

**REPORT OF THE LEGISLATIVE CRIMINAL JUSTICE
OVERSIGHT TASK FORCE**

October 27, 2015

The Legislative Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force met at 1:00 p.m., on Tuesday, October 27, 2015, in Room B-MAC, Little Rock, Arkansas.

Task Force Members present: Senators Jeremy Hutchinson, Co-Chair, and Joyce Elliott; Representatives Matthew J. Shepherd, Co-Chair, and Dwight Tosh; Judge Gary Arnold, Judge Cristi Beaumont, Mr. Kenton Buckner, Ms. Tjuana Byrd, Mr. John Felts, Mr. John Wesley Hall, Mr. Tim Helder, Ms. Wendy Kelley, Mr. Robin Raveendran, Ms. Sheila Sharp, and Judge David Talley. Non-Committee Members: Representatives Charles L. Armstrong, Bob Ballinger, Scott Balz, David Fielding, Sue Scott, James Sorvillo, and Senators Keith M. Ingram and Scott Flippo.

Senator Hutchinson called the meeting to order.

Action/Requests

Without objection, the Minutes of the August 12, 2015 meeting were adopted as written.

Discussion of Fatherhood Re-Entry Program (See Handout 1 for complete report)

Sheriff Tim Helder, Washington County Sheriff, gave an introduction for Mr. Chuck Burlow, CEO, Sterling Yard, Inc., located in Fayetteville, AR. Mr. Burlow presented a report on a re-entry program called *Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC)* that was created to reduce prison recidivism, substance abuse, and HIV/Hepatitis infections rates; increase community protection; and help promote fatherhood and relationship skills and healthy sexual practices amongst men returning back to the community from prisons. He provided information based on two studies from the *(Criminal Justice Policy Review Journal)* (2013) and the *(Family Process Journal)* (2012) that showed within the first year, re-entry inmates were 2.94 times more likely to return to prison than those who completed the CLFC program—a 60% reduction in the rate of recidivism. For every 50 inmates that go through the 20-week CLFC program, statistically, 30 of them are not returning to prison the next year. Using public state figures of \$23,000 required to house one inmate, one inmate cycle of participation in the CLFC program saves the state \$690,000 if 30 inmates do not return to prison.

Incarceration, Reform, and Design (See Handout 2 for complete report)

Mr. Thomas Moore, Senior Architect, Cromwell Architects Engineers, gave a presentation entitled *Incarceration, Reform, and Design* and spoke on the following topics:

- Adaptive Transformation: Turning an educational campus into a reformation campus
- The Aging Population (within jails/prisons): Providing in-house hospice programs and assisted living wings/facilities for geriatric-specific services
- Re-Entry Programs: Provide facilities that look more like home and less like jail and programs that will bring inmates closer to family, friends, and support groups

The Challenges and Opportunities in the Arkansas Youth Justice System (See Exhibits E.1-E.4)

Mr. Jerry Walsh, Executive Director, South Arkansas Youth Services, and Mr. Paul Kelly, Senior Policy Analyst, Arkansas Advocates for Children and Families, gave an overview of the challenges and opportunities in the Arkansas Youth Justice System. Mr. Jerry Walsh expressed the need for implementation of policy and practices that would divert youth at risk for or charged with status offenses from the courts and connect them to family and community-based systems of care that more effectively meet their needs. Mr. Paul Kelly gave an overview on the topic and expressed that youth well-being is best achieved in communities where young people can be safe with their families and access services that address their individual needs. He also stated that communities can also hold youth accountable without resorting to incarceration. He further added that in Arkansas, when more community-based services are provided in local communities, the number of youth committed to the DHS Division of Youth Services tends to decrease.

After questions and answers, Senator Hutchinson suggested to Committee members that the assigned working groups within the Task Force begin to meet and prepare outlines for any issues that they will discuss at upcoming meetings.

The next Task Force meeting will be held November 30, 2015 at 1:00 p.m. With no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:34 p.m.

DRAFT