have a recidivism rate at approximately 20%. We are half the cost of the state and return on investment and positive results are three times that of the state. Groups such as the Government Efficiency and Reform Commission (GEAR) have shown that if the state were to transfer state inmates with non-violent offenses and a low re-offense risk, the state of New Jersey could see well over $100 million in annual savings. This is supported through research by other study organizations such as Pew, VERA Institute for Justice, and the Sentencing Project that put out study after study talking about increased incarceration rates, community alternatives, racial disparities, etc.

Volunteers of America Delaware Valley will continue to advocate for greater emphasis on the positive attributes of community corrections. We will do this the same way we have always done it – using facts to support the truth and change public policy for the betterment of the people we serve and the community at large.

Thank you for your time and consideration.
July 17, 2012

RE: Investigations into Half Way Houses & Anticipated Legislative Hearings

To All Concerned Parties:

In light of recent investigative reports by the New York Times on the above topic, I understand that the state legislature is about to embark on a fact finding mission and is poised to conduct hearings as to further investigate this very serious problem.

Personally, I was delighted to see that such a detailed investigative report was published and while these NY Times reports have seemed to hit some like a ton of bricks, I can tell you quite frankly that those of us behind the walls of our jails and prisons and those of us in the PBA particularly who have watched this situation grow to problematic proportions, were not only prepared for these revelations brought by the NY Times, but we have publicly predicted for many years that this day would come just to have our concerns ignored and to have our personal integrity as well as the integrity of our concerns ridiculed and insulted by elected officials and political appointees.

At this point, I'm sure everyone realizes that this issue has presented itself, because we have allowed the focus and the integrity of our state and county correctional system to be slanted and overshadowed by big business, back door politics and profiteering, which has ultimately put price tags on the heads of our inmates and no one can deny that public and inmate safety has taken a back seat for many years in a system where "profit" became the only concern for those who run these privatized facilities.

As investigative initiatives move forward, please note that these issues exposed in the media, affect both our state and our county correctional system, but affects them in two separate and distinct ways.

Furthermore, with the even more recent NY Times report of the near bankruptcy a few years back and continued financial troubles of CEC, why would our state leadership continue to allow this private company to play such a big part within our correctional system and hold thousands of our inmates when they nearly closed their doors once already? Imagine that day when these privatized inmates appear back at our doorstep with no place to put them, but I digress.

Our state provides lawful guidelines under New Jersey Administrative Code (Title 10A) which sets the operating standards for state and county correctional facilities and even though it’s now been exposed that we have severe problems within the Half Way House System regarding state prison inmates, the referenced administrative code fully dictates what the criteria is for an inmate to be placed into a
privatized community based / rehabilitative / re-entry facility and we would have to assume at this point that all the inmates being sent to these re-entry facilities from state prison, all fit that criteria.

**State Prison Level Inmates:**
In short, Title 10A criteria under Chapter 20-Subsection 4, calls for a *State Inmate to be free of any threats to public safety, must be within 18 months of finishing their state sentence, must have a set parole date and obviously cannot have any pending criminal charges* and while there are other criteria... what I have given you, are the basics in regard to an inmate being truly classified as a low risk inmate who in fact has a set date for when they will be returned to society.

Since the media exposure has occurred, Officials from CEC, "Community Education Centers" as the for-profit arm of their sister non-profit company EHCA, "Education and Health Centers of America", have been on a whirlwind of self-defending and self-preserving media based initiatives as an effort to punch holes and weaken the NY Times report, but as a virtual and very vocal fly on the wall, who represents hundreds of other uniformed flies on the wall within our correctional system, I can tell you that the NY Times report was 100% on point and even exposed other things that even we weren't aware of.

For example...it was exposed that there were over 5000 escapes in recent years and CEC officials claimed that this fact is distorted because they weren't really escapes, but more or less what they refer to as "walk away's."

Regardless of whether these 5000 or so inmates dug a hole under a fence, broke a lock, broke through a wall or simply didn't return to the facility at night after being permitted to leave during the day... these 5000 or so inmates all fit the state criteria referenced earlier to be released from prison, but unfortunately proved some very important points in now realizing that we may be too quick to kick these inmates out of the secured prison system.

- These 5000 or so inmates were obviously not yet ready to concede to authority regardless of the fact that their sentence was just about concluded. (That's How Criminals Think)
- These inmates took the trust given to them for granted and thumbed their nose at us. (That's How Criminals Act)
- These inmates obviously took advantage of a system meant to provide them with re-entry services and decided that they'd rather rush back into a life of crime. (That's What Criminals Do)

In other words...Our Half Way House System on a state prison level is nothing more than a way to keep prison population low and has become just another revolving door and annex of our prisons while CEC officials work hard to protect their profit margin, by claiming that they reduce recidivism.

