

**REPORT OF THE
CHARITABLE, PENAL & CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS SUBCOMMITTEE
OF THE
ARKANSAS LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL
AUGUST 21, 2009**

Mr. Chairmen:

The Charitable, Penal & Correctional Institutions Subcommittee met on Tuesday, June 30, 2009 and Thursday, July 30, 2009, to continue discussion regarding the increasing inmate population in Arkansas and possible alternate program recommendations to curtail future prison growth.

At the June meeting, Mr. Larry Norris, Director, Department of Correction (DOC), discussed three pending investigations. The first being the escape of two inmates from the Cummins Unit on May 29, an incident at the solitary maximum security unit in January, and the fatal shooting that occurred at the Tucker Unit. Mr. Norris testified that all of the incidents have been or are being thoroughly investigated. Mr. Norris reported that all of the DOC institutions are fully accredited by the National Correctional Association and that Arkansas is one of only a handful of states that every facility, the central office, the training facility, all the farm and industry is fully accredited. Mr. George Brewer, Research and Planning, DOC, presented reports on the inmate population projection and recidivism rates. Mr. David Guntharp, Director, Department of Community Correction, presented program updates within the Community Correction Centers, Probation and Parole Services, Technical Violator programs, and Drug Courts.

At the July meeting, General Dustin McDaniel, Attorney General, briefed the committee on how the AG's office is educating young people in efforts of cutting down the number entering into the criminal justice system. General McDaniel presented the "Smart Choices, Better Changes Law Education and Crime Prevention Program". The curriculum for this unique program was developed by educators, attorneys, state legislators and the law enforcement community as a result of gang violence in the early 1980s. Over 216,000 kids have participated in the program and 21,870 participated in 2008 alone. Continued discussion from the previous meeting, Mr. Norris presented an overall view of current prison population statistics and recidivism rates. Mr. Norris reported that recidivism rates are down, yet 15,193 inmates are sentenced to the DOC and county jail back up exceeds 1,400. Including 1,138 inmates serving life sentences, 621 serving life without parole and 611 serving 50 years or more. Mr. Benny Magness, Chairman, Board of Corrections, was present to answer questions with regard to pending investigations and the procedures and policies utilized by the board when an incident occurs. A copy of the Administrative Directive outlining incident notification procedures was distributed.

Respectfully Submitted,

Senator Bobby Glover, Co-Chair

Representative Adcock, Co-Chair