



H.I.R.E. on the Hill

Senate Judiciary Subcommittee Convenes Hearing on Recent Prison Safety and Abuse Commission Report; Panelists Highlight Need for Additional Educational, Drug Addiction Treatment and Health Services for Incarcerated Individuals

On June 8th, the Senate Judiciary Corrections and Rehabilitation Subcommittee held a hearing to examine the findings and recommendations of the Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons. The commission recently released a report entitled "Confronting Confinement" which addresses the state of American prisons. Senators Tom Coburn (R-OK), chairman of the Subcommittee, and Richard Durbin (D-IL), ranking member of the Subcommittee, led the hearing. Individuals providing witness testimony were: John Gibbons, former Chief Judge of the U.S. Court of Appeal for the 3rd Circuit; Nicholas Katzenbach, former Attorney General; Gary Maynard, director of the Iowa Department of Corrections and President-elect of the American Correctional Association; Marc H. Morial, President of the National Urban League; and Pat Nolan, President of Prison Fellowship's Justice Fellowship.

In his opening comments, Senator Coburn echoed the Commission's assertion that what happens in prison affects everyone in society and expressed his hope that the Commission's report would serve as the start of a discussion about the conditions facing the over 2 million people who are currently incarcerated. Senator Coburn, a medical doctor, spoke about the prevalence of people in the criminal justice system who have histories of drug abuse and addiction; in his comments Senator Coburn spoke about the effectiveness of drug addiction treatment services and noted that treatment is less costly than incarceration. In his remarks to the Subcommittee, Senator Durbin commented that, despite the large number of people in prison and those reentering from incarceration every year, there is very little focus on prison or the reentry process in Congress. Senator Durbin spoke of the impact incarceration has on family, friends and public safety, and reiterated that about 95 percent of incarcerated individuals eventually return home. Speaking about the high number of people who leave incarceration but who are rearrested, Senator Durbin emphasized the importance of education, drug addiction treatment and mental health services to successful reentry and reducing recidivism, and argued that these services need additional funding.

Nicholas Katzenbach, co-chair of the Commission, testified that over the course of a year, nearly 13.5 million persons find themselves incarcerated, and that \$60 billion is spent annually on corrections. Mr. Katzenbach asserted that there is too little medical care and support available in the correctional system. Mr. Katzenbach also spoke about the Commission's report, detailing its focus on the relationship between people in prison and correctional professionals. Specifically, Mr. Katzenbach spoke about the correctional culture which can pit correctional officers against incarcerated people and argued that a failure to address this culture of conflict was short-sighted concerning the health and safety of not only incarcerated people but also of other members of society. Citing the need for greater discussion and collaboration, Mr. Katzenbach expressed his satisfaction that 20 people from different places, industries and political affiliations were able to come together to agree on so many of the Commission report's recommendations.

Judge John J. Gibbons, second co-chair of the Commission, also provided testimony to the Subcommittee. Judge Gibbons emphasized the need for more oversight of America's correctional

institutions, arguing that greater accountability will improve conditions and that Congress should support development of an oversight committee system in the states. This theme of the need for additional oversight was also echoed by additional panelists providing witness testimony. When Senator Durbin asked the panel about the number one recommendation or issue that is most important to them each panelist cited better guidance from the federal government as one of the main catalysts for change. In their responses, each panelist expressed that if the federal government created standards, the states would be inclined to follow them and this would lead to a change in culture in individual institutions.

Gary Maynard spoke about the need for better medical and mental health care in the criminal justice system. Mr. Maynard argued that incarcerated people are the least healthy group in America and that many of their health problems, including diabetes, hepatitis A-C, HIV, and tuberculosis, are highly contagious. Mr. Maynard stated that about 16 percent of prisoners are mentally ill and that prisons and jails have become de facto psychiatric hospitals. Mr. Maynard further expressed that correctional facilities are not effective places for people to overcome their mental illnesses because of debilitating conditions that do nothing but exacerbate psychiatric symptoms. In his comments to the Subcommittee, Mr. Maynard asserted that prisons and jails should partner with public health, clinics and other organizations so that the transition period will be easier for incarcerated people who suffer from mental illness and so that the quality of health care can be improved. Mr. Maynard also recommended changes that would allow Medicaid and Medicare to help offset the cost of healthcare for incarcerated individuals.

In his comments to the Subcommittee, Mr. Morial spoke about the corrections field and how correctional facilities are operated under stressful conditions and have traditionally been understaffed and under-resourced. Mr. Morial asserted that despite the growing number of prisoners in this country, corrections professionals are exposed to a great deal of stress and danger and often do not receive the necessary amount of training and education. Using Louisiana's Angola Prison as an example, Mr. Morial asserted that prison reforms can occur, mutual respect among corrections professionals and incarcerated people can be instilled, and that the culture of a correctional institution can change. Mr. Morial expressed that the best way to reform America's prisons is through a change in culture that includes clear concrete steps such as training by the National Institute of Corrections, and managers and wardens receiving support at the local- and state-levels to find more diverse, better trained staff who are able to operate under the cross-cultural conditions in most prisons.