I'm sure that CEC can point to many success stories, but again pointing to the NY Times report...what is the balance between their success stories and the horrific crimes that are occurring within their facilities and the thousands of inmates who can care less about being rehabilitated and/or integrated back into society and made that very clear by taking our governmental kindness as governmental weakness and simply walked away?

Were CEC success stories worth the lives of the motor vehicle law offender who was murdered in Delaney Hall by three recidivist prison bound inmates, the young girl who was murdered by a Delaney Hall escapee or worth the trauma of a woman who was repeatedly raped in a CEC facility with no legal recourse no less?

Why is this occurring?
It's because CEC is being permitted to overstep their intended non-profit part within our correctional system, which is for the rehabilitation and re-entry based training needs for sentenced, short term, low risk and soon to be released inmates and has been politically protected and politically permitted to build a "profit based correctional system" within the "governmental correctional system", which brings me to the distinct "County Jail Portion" of what also needs to be thoroughly investigated.

**County Level Inmates:**
As I'm sure you know, a county jail is nothing more than a holding facility for pre-adjudicated inmates who were arrested for a variety of crimes, have had a bail placed upon them by a judge and who are housed on a county level while awaiting trial on offences that may result in something as small as a fine, all the way up to life in prison.

After being properly adjudicated through the court / criminal justice system, should an inmate be sentenced to less than 1 year, that inmate remains in the county system to serve that sentence, but for any sentence longer than 1 year, that inmate is sent to a state prison.

As a brief history of our Essex County Jail System particularly, our jail happens to be directly next door to Delaney Hall, which was opened in 2000 and in anticipation of our new jail, which back in 2000 was still under construction.

Our county previously operated 2 county jails. The Main Jail in downtown Newark and the Jail Annex in North Caldwell, which held a mixture of county sentenced inmates and pre-adjudicated inmates.

Upon the opening of Delaney Hall, our county began to shift our sentenced inmates from the Jail Annex to Delaney Hall and it made perfect sense to send these short term, low risk inmates there for re-entry type services and training.

This legitimate use of Delaney Hall continued until March of 2004, when the new jail opened, but it's important to mention that the new jail construction project was politically and financially problematic for our county executive who took office in 2002 and who in his haste to get the new jail opened and the old jails closed...stopped construction of the new jail, called it complete and opened the jail nearly 1000 beds short of its originally intended capacity. An entire wing of the jail was scrapped from the project.

In the weeks prior to the new jail opening and knowing very well that the new jail could not accommodate our jail population, we began to send pre-adjudicated inmates to Delaney Hall.

At first, these pre-adjudicated inmates were all facing minor charges with very low bails, but as our jail population continued to swell and with no beds available in the jail, the county continued to roll the dice and continued to elevate the bail amounts and classification levels of the inmates, which we send to these supposed rehab facilities and as of this date...we have nearly 1000 pre-adjudicated county inmates with bails as high as $100,000 in not only Delaney Hall, but over the years we also began using Logan Hall on the other side of Newark.

I certainly expect that within the legislative investigations, the criminal histories, current charges and other pending warrants of these high risk, recidivist and prison bound criminals currently housed by CEC are requested for legislative review.

I would also expect that jail investigative reports and disciplinary reports generated, which detail the criminal activity being engaged in by the inmates in these facilities are also requested by the legislative
committees where you will find, drug use, drug possession, drug distribution, weapons, cell phones, gang activity, assaults on both other inmates and CEC staff, etc.

Lastly, I would expect that the court transcripts for the 2009 Delaney Hall murder trial are requested where the accused, convicted and gang affiliated inmates themselves make startling revelations of how they operated with impunity within Delaney Hall.

Question:

How can this be occurring if NJAC Title 10A, as earlier explained, provides that only low risk, pre-release inmates and inmates who are free of pending charges are permitted to be turned over to a private Half Way House / Re-entry Facility?

*It's because Title 10A simply doesn't have oversight language on this subject for pre-adjudicated county inmates, which leaves CEC and county governments to make up their own rules and to enter into jail contracts where in fact, CEC, through its slanted and questionable affiliation with EHCA has become a publicly funded for-profit county jail operation as opposed to their claim to simply be providing re-entry services for soon to be released drug offenders.*

This is the closely guarded secret that the PBA has been exposing since 2004, which was recently further exposed by the NY Times and which CEC and county officials will vehemently deny, but the issue has now reached a very public fork in the road.

One way will be a *clear path* back to normalcy, legitimacy, and integrity within our states correctional system and the other will be a *dead end road* where the escapes, crime, violence and corruption will continue for the sake of the profiteers and with the *recent veto of legislative attempts to seek oversight into these facilities, its painfully obvious that our governor is choosing the dead end road.*

Aside from the documents mentioned above, which I sincerely hope will be sought by our legislators, the final order of business in my humble opinion needs to be an *amendment to NJAC Title 10A, which includes oversight language for the way in which these facilities are used by county correctional facilities and specifically, pre-adjudicated county inmates.*

Why is this county language not already in 10A?

- It’s because no one in their right mind ever dreamed that we needed to write laws to keep pretrial high bail inmates in jail.
- No one in their right mind ever dreamed that a county government would put prison bound inmates who haven’t even been to court yet let alone sentenced yet, into a re-entry facility.
- No one in their right mind ever dreamed that a non-profit based re-entry provider would concoct a way to back door themselves directly into the jail business, skirt pay to play laws and reap profit through public money.

This same story is currently being played out in Mercer & Union Counties, where their elected officials are also taking full advantage of this loophole in correctional law and now that the state is moving toward a *legitimate and mandatory drug treatment initiative* for the truly deserving drug addicted inmates, I'd love to know where we expect these people to rehabilitate themselves when the rehabilitation facilities as we speak are predominantly inhabited by high risk, recidivist, violent, gang affiliated and state prison bound inmates?
No one is denying the need for alternatives to incarceration and rehabilitative services for those who can truly benefit from such initiatives, but this politically driven runaway train needs to be brought to a halt.

I’m sure that CEC will dazzle you with scientific studies and fancy charts that will be portrayed as proof that they are a success story, but all I have to offer you is my bird’s eye view from behind the walls of the jail and my first-hand knowledge of the facts, which can’t be put onto charts.

I offer the kind of information that one needs to live, experience and witness on a daily basis before it can be fully understood and the fact that jails and prisons themselves being secretive by their very nature, is what’s allowed these problems to exist for so many years and has allowed the years of denials to occur on the part of county and jail officials.

I leave you with one last question and final thought in regard to the necessity of a full investigation and amendments to Title 10A...

Why should we be surprised that the inmates in these facilities act with impunity if the people who run the facilities and the politicians who stock these facilities with pre-adjudicated inmates are also permitted to act with impunity?

Thank you for your time and consideration of these facts.

Respectfully,

Joe Amato, President
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Arthur Townes, Director of the CEC Alumni Association

Testimony before the Senate Legislative Committee

Mr. Chairman and members of the Committee, good afternoon. My name is Arthur Townes and I am the Director of Community Education Centers’ Alumni Association. I am thankful to have this opportunity to address the committee today as a representative of the formerly incarcerated here in this room and in New Jersey.

In the mid 1990s, I was a criminal. I was criminal because of my addiction to drugs. The crimes I committed were damaging to my community and in 1995 I was arrested, convicted, and served three years in a New Jersey state correctional institution. In July of 1998 I was transferred to Talbot Hall, one of New Jersey’s two assessment and treatment centers, and then to a day reporting program.

Talbot Hall did not only save my life, but gave me the opportunity to start a new life that I have devoted to helping the formerly incarcerated. For those of you here who have not struggled with the disease of addiction and the life of crime that often accompanies it, you can easily dismiss the phrase “Talbot Hall Saved My Life,” as a catch phrase. But for those of you here today that have faced an alcohol or substance abuse addiction or known someone whose has, the words “Talbot Hall Saved My Life,” will ring true because in each recovered addicts life there is a life changing moment when they realize they can no longer live a life of drugs and crime. For me that moment was at Talbot Hall.

While at Talbot Hall I was able to admit to myself that I was an addict. While at Talbot Hall I was provided with information and tools to overcome my addiction and life of crime. The staff at Talbot Hall taught me that after I was released I had options and did not have to return to my old life. I think it is important for today’s hearing to understand that what was recently printed in the newspapers failed to capture this simple fact—that New Jersey reentry facilities give offenders a chance to change. Not everyone is going to change because not everyone is ready to change. But for those offenders that want to change, and there are thousands of them, places like Talbot Hall are where that change can and does happen.