Pat Nolan, President of Prison Fellowship, spoke about his experiences serving time in federal prison. Mr. Nolan talked about the extreme isolation he felt while incarcerated and how chaotic the prison environment was. Speaking about the violence that pervades many correctional facilities, Mr. Nolan asserted that the best ways to prevent violence are to increase the access to medical, mental health, and drug treatment services, to expand educational programs for incarcerated people, to establish an environment of mutual respect, to take steps to strengthen the connection between people in prison and their family members and to decrease prison overcrowding. Mr. Nolan also spoke about the need for a uniform system for collecting data on violence.

More information on the Subcommittee hearing can be found at: <http://judiciary.senate.gov/>. The Commission on Safety and Abuse in America's Prisons report can be found at: <http://www.prisoncommission.org/report.asp>.

House Appropriations Subcommittee Approves Spending Bill for Programs in the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education; Under the Spending Bill, Department of Labor Funding for the President's Prisoner Reentry Initiative Would be Eliminated

On June 7th, the House Appropriations Subcommittee with jurisdiction over the Departments of Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education approved its spending bill for the 2007 fiscal year. Programs providing drug and alcohol education, prevention, and treatment services and conducting scientific research on alcoholism and drug addiction, would receive the following appropriations under the House Subcommittee-approved bill:

- **The Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant** would receive \$1.834 billion, a \$75.4 million increase over both FY 2006 funding and the President's budget request.
- **The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment** would receive \$326.7 million, representing a \$72.2 million cut from last year's funding and nearly \$48 million less than the President's budget request.
- **The Center for Substance Abuse Prevention** would receive \$195.8 million, a \$3 million increase over FY 2006 funding, but \$15.2 million more than the President's budget request.
- **The Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities State Grants program** would receive \$310 million, despite being slated for elimination in the President's budget; this represents a \$36.5 million cut from last year's funding.
- **The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)** would receive \$995 million, a \$5 million cut from last year, which is equal to the President's budget request.
- **The National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)** would receive \$433 million, also equivalent to the President's budget request, a \$2.6 million cut from last year's funding.

Additionally, funding through the Department of Labor for the President's Prisoner Reentry Initiative would be completely eliminated under the House Labor HHS spending bill. The Department of Labor had received \$19.6 million last year, the same amount the President requested for the program to receive in his FY 2007 budget. The House Labor HHS spending bill did not include any funding for this program through the Department of Labor. The Department of Justice, which received \$5 million for the President's Prisoner Reentry Initiative last year, is a part of a different spending bill that has not yet been approved by the Appropriations Committee.

Under the House Labor HHS spending bill, the Ryan White Care Act, which funds health and supportive services for people living with HIV/AIDS, would receive a \$70 million increase over last year's funding. The additional funding is intended to help States provide medications to individuals with HIV/AIDS. In addition, the House Labor HHS spending bill would also provide \$63 million for a new HIV testing initiative at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Additional information about funding amounts approved by House Labor HHS Appropriations for the 2007 fiscal year can be found at: http://appropriations.house.gov/files/LH_Detail_SCWEB.pdf.

**OVERVIEW OF DRUG AND ALCOHOL TREATMENT, PREVENTION,
EDUCATION AND RESEARCH FUNDING**

<u>Program</u>	<u>FY 2006 Funding Level</u>	<u>FY 2007 President's Budget Request</u>	<u>FY 2007 House Subcommittee Recommendation</u>	<u>Difference Between FY 2006 Funding and House Subcommittee FY 2007 Funding Recommendation</u>
<u>Substance Abuse Prevention and Treatment Block Grant</u>	\$1.7586 billion	\$1.7586 billion <i>(level funding)</i>	<u>\$1.834 billion</u>	<u>\$75.4 million increase</u>
<u>Center for Substance Abuse Prevention (CSAP)</u>	\$192.9 million	\$180.6 million <i>(decrease of \$12.3 million)</i>	<u>\$195.8 million</u>	<u>\$3 million increase</u>
<u>Center for Substance Abuse Treatment (CSAT)</u>	\$398.9 million <i>(Includes \$100 million for the Drug Treatment Voucher Program, Access to Recovery)</i>	\$375.4 million <i>(decrease of \$23.5 million)</i> <i>(Includes \$98 million for Access to Recovery, which includes \$70.5 million for the new Voucher Incentive Program and \$25 million for a new Methamphetamine Voucher program)</i>	<u>\$326.7 million</u> <i>(Subcommittee recommends \$25 million for Methamphetamine Treatment grants; vouchers allowable but not required)</i>	<u>\$72.2 million cut</u>
<u>National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)</u>	\$1.00 billion	\$995 million <i>(decrease of \$5 million)</i>	<u>\$995 million</u>	<u>\$5 million cut</u>
<u>National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA)</u>	\$436 million	\$433 million <i>(decrease of \$3 million)</i>	<u>\$433 million</u>	<u>\$3 million cut</u>
<u>Safe and Drug Free Schools and Communities: State Grants Program</u>	\$346.5 million	\$0 <i>(slated for elimination, decrease of \$346.5 million)</i>	<u>\$310 million</u>	<u>\$36.5 million cut</u>