I now work for CEC. I am the Director of the company’s Alumni Association and spend my days and nights inside CEC’s New Jersey facilities meeting with offenders before their release. What I see inside those facilities is NOT what has been inaccurately reported in recent newspaper stories. Inside those facilities are men and women working together to help offenders change their lives like I have. Inside those facilities are offenders getting medical care, three full meals and a safe bed to sleep in.

Today, I lead an association which is comprised of former offenders, like myself, who have successfully completed a reentry program. As mentors, alumni are available to offenders, before and after release, to provide assistance and help them set goals, find jobs, and utilize social services. Please don’t believe these false reports based on a few disgruntled former employees. Please support community programs and help us help more offenders change their lives. Thank you.
Arthur Townes, Director  
CEC Alumni Association

Mr. Townes graduated a CEC program in 1998 and joined the CEC team as an employee in July of 2000. He began his career as a Counselor and was promoted to Senior Counselor and then Unit Supervisor. He is presently the Director of the CEC Alumni Association, which offers resources and support services to assist graduates of CEC's New Jersey and Pennsylvania-based reentry programs. The Alumni Association offers resources and support services to assist graduates of CEC's New Jersey and Pennsylvania-based reentry programs so that they may successfully reenter the community as productive members of society.

In addition Mr. Townes works at a group home for troubled youth and volunteers as a mentor for at-risk youth. He is active in his community and participates in anti-violence rallies, gang prevention awareness symposiums, and community service projects. Mr. Townes is a graduate of Essex County College and a student at Rutgers University pursuing his BSW, Mr. Townes is also preparing to take the CADC exam to become a certified counselor.

The Alumni Association provides a resource for residents who leave CEC facilities, helping find referrals for jobs, housing, education and self help groups like NA, AA, and GA, and inpatient/outpatient programs. The Alumni Association also provides a window of opportunity to help individuals through the process of reentry; and helps get participants reintegrated into the community through job searching/coaching, volunteering, community service, resume preparation, and more.
July 18, 2012

Dear Senator Gordon and Members of the Oversight Committee,

I’m writing this letter in response to Mr. Gordon’s plea for a better understanding of what is wrong with the halfway house system.

On June 6th of 2011, I left Devins FMC in Massachusetts after almost three years. My wife and son picked me up and dropped my off at Logan Hall, the “one and only” federal Halfway House in New Jersey. I thought a halfway house was a step up from prison but I soon found out that is was not.

I was given four hours to report to Toler House from Devins. After hitting traffic through Harford, Connecticut, I arrived approximately five and a half hours later. After three years in Devins with a clean record and no troubles, I was written up for being late. This despite my three phone calls to inform the Logan House that there were traffic problems.

Once there I found there was no job placement available, a so called library that consisted of approximately 50 paper back books, no computer room, just one to use in Miss Murray’s office that you had to try and sign up for the night before and if you were lucky enough you got yourself a half hour slot the next day.

Rec. consisted of forty minutes a day in a dirty yard that had pull-up bars and one basket to shot hoops, under Route 78. If it rained there was no Rec.

Food at Tolar is unfit to eat. There also was no Heart and Health Option. The lunch room had soda machines, and plenty of chips, candy and honey buns.

You were not allowed any food, coffee or water back to your rooms. This is after being allowed commissary once a week at any prison facility in the system to go.

I was refused permission to go to Essex County CC the day they had a job fair and registration for the upcoming year. No reason was given.

The Staff was by far the most unprofessional people I had ever dealt with in my three years away! Talking down to inmates all day.

Smoking in the Bathroom was ignored. Coming back in to Toler House you were given a breath test and passed through a metal detector. I could have taken drugs (and I don’t) at anytime when I want out as there was never a urine or drug test administered.

I was transferred from Toler House to Brooklyn Met Center after four weeks and spent till October 2011 there until my release and I could not have been happier!

In closing Mr. Gordon, if I knew what I know now about the Toler House I would have requested to stay at Devins FMC in Massachusetts to finish out the remainder of my bid!
I just like you to know that there is not a day that goes by that I don’t regret the mistake that I made. But the system has major flaws and after reading your comments in the paper about you understanding the problems and how to improve them, I thought that as a person that has been through the system it was my duty to speak up.

This letter was not written to bad mouth Logan Hall or the halfway house system. What I’d really like to see is a system that is determined to better itself and to get future inmates back to a better society. This is a very sensitive issue to me and I thought long and hard about even calling you. If my experience and understanding of the system can help please feel free to call me at anytime. Maybe we can get it right.

Thank You
Submitted by John J. Clancy, Chairman and Chief Executive Officer, Community Education Centers, Inc., Private Citizen: