

**New Jersey Community  
and Corrections  
Working Summit:**

***Impacting Communities of Color***

**2003 Summit Report**

**Sponsoring Partners**

**Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey**

**New Jersey Black Issues Convention**

**New Jersey Department of Corrections**

**New Jersey State Parole Board**

**Final Summit Report Compiled and Authored by  
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**May 17, 2004**

*“When spider webs unite, they can tie up a lion.”*

*African Proverb*

# Acknowledgements

## Section I

*Do all the good you can, by all the means you can,  
in all the ways you can, in all the places you can,  
at all the times you can, to all the people you can,  
as long as you ever can.* John Wesley [1703-1791]

Many individuals made this report possible, and the author is grateful to all of them, most especially to the Summit participants who shared their collective wisdom, listened with open hearts, and astutely contributed with spontaneity and candor throughout the working day. They kept the purpose of the day always in focus.

To the many report readers/editors who made sure this writer reported accurately, and genuinely illuminated the essence and essential components of the day. Their ever astute editing skills ensured that every "f" was crossed and every "i" dotted: *Anna "Cuqui" Rivera, Luis Silva, Jerome Harris, MayVa Lor, Jason Jimenez, Angelyn Frazier, Daniel Santo Pietro, Jiles Ship, Yvette Molina, Reverend Steven Louis Craft, Ellen Wanser, Wayne Hedgepath, Luis Rivera, and Richard Vaca.*

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To the members of the Summit Planning Committee; the months of hard work and unbridled resilience to make the Working Summit a reality is a true and admirable accomplishment. Their work is appreciated; they have set the standard for inter/intra-agency collaboration and cooperation, a benchmark for others to follow. Thank you.

It has been said that the "difference is in the details"; Summit Planning Committee Chairperson Anna "Cuqui" Rivera knows this to be true—her attention to the fine points of organizing and preparing for the Summit, accompanied by her tireless passion and unbridled enthusiasm, categorically shaped the day's productive outcome. She compels us to work a little harder and "dig a little deeper."

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|                                                |                                      |                                     |
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| Latino Leadership Alliance of New Jersey       | NJ Department of Community Affairs   | NJ State Police                     |
| Citizens at Large/Affected Families            | NJ Department of Corrections         | Office of the Governor, State of NJ |
| UMDNJ-University of Medicine & Dentistry of NJ | NJ Department of Law & Public Safety | Office of the Public Defender       |
| Hispanic Americans for Progress ( NJSP )       | NJ Department of Labor               | United Chaplains Assoc. of NJ       |
| Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey   | NJ Division of Criminal Justice      | NJ Black Issues Convention          |
| Juvenile Justice Commission                    |                                      |                                     |

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To find the complete version of this Summit Report, the Summit's Executive Summary, or to locate other related New Jersey specific criminal justice information on the internet, go to:

**[www.NJCommunityandCorrectionsWorkingSummit@yahoogroups.com](mailto:www.NJCommunityandCorrectionsWorkingSummit@yahoogroups.com)**

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*“While the impact of incarceration on individuals can be quantified to a certain extent, the wide-ranging effects of the race to incarcerate on African American communities in particular is a phenomenon that is only beginning to be investigated. What does it mean to a community, for example, to know that three out of ten boys growing up will spend time in prison? What does it do to the fabric of the family and community to have such a substantial proportion of its young men enmeshed in the criminal justice system? What images and values are communicated to young people who see the prisoner as the most prominent pervasive role model in a community? What is the effect on a community’s political influence when one quarter of the black men in some states cannot vote as a result of a felony conviction?”*

**Marc Mauer, *Race to Incarcerate*, 1999**

*“He who strives to do, does more than he who has the power.”*

**A Spanish Proverb**

*“Building more prisons to address crime is like building more graveyards to address a fatal disease.”*

**Robert Gangi,  
Executive Director, Correctional Association of New York**

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# **E**xecutive Summary

## **SECTION I**

Presently, four out of every five New Jersey state prisoners are either Black or Latino. The disproportionate number of people of color in prison is of a great concern to the health and future of these populations, and to the State at large.

It is these startling facts and their dramatic impact on the lives of New Jersey residents that have raised the concerns of the community-based activist organizations along with public safety and correctional state agencies. Originating from this jointly held concern, and along with the support of New Jersey Governor James McGreevey, the *New Jersey Community and Corrections Working Summit: Impacting Communities of Color* was held as the first step in addressing the crisis of racial disparity in New Jersey's criminal justice system.

A substantial portion of the Summit day was dedicated to the track sessions and later, the reporting of track recommendations to the entire group.

Track One: Legislation, Law Enforcement and Sentencing Laws

Track Two: Incarceration Services and Rehabilitation

Track Three: Successful and Sustainable Reintegration

Based on the exhaustive discussions, findings and the correlations established among the three groups, the following recommendations are submitted:

### **1. Legislative Initiatives**

- A. Modification of *Temporary Assistance to Needy Families [TANF]* restrictions as it relates to housing restrictions, elimination of welfare benefits, and elimination of higher education funding opportunities.
- B. Support of pending legislation [A2750] to form a sentencing review commission.
- C. Expand and modify State Drug Court Program; support current legislation for increased funding allocation of Program.
- D. Identify relevant pending legislation and coordinate efforts to support or denounce.
  - i. Coordinate efforts to draft legislation that has reciprocal benefit; recruit legislative sponsors for drafted Bills.
  - ii. Address need for legislation that would allow temporary suspension of, or reduction in, child support payments while incarcerated.

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## 2. Offender Community Reintegration

- A. Increase and improve educational and training programs during and post incarceration.
  - i. Utilization of private industry, public education, volunteers, faith-based organizations, qualified and skilled prisoners to furnish supplemental staffing and programming.
- B. Build partnerships with public and private sectors to gain additional funds, and services; forge relationships that will serve to bridge prisoner transition from incarceration to community.
- C. Implementation of a case management model in both the prison and parole systems that would provide needed services necessary to assist offenders in developing and effecting realistic achievable re-entry plans. Particular focus on offender population that includes:
  - i. Those servicing sentencing of five years, or less;
  - ii. Offenders with serious, chronic physical illness [i.e., HIV/AIDS, hypertension, Hepatitis B/C, diabetes, chronic disability];
  - iii. Offenders with mental illness, substance abuse and/or dually impaired offenders; and,
  - iv. Offenders with no visible means of family/external support.
- D. Develop programs to educate and support offenders' loved ones while incarcerated and post release.
- E. Need for adequate housing and safe shelter post release is critical. Creation of state-wide task force to further identify specific communities of need, and develop a plan of action to begin to resolve this problem.
- F. Investigate and evaluate innovative programs such as:
  - i. Restorative Justice initiatives that work to bridge victims and criminals using established and successful methods.
  - ii. Mentoring programs
  - iii. Parenting skill programs
  - iv. Skill building

## 3. Communication-Collaboration-Involvement

- A. Improve cultural competency within all levels of government, among community-based partners, offenders, and others.
- B. Governmental and community based partnership that will:
  - i. formulate, prioritize and execute mutually advantageous goals;
  - ii. consolidate and merge duplicating and/or competing efforts [reduce costs];
  - iii. channel funds into jointly agreed upon projects;
  - iv. unify alliances for seeking, writing and executing mutually beneficial grant opportunities; and,

- v. develop integrated plan for community and public education
- C. Partners need to include representatives from:
  - i. state-wide and community-based law enforcement;
  - ii. governmental legal community;
  - iii. state and federal labor department;
  - iv. drug court;
  - v. corrections, parole and probation;
  - vi. juvenile justice
  - vii. faith-based organizations;
  - viii. community organizations that are representative of and/or are advocacy focused on the offender population;
  - ix. treatment providers [health care, mental health and substance abuse];
  - x. private industry;
  - xi. ex-offenders and affected family members; and,
  - xii. representatives from the “victim community”
- D. Cross-training program among the various public and private organizations to gain improved knowledge of, and appreciation for, the goals, tasks, and inner-workings of each element of the system.
- E. Effectively fortify, improve, promote and communicate resources available to offenders and their families during incarceration and post release.
  - i. Create centralized system and source for accurate information gathering and dissemination of information.
  - ii. Utilize and expand current automated systems to amass and publicize resource information.
  - iii. Publish comprehensive resource guide that can be promoted and disseminated to a wide variety of individuals, groups and organizations. This Guide is to be available to each individual prisoner prior to release.
- F. Public education and information – The public needs accurate and reliable information concerning the costs and benefits of maintaining the current criminal justice system in New Jersey versus making needed changes that will result in reduced costs while continuing to provide for community safety. The partnership of governmental and community-based agencies will be in the best position to address this complex, politically-charged, and intricate issue.

These recommendations impart direction toward the next phase in this process; to shape, construct and execute a realistic implementation plan. This plan will earmark specific goals detailing incremental achievable steps to be implemented and aimed at achieving the desired objectives. The plan goals will serve as benchmarks to evaluate progress toward reducing racial disparity in the New Jersey criminal justice system and recidivism.



**I** **ntroduction and Purpose of Report**

*"If you are not part of the solution, you are part of the problem."* Author unknown

Conceived over two years ago, over one year in the planning, the *New Jersey Community and Corrections Working Summit: Impacting Communities of Color* became a reality on Saturday, November 8, 2003, and was held at Rutgers, The State University Livingston College Student Center.

The Summit was the result of a coordinated venture sponsored by community and corrections-based agencies: *Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey* [HDANJ], the *New Jersey Black Issues Convention* [NJBIC], the *New Jersey Department of Corrections* [NJDOC], and the *New Jersey State Parole Board* [NJSPB].

Indeed this conjoint effort can be legitimately earmarked as historical for it is exceptional that state agencies would join forces with activist community organizations to create a forum where the disparate incarceration of racial minorities would be the focus and setting; an agenda for change and action would be the result. But that is what happened.

This Report, an evolving work in progress, should be read, masticated, and slowly digested. The Report will present the issues, problems, challenges and needs that require our coordinated effort and work in the months ahead. In addition, this Report will present recommendations resulting from the Summit. And finally, this Report will emphasize the wide-reaching, complex, and unique process that paved the road to meeting the goals of this Summit: to reduce the number of minority men and women in New Jersey prisons and jails by creating greater opportunities for those same individuals to productively contribute to New Jersey communities, and thus, diminish recidivism.

This Summit Report is the next phase in this transformational process!

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## **H**istorical Background

## **SECTION IV**

*"If people don't have their own vision, all they can do is 'sign up' for someone else's. The result is compliance, not commitment." Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline, 1990*

After meeting with then newly elected New Jersey Governor James E. McGreevey in February 2002, the Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey [HDANJ] was challenged with a mandate; to bring together both state governmental agencies and community organizations to address issues and concerns of the States' Latino population. An issue of significance to the community was the growing number of Latinos incarcerated in New Jersey prisons. A few months after Devon Brown's appointment as Commissioner of the New Jersey Department of Corrections [NJDOC] in April 2002, the two seemingly divergent groups started meeting together. The result of the initial meetings were fruitful, resulting in the appointment of two identified NJDOC liaisons, Luis Silva, Ombudsman and Alfaro Ortiz, Administrator, Riverfront State Prison, to work with HDANJ in addressing issues leading to the over-representation of minorities incarcerated in New Jersey.

It quickly became evident to this evolving work group, that the inclusion of other state agencies and community-based organizations would be needed to further the agenda of reducing the number of people of color incarcerated in New Jersey. The initial working group realized that they alone would not be able to adequately identify all the key elements that contribute to this problem, nor arrive at potentially realistic solutions; other key stakeholders were needed to be included in this process.

In September 2002, a written invitation was extended to several community organizations, agencies and state officials to join with HDANJ and NJDOC to plan a "Minority Corrections Summit" that would work to:

- Reduce the overrepresentation of minorities in New Jersey prisons
- Reduce the recidivism rate
- Improve community provider services to facilitate prisoners' successful family and community reintegration.

### **Summit Planning Committee Structure and Tasks**

The first Summit Planning Meeting was held on November 4, 2002. One year [almost to the day], fifteen planning meetings, and several other sub-committee meetings later, the Summit was held. The Planning Committee, chaired by Anna “Cuqui” Rivera, was comprised of 19 individuals representing state correctional and public safety agencies, faith-based, advocacy and community-based organizations, academic institutions, affected family members, and citizens at large. This Committee created and designed all aspects of the Summit

[see *Appendix A* for a complete listing of the Planning Committee Membership]

The Committee developed an ambitious operational agenda that incorporated key components necessary to prepare and implement such an undertaking. Primary tasks included:

- Securing written working agreements among primary Summit sponsors
- Formulating Summit design:
  - Developing overall Summit goals and intentions
  - Mapping of the program day to specifically meet these targets
  - Constructing methods to measure Summit outcomes
  - Identifying methods to advance Summit recommendations
- Developing and maintaining a Summit budget that also managed:
  - Locating available funding resources
  - Identifying possible avenues for fund-raising [i.e., Summit tee-shirts sales] and/or cost-savings [i.e., volunteer recruitment]
- Obtaining an appropriate facility for the Summit
- Establishing sub-committees to address specific components of the meeting day [i.e., Track sub-committees, Registration].
- Designating target Summit participants [principal stakeholders] to be included and/or invited to the Summit.
- Launching of Summit promotional activities, including the development of a web-based newsgroup [<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/NJCommunityandCorrectionsWorkingSummit>]
- Operational Planning

### **Summit Purpose**

The Summit was convened to:

1. Address the glaring overrepresentation of Blacks and Latinos in New Jersey prisons [81%]; and,
2. Identify avenues and methods to reduce the recidivism rate in New Jersey.

### **Summit Goal**

To bring together community members, legislators, decision makers, ex-offenders and affected family members to examine these issues and produce a dynamically driven action agenda that will be shared with Governor McGreevey, summit participants and relevant State Departments in New Jersey.

### **Summit Intentions**

1. To bring primary stakeholders together, in an atmosphere of cooperation and collaboration, to identify and discuss issues relevant to the Summit's focus and goal.
2. To arrive at an amalgamated action-orientated group of recommendations that, if implemented, will show a reduction in the number and rate of minority representation in New Jersey state prisons.
3. To establish meaningful and productive relationships among those representing correctional agencies and community organizations.

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## **K**eynote Speech

## **Appendix C**

### **Guillermo Beytagh– Maldonado, Chairperson, Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey**

In 2002, when the Hispanic Directors Association first met with recently elected Governor McGreevey, we asked him to help us set-up some meetings with key departments of the State. Departments that had a direct influence on our community. The fact that the governor was asking for these meetings would give the commissioners and their staff a more serious sense of urgency in terms of dealing with our issues.

His response was positive and we eventually began to meet with different commissioners. Shortly after that meeting, Cuqui, my adopted sister, and I had to go to Puerto Rico to deal with some family matters. During that trip, we spent a lot of time in a car traveling to our meetings and we were discussing the strategy of the Hispanic Directors in meeting with these commissioners.

Cuqui, as always, argued with me that we needed to deal with the Department of Corrections. That this was our opportunity to work with a system where our community was highly overrepresented and that much needed to be accomplished to deal successfully with this sector of our community.

She told me that the scarcity of education, health care, drug prevention & treatment programs throughout our state awaited ex-offenders as they leave prison to reenter our communities and that through her experience, efforts to reintegrate offenders into the society are almost invisible. I remembered an essay by Marx that I read while studying community development and Puerto Rican Studies here, at Livingston College, my alma mater, on how difficult it is for the criminal justice and corrections system to become successful. Marx argued that if the system worked, people that run it would lose their jobs, so they really did not have an incentive to do so.

In addition, I had, back in the early nineties led an effort to try to save the then very successful Office of Hispanic Services within the Department of Corrections, which the Whitman administration had decided to eliminate. It really did not take much to convince me that we had to deal with this department and the agencies that provide supplemental services to the offender population.

Honestly, the first couple of meetings with Commissioner Brown and some of the top administrators of the department were a bit strained. We noticed that Commissioner Brown had been meeting with different community and advocacy groups and that he and his staff was being bombarded with criticism on the conditions of the department and its programs. Nevertheless, we decided to move on and, to his credit, the Commissioner agreed to hold this summit, as long as the expense to the department was minimal.

We met with many people within Corrections, Parole and other entities. Moreover, we learned that there are many conscientious individuals within these institutions.

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Individuals that not only are ready to help improve the situation of people of color within the offender population, but also individuals that are very aware of the problems confronting these institutions. And had their own ideas on how to resolve some of the issues that will be discussed here today. I learned and will address some of them.

Why did we need this summit? Plainly, it is so because leaders within the African American and Latino communities are extremely concerned with the overrepresentation of our communities within the system, and we have decided that enough is enough. We cannot be silent any longer. We can not just sit back anymore and continue to observe a system that is failing our community. A system that is hard to change, for political, social and economic reasons. A system that is in many ways, paramilitary in nature. And a system that receives very little attention from the mainstream citizens of New Jersey with their newly found sentiment of put them away and throw away the key.

Pressure form our communities of color is very much needed. But lets get immediately to the root of some of the problems we face and the things we need to change.

What is holding back change? What does it take to reduce costs, reduce recidivism, and get this situation under control?

First of all:

1. Candidates for political office in New Jersey have to stop trying to get votes by pandering to voters' fears that are enlarged by media crime hype.
2. Elected officials have to reform the mandatory minimum laws.
3. Our government has to shift resources, to restoration and rehabilitation of offenders - instead of pursuing its single-minded solution of only punishment and more and more prisons.
4. We have to substantially expand the funding for alcohol and drug treatment and the community-based alternatives to incarceration, which through countless studies have shown to be less expensive, and more effective, and
5. We have to expand and raise the quality of correctional education and vocational training for a holistic approach and a maximum payoff.

You know, societies should be judged by their treatment of offenders. Clearly, incarceration is punishment and societies should not contrive punishments that are amenable, but the range of what is tolerated in this country as lawful punishment is dangerously broad. Consequently, the convicted felon (regardless of whether he or she is actually innocent) is at the mercy of the creativity of his/her jailers.

If they develop a method of incarceration, he or she must suffer it. Within the current system, the felon who is incarcerated must expect that cruel punishment is usual until proven otherwise.

The Department of Correction in New Jersey has approximately 28,000 prison inmates. In the United States, we now imprison at least six to ten times as many people as most civilized countries. The length of our sentences is two to three times those in England.

A report just released last Thursday by the Drug Policy Alliance stated that New Jersey leads the nation in warehousing nonviolent drug offenders. The report found that this is so as a result of punitive, inflexible laws that are burdensome to taxpayers and ineffective in curbing drug abuse.

36 percent of New Jersey's 28,000 prison inmates are serving sentences for drug crimes, compared with the national average of only 20 percent. New Jersey's drug sentencing laws were last amended in 1986.

One factor cited by the report was New Jersey's law requiring that convicts serve 85 percent of their sentences, regardless of the nature of their crime or their behavior behind bars. New Jersey policies put into place 10 and 15 years ago, including school-zone mandatory minimums, have resulted in the warehousing of drug offenders.

The Alliance estimates that the state's drug-related inmate population costs \$266 million a year; more than what a third of all states spend on their entire prison populations. Among other criticisms, the report said the state's drug incarceration laws had a disproportionate impact on minorities.

The account on African Americans and Hispanics in prison is disgraceful. By FBI studies, people that are not of color consume most of the drugs, and more than half of the dealers are not minorities.

In New Jersey, African Americans and Hispanics make up about 81% of the prison population, though they represent only 27% of the state's population. That is 3 times the proportional rate! I have been around, and I know! That we, as a community, are not three times more delinquent than others.

Much of the suburban drug activity is behind closed doors. However, much of the drug trade in low-income minority neighborhoods is done in the streets. There, it is much easier to sweep us up.

Often, society blames the problems of minorities on the disintegration of our families. But, what is happening to the families of those incarcerated? We are destroying Black and Latino families at a great rate.

The children of incarcerated parents suffer the most. They often get shuffled among relatives or foster care families. And as we all are very well aware, in New Jersey, that can become very, very dangerous.

These children will be the next generation in prison. You know:

1. 70% of youths in state institutions are from fatherless homes.
2. 75% of adolescent patients in substance abuse centers are from fatherless homes.

And what an industry we have created! Really on the backs of the minority community! Not only are we constantly studying in institutions of higher learning the criminal justice and corrections system but in many cases communities compete for the construction of prisons within their area in order to develop jobs and the economy. Across the country, there has been a prison building boom as a way to create jobs.

Do you have an idea what all this costs? The annual operating budget for New Jersey's Department of Corrections increased this year by \$20 million to \$918 million.

Meanwhile, to fund all that prison growth, a lot of education, health services, and infrastructure all suffer, because the money is taken from them. Although the Department of Corrections increased their budget by \$20 million this year, higher education in New Jersey was cut by \$26 million.

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Throughout the nation, states spend more on corrections than on higher education.

I truly believe that what is driving so many members of our communities of color into prisons are drugs and irrational drug laws. For example, there are about 10,100 drug offenders locked up in New Jersey prisons. It cost the state almost \$1 billion to construct the prisons to house those people. And the operating expense for confining them comes to over \$300 million each year.

Today's mandatory minimum laws tie the judge's hands, and prevent him or her from taking into account the circumstances and context of the crime, the individual's character and background, and the relative position of the offender in the drug traffic hierarchy. Today many minor offenders, who may possess a small amount or sell a small amount to feed their addiction, get huge sentences, as much as many murderers.

What we do not hear is that the much-maligned "repeat drug offenders" are often sick addicts who must regularly sell small amounts to simply feed their expensive habit. Let us remember that substance abuse is an illness, not bad behavior.

On the other hand, most say that the drug war is being won. We have been enjoying a big drop in crime for years. But in reality, the drug war has been ineffective. After spending almost half a trillion dollars on it, drugs are as plentiful and as cheap as ever.

It is argued that incarceration has little effect on drug activity because of the "replacement" phenomena. For every dealer locked up, there are many others ready to move in and reap the big rewards.

More and more experts now agree that the drug laws must change because mandatory sentencing ties the hands of judges too tightly and prevents them from exercising discretion and good judgment.

So what are the alternatives?

It is apparent that each year thousands of persons who present no, or a minimal threat to public safety are being committed to state prison. And this is being done despite the exorbitant costs involved and despite the fact that community-based programs may well be as effective, or appreciably more effective in rehabilitating these offenders.

And I do not mean only drug treatment programs. Although drugs are a big part of it – Columbia University reports that 80% of our prisoners have alcohol or drug problems. There is more violence from alcohol than from drugs. And the greatest scandal is that less than 20% of those prisoners needing treatment get any treatment at all, and much of that is inadequate.

As our prison population grows, our in-prison alcohol and drug treatment programs have not kept pace. We all know that.

And drug treatment does work. But like so many things, it has to be done well to have good results. A Rand study found that drug treatment reduces serious crime 15 times more than mandatory minimum laws, and 10 times more than conventional sentences. Arizona now mandates all drug addicts to treatment rather than prison and claims a 75% success rate. It pays to give addiction treatment and education/training to prisoners.

Casa, the Columbia University group, estimates that if we successfully treat and train only 10% of the 1.2 million inmates who need it, the nation would benefit more than \$8 billion for each year

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those released inmates remain employed and drug-and-crime free. One study showed that by paying for some education and training As well as addiction treatment, we as a nation could save hundreds of million of dollars per year from:

1. Reduced crime costs;
2. Reduced arrest and prosecution costs;
3. Reduced incarceration costs;
4. Reduced substance abuse costs; and,
5. By earnings benefits as these people are put back to work.

Other alternatives to incarceration have also had great success. Especially, holistic, culturally sensitive, community-based approaches to offender problems.

The problem of an offender may, for example, be a combination of some addiction, lack of education or job training, and bad attitudes. We need education and job training that enables a person to hold a job that pays living wage. These are obviously prerequisites to a stable, non-criminal life.

Yet, a majority of prisoners have no high school diploma. An estimated 40% of them cannot read. And the data indicates that education alone, ranging from literacy, adult basic education, GED, vocational, and post-secondary have consistently reduced recidivism. And although we might have to redirect some resources to education and training, it is a good investment. It more than pays for itself in the long run. There is little doubt that prisoner education pays.

Now a days, when a prisoner does come out, after years of sub-human treatment, with no practice of socialization and decision-making, still addicted, and without job skills, a returning inmate is lost. Without help, he or she is likely to despair and end back in prison. Two thirds do.

In the process of preparing for this summit, some of us visited prisons and searched out for inmate-run and religious programs. These are also very important for reintegration success. You see Cuqui; I have been listening to you!

The way a prisoner thinks is perhaps the most crucial factor in whether a prisoner succeeds or fails upon release from prison. Many prisoners blame prison administrators for not offering enough programs to help them develop skills that will lead to employment.

Those prisoners wither away years at a time watching television, playing table games, or immersing themselves in the loser's trap of prison culture. Conversely, a much smaller group refuses to wait for administrators to open opportunities. In fact, they recognize that the prison system itself dehumanizes them.

The prison system is geared to emphasize security and custody, and through that emphasis, it frequently erects obstacles that block an individual's efforts to develop. The committed prisoner and his or her peers, however, navigate his way around those obstacles. He is singularly focused on success, and expects administrators and society will place barriers before him.

The committed prisoner passes every day in an all-consuming effort to prepare himself for the challenges he knows that he will encounter, both in prison and upon release. Prisoners who succeed do not reach their success by accident. They know exactly what they want. They implement strategies and exercise discipline to overcome the obstacles wrought by confinement.

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They emulate the behavior and living patterns of leaders, many times of religious leaders, and they never offer excuses for their own failures.

This is why these inmate-run and religious programs are so important. If run and supervised effectively, they can prepare prisoners to overcome the obstacles they expect to encounter upon release. If we pay attention today and are able to make changes then millions of dollars and most importantly many members of our communities of color can be saved.

We must change our whole approach to our corrections system. We must:

1. Return judicial discretion to judges.
2. Reduce the excessive lengths of sentences.
3. Make the new laws somewhat retroactive.
4. Make appropriate assessment of risk. Insure that the right people are in the right programs.
5. Offenders must be given a validated risk assessment instrument.
6. We must not only increase programs that target crime-producing behaviors such as substance abuse, but also those that deal with criminal values, anti-social peers, poor problem solving, and relapse. These programs must use structured cognitive-behavioral curricula that target anti-social thinking and other factors related to criminality, for example impulsivity, poor problem solving skills, lack of considerations, consequences, and so forth.
7. We must also emphasize education and training.
8. Make alternatives to incarceration and restorative justice the norm.
9. We must create a sensible re-integration policy. A re-integration policy must include the departments of corrections, parole, human services, community affairs, labor, labor unions, and culturally competent community-based agencies. Then, and only then, we will be able to create and ensure implementation of successful re-entry programs.

We must also take advantage of some of the opportunities we presently have in New Jersey. New Jersey will be engaging in one of the largest construction programs since the new deal. Given the positive impact of livable wage employment on reduction in recidivism, job preparedness and career development programs in construction designed for early participation on the part of inmates are important. A tie-in to construction industries could prove meaningful.

Vocational education, work in collaboration with the labor communities and private agencies with employment support experience to develop apprenticeship programs that reflect the need for construction workers in these endeavors is very time-appropriate.

Let us not forget a recent Human Rights Watch study that found that as many as one in five of American prison inmates are seriously mentally ill, and that prison systems have become default mental health systems. Offender focused intensive case management models should be implemented initially, immediately after sentencing, during incarceration, during the transitional center stage, and continued at least, through the first year post release.

In addition, given the finding that so many prisoners suffer from mental illness, the establishment of separate housing facilities and access to therapeutic counseling and other treatments are more than warranted in this state.

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It is now generally known and accepted that female prisoners have different rehabilitative programming and service needs than their male counterparts. Therefore, there is an increasing need for instituting community-based gender-based programs and alternative sentencing strategies.

I would argue that Latino prisoners also have different rehabilitative programming and service needs than their counterparts. The re-establishing of the Office of Hispanic Services within the Department of Corrections is also warranted and needed.

Given how important family reunification is to successful transitioning and community re-entry and its impact on recidivism, more programs and support services are sorely needed in this area. I also recommend alternative sentencing strategies designed to facilitate optimum support and contact with children for both men and women.

Also, in order to help facilitate successful family reunification and community re-entry, we must provide funding to expand intensive case management models that bring offenders, families and communities together to reduce the pain and increase the prospects for a brighter collective future. Currently there is no institution really designed to provide the myriad of programs and support services that are truly needed.

Partnerships are necessary. The department of corrections and the other fore-mentioned government agencies must join forces with culturally competent, community based and faith based agencies. These partnerships, must be real partnerships. All partners must be viewed as valuable and necessary.

I can go on forever. But it is up to you, the participants of this conference to further discuss the alternatives that exist to reduce the overrepresentation and the soaring recidivism rates of communities of color in the correctional system.

Lastly, I must acknowledge not only the co-sponsors and funders of this summit. But also, the tireless labor of love put forward by the planning committee and specifically Cuqui. We did it!

And we all deserve a nice round of applause and appreciation for those that helped and are helping us.

For our community's sake, let us move forward and do the right thing.

Thank you!

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# **K**eynote Speech — Devon Brown, Commissioner, Department of Corrections

## **Appendix C**

Thank you Mr. Silva for that kind introduction.

Good morning and indeed it is a good morning for we, as friends, family, and concerned citizens, have gathered to constructively address aspects of our nations and our states criminal justice policies as they affect people of color.

I believe that all of us will agree that this summit is well overdue for it affords us the opportunity to explore the devastating consequences of this country's race to incarcerate and to forge strategies that are based upon sound logic, reason, and compassion. This summit is highly unique for it represents the first occasion in this state and perhaps the nation in which those who are most affected by our rapidly expanding correctional industry, Hispanics and African-Americans, have united to convey our perspectives on this all consuming crisis.

As we do so, it is important that we understand what this summit is not about.

1. It is not about speaking in codes. We have had far too much of that from those who seek to conceal the true nature of the problem. Candor and open dialogue should be the rule of the day.
2. The summit is not about complacency for we are amidst a national catastrophe, one which imperils the most important, the most cherished entity in our lives, our children.
3. This summit is not about unbridled carping or about casting blame. As a behavioral scientist, I know the virtues of introspection that is, the necessity that we look inwardly before we displace responsibility for a problem onto others. As one who is legally trained, I understand the truth of the principle that he who seeks justice must do so with clean hands. Yes, the system may well have failed us but perhaps that has occurred in large part because we have failed ourselves.

Today, we stand at a bitterly contested crossroads where race relations intersect with the rules that govern the apprehension, trial, and punishment of those who have violated our laws. The direction that we take will have major political, social, and economic ramifications. It is a direction that must be determined by objective debate and yes, justice, two entities which have thus far been woefully lacking.

Ironically, while the proliferation of our criminal justice system has caused corrections to become one of the country's few growth industries, it has become the bane of governmental budgets and fiscal stability.

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As I speak, 2.1 million people are behind bars in this country. One in every thirty-two individuals is incarcerated or has a history of incarceration in this land where freedom is considered the most basic of rights. For those who mistakenly equate sheer volume and size with prosperity, the current state may foolishly be viewed as positive. But for those of us who understand what the criminal justice system [particularly as it relates to prisons and jails] really means about the health of society, there is reason for great alarm.

I ask at this point that you envision a situation wherein you, a pregnant mother, are at your first meeting of a childbirth class in Camden, Newark, Plainville or any town in “inner city” U.S.A. All ten members of the class are African-American women who, coincidentally, are expecting boys. After a general overview regarding what to expect of pregnancy and childbirth, the teacher tells you that she also has some news regarding the future of your children three out of ten of your boys will spend time behind prison walls. While she can’t predict which of your sons will be there, national statistics suggest that this is how their lives will turn out.

This is a rather bleak scenario, of course, and one that is not generally incorporated into child birth classes but it is accurate nonetheless. My question to you today is: would America permit these circumstances to continue if the odds were three in ten for boys from other racial and ethnic groups? The answer should be obvious.

Today, as during the close of the twentieth century, race, crime, and the criminal justice system are inextricably linked. A walk through nearly any courtroom or prison in the United States will reveal a sea of black and brown faces at the defendants table and in the prison yard. The sad reality is that half of all prison inmates are now African-American and another 17 percent are Hispanic percentages far out of proportion to our members in the national general population or New Jersey.

With these figures in mind, there are those who with some degree of justification have proclaimed our prisons as being America’s new plantations for not since slavery has our country promoted policies which have visited such enormous economic and human calamity on the black community.

It is an unfortunate and unacceptable truism that this state and nation has lost a generation of young African-Americans and Hispanics, both male and female, to the criminal justice juggernaut. It is equally clear and shocking that a profound number of today’s black infants now have a heritage of having a parent, father and/or mother, who was in prison or under some form of criminal justice control. The harsh gravity of this finding will have far reaching implications for it is likely to perpetuate further social, economic, and psychological imperilments for future generations of Americans including those living in New Jersey.

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As a career correctional professional, I have come to know that the number and occupancy rate of correctional facilities are in fact the true barometer of a society's health. Based upon the present circumstances, our state and country may well be approaching a condition far more grave than we choose to acknowledge. It is critical that we re-examine our criminal justice policies and laws. It is imperative that you ensure that what is in essence, search and destroy, drive by legislation that has had the effect of targeting selected populations be reviewed.

Now, there are those, the unenlightened and adversaries of progress, who may question the Commissioner of Corrections maintaining such views. But to them I respond I am without apology!

I proudly believe that we are one nation under god indivisible with liberty and justice for all.

Thank you for your continued support.

I am your native son.

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# **T**rack Recommendations

## **SECTION VII**

*“Good ideas are not adopted automatically.  
They must be driven into practice with courageous patience.”*  
Hyman Rickover [1900-1982]

### **Track One – Legislation, Law Enforcement and Sentencing Laws**

This track was charged with the following tasks:

1. *Explore and prioritize through discussion with key authorities, different legislative initiatives that could acquire public support, and help relieve the state of the current financial burden caused by incarceration.*
2. *Describe current alternative programs to incarceration.*
3. *Work with law enforcement to improve community/police relationships and practices throughout communities of color.*
4. *Explore and develop realistic recommendations for reform in sentencing laws such as; drug free school zones, truth in sentencing [85%] law, three strike law, and other mandatory minimums and policies under Title 2C.*

Panelists included representatives from the State’s law and public safety agencies, legislature, and advocacy organizations.

#### **Barriers Identified**

1. Limited use of drug courts; only available in specifically funded counties.  
Eligibility criteria for acceptance into drug court program are narrowly defined.
2. Mandatory sentencing and school zone provision has increased incarceration rates primarily among minority populations.
3. Treatment not viewed as a viable or adequate option to be incorporated as a punitive consequence to criminal conduct.
4. Limited diversity among law enforcement and deficiency in cultural awareness.
5. “Lock ‘em up” mentality remains among many working in law enforcement, public safety and governmental law agencies.
6. Communities of color continue to have general mistrust of local and State police as to their attitudes, behavior and intentions in the adjudication of their job responsibilities and position of authority.
7. Impact of NERA [“No Early Release Act”] on future prison growth and resulting decrease in number of parolees. NERA significantly impacts those convicted of violent crimes who typically receive longer sentences.
8. Changes in the mental health system have increased the number of mentally ill prisoners.

9. New Jersey Criminal Code, 2C-35:14, *Rehabilitation Program for Drug and Alcohol Dependent Persons; Criteria for Imposing Special Probation; Ineligible Offenders; Prosecutorial Objections; Mandatory Commitment to Residential Treatment Facilities; Presumption of Revocation; Brief Incarceration in Lieu of Permanent Revocation* defines the eligibility requirements for alternative to incarceration programs, thus narrowing the pool of suitable candidates that could otherwise take advantage of alternatives.. In addition, the law’s prescribed residential level of care for treatment is too restrictive.

## Track Recommendations

### Sentencing Reformation

1. Expand drug court utilization
  - A. Expand to all counties
  - B. Amend eligibility to include those who have had three prior non-violent convictions.
  - C. Increase use of outpatient substance abuse treatment
2. Greater law enforcement involvement and “buy in” to the need for reforms—devise interventions directed toward law enforcement to modify attitudes about treatment.
3. Investigate use of “mental health court” to divert qualified mentally ill individuals to mental health treatment instead of incarceration.
4. Mandatory Sentencing
  - A. Repeal the mandatory 1000 foot school zone law and to support all efforts to do so. Under the current statute, selling, distributing or possessing drugs with intent to distribute within 1,000 feet of school property warrants a three-year mandatory prison sentence.
  - B. Support legislation to establish a commission to evaluate the current sentencing guidelines and make recommendations for modification [A2750 and S2215].
  - C. New Jersey Criminal Code 2C: 35-14 needs review and modification to improve access to treatment to a broader group of offending drug abusers.
  - D. Need to address other mandatory laws that impact prisoners, specifically the 30-year mandatory sentence and *NERA* [“No Early Release Act”].
  - E. Mandatory sentencing should include opportunities for mandatory treatment.

### Racial Profiling

1. Ability to identify an effective way to monitor racial profiling on a local community level.
2. The need to address racism “head on” including cultural competency. This is closely tied into racial profiling, as there was a clear consensus from all arenas [corrections, educators, judges, and police] that there was a basic lack of cultural awareness and understanding.
  - A. Develop and implement core cultural diversity curriculum and training for law and public safety agencies [and other applicable groups] based on established effective and



evidence-based, results-driven programs.

- B. The racial profiling Compact Disc [CD] being developed for police should be given to all members of the criminal justice system.

**Building Trust**

- 1. Improve Communication and Participation
  - A. Many more community and grass root organizations and individuals need to be drawn in and participate in this effort.
  - B. Victim groups need to be solicited and invited to join effort.
  - C. Improve communication and collaboration between legal organizations, advocates, and the Attorney General's Office.

**Track One Final Recommendation Thoughts**

Track One identifies specific legislative direction that, when passed and implemented, will be a pivotal first step in reducing the racial disparity in the criminal justice system. Collaboration among governmental, legal and community organizations can exert substantial influence to see that mutually beneficial laws get passed and enacted. However, without the amalgamated and concerted effort by those who are directly involved and impacted by the system, the legislation may only have minimal impact. Racially and economically biased attitudes, and actions based on those attitudes, along with a general mistrust of system intentions, bleed together further damaging a struggling system of justice. The system must also change from the "inside out"; local cities and communities need to direct their attention to issues of racial profiling and the apparent lack of cultural understanding. On a system-wide, state-wide basis, a core curriculum needs to be designed that specifically addresses the needs of this State, and is intended to assist its stakeholders to better understand, appreciate and enjoy cultural differences, as well as similarities. Leadership and active participation from all realms, public and private enterprises, are required to work together to make these necessary changes and to set the example for all of us.

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**Track Two – Incarceration Services and Rehabilitation**

The primary goals of this track were:

1. *Examine the existing programs in Corrections and determine if more programs are needed.*
2. *Discussion on whether other alternatives exist for reducing the recidivism of Black and Latinos.*

Panelists included individuals from various correctional settings and other disciplines such as administration, academia, substance abuse, discharge planning, and community release programs.

**Barriers Identified**

1. Not enough skill-based/job-training programming within the prison system.
2. Amount and types of programs not as accessible in some of the prisons.
3. Decreased funding for rehabilitation efforts
4. No opportunities for family education, involvement, or support.
5. Little attention to offenders' needs post prison release-lack of preparation for return to community. This barrier contributes significantly to recidivism.
  - A. Offenders often leave prison without any valid identification or information about how to obtain post release.
  - B. Little to no information provided concerning services available in one's community, such as; housing options, employment services, support services.
  - C. No preparation for managing possible legal requirements [i.e., child support, fine payment].
6. Little to no parenting programs; parent-offenders leave prison without having had the opportunity to learn positive parenting skills.
7. Written material not always available in Spanish; limited bi-lingual staff.
8. Limited use of outside resources [i.e., federal agencies such as Veteran's Administration, faith-based organizations]
9. Lack of cultural sensitivity among all parties [i.e., offenders, correctional officers, and halfway house staff].
10. Limited academic educational opportunities post GED acquisition, especially for those over age 21.
11. Public has a lack of accurate information about offenders and about the criminal justice system.
12. Prisoners have limited opportunities to be involved or to take an active positive role in making needed improvements.

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**Track Recommendations**

**Pre-incarceration Efforts**

1. Legislation to temporarily postpone child support during incarceration.

**During Incarceration Efforts**

1. Education
  - A. Develop realistic educational programs.
  - B. Provide educational opportunities to offenders over age 21.
  - C. Re-institute college level courses for offenders.
  - D. Implement job readiness and skill-based training programs at all the prisons.
  - E. Partner with private industry and federal agencies to develop entrepreneur and/or apprenticeship programs.
  - F. Assist offenders to secure any certificates of accomplishment prior to release.
2. Rehabilitation
  - A. Continue to enhance Therapeutic Community Programs
  - B. Implement effective case management
  - C. Start discharge planning process early into the offender's incarceration, when appropriate; develop comprehensive re-entry plan with offender input.
  - D. Promote prisoner self-help groups and organizations within the prison system.
  - E. Engage community based organizations to assist offenders with programming and pre-release process.
  - F. Compile comprehensive list of services for offenders and their families; Assist offenders to locate services via supervised use of web-based NJ offender release assistance web site.
  - G. Assist offenders with accessing the necessary information that will enable them to secure legally valid identification prior to release, or soon thereafter.
  - H. Develop pre-release services in each prison to assist and better prepare offenders prior to release.
  - I. Engage family/significant others in the discharge/release process with educational and supportive services.
3. Other
  - A. Ensure all written material provided to offenders and their families is available in Spanish.
  - B. Develop methods for securing bi-lingual and culturally sensitive staff members.
  - C. Create cultural awareness/sensitivity programs for offenders and prison staff.
  - D. Develop a plan to identify funding resources and opportunities to support the recommendations.

**Post-Incarceration Efforts**

Direct Efforts

- A. Case management system that will coordinate release plan with identified law enforcement agency, community agency and/or support system post release of offender.

Indirect Efforts

- A. Develop incentives to motivate businesses to hire ex-offenders.
- B. Educate and increase public awareness on the benefits of offender re-entry programs and supportive services; focus education on ensuring public safety, need for ex-offender re-entry initiatives, and the cost-benefit of such endeavors.
- C. Continue to work with governmental and community-based organizations to work collaboratively on matters affecting offenders, their families, and our communities.

**Track Two Final Recommendation Thoughts**

The participants of Track II believe that rehabilitation services provided to prisoners during their incarceration is not just cost effective; it also makes good public policy sense. With formal educational studies, job training programs, social skill building, self-help support groups, and treatment services, prisoners are given opportunities to sensibly and productively employ their time by providing realistic and new approaches to securing employment when released. If ex-offenders can secure employment soon after prison release, there is less likelihood that they will re-offend. The community can now appreciate a new tax payer; one who will not “charge” the system yet again, if returning to prison—that is cost effective intervention. With the use of trained volunteers, faith-based organizations, partnerships with private industry and public educational institutions, grant opportunities, and identified skills of fellow prisoners, the Department can be fortified to provide some of these needed services with minimal overhead costs. Residents of New Jersey have failed to recognize the significant costs they absorb, and in reality, the minimal benefits they receive in return, when the criminal justice system does little other than to function as a temporary human warehouse called “punishment.” It is imperative that the residents of New Jersey be educated as to the costs of maintaining the current “status quo” system of incarceration and potential for realized benefits to instituting increased rehabilitation efforts in our State’s prisons. Astute and shrewd citizens will understand that rehabilitation of prisoners makes good sense; for the prisoners, for their families, for the community and most importantly, for the pocketbooks of New Jersey residents.

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### **Track Three – Successful and Sustainable Reintegration**

The focus of this track was to:

1. *Examine the existing resources and barriers for the ex-offender upon release.*
2. *Identifying barriers and seeking realistic proposals to address these barriers.*
3. *Outline the steps to be taken and those to be worked upon.*

Track panelists included individuals representing the offender population, therapeutic communities, prisoner advocacy and faith-based organizations, State Parole Board, and the State's Department of Labor.

For the purpose of clarification, it was immediately recognized that two distinct categories of offenders reenter our communities:

- Those who are released upon completion of their sentence [max out]; and,
- Those under parole supervision.

The needs of these two distinct groups may not necessarily differ upon release, but current community supports tend to be more available for those under some form of criminal justice supervision as compared to what is accessible to the individual released upon sentence completion.

Barriers to reintegration were discussed and developed in a detailed and constructive forum that allowed for the free flow of information and comment. Audience participants represent the offender population: ex-offenders, significant others of offenders [or ex-offenders], treatment providers, human rights advocates, corrections' staff, academia, social services, professionally certified practitioners, and representatives from the law enforcement community, including the then Acting Chairman of the New Jersey State Parole Board, the Honorable John D'Amico, Jr.

#### **Identified Barriers**

##### **During Incarceration**

1. Lack of adequate preparation prior to release/parole.
2. Minimal planning prior to release [max or parole].
3. No family/significant other contact/preparation

**Community Services/Support**

1. Lack of supports and services becomes a costly burden to communities and contributes to recidivism.
2. Lack of access to community services
3. Lack of educational opportunities
4. Lack of clothing [and/or appropriate clothing for job interviews]
5. Lack of temporary shelter upon release and/or creates delays in paroling homeless offenders [i.e., no public shelters in Burlington County; waiting lists to get into shelters]. Few halfway houses and/or safe houses available [transitional housing].
6. Lack of affordable housing
7. Lack of affordable recreational activities
8. Lack of affordable and accessible health care services
9. Lack of and/or limited access to literacy programs, computer training, job readiness, and parenting skill programs.
10. Lack of dedicated reintegration services
11. Minimal faith-based interventions encouraged or recognized
12. Transportation issues
13. Limited Spanish-speaking staff/interpreters

**Offender/Ex-offender Concerns/Issues/Limitations**

1. The social stigma associated with being a convicted felon.
2. Minimal to no visible means of assistance/support if released at completion of sentence.
3. Lack of knowledge concerning recognition of civil rights
4. Loss of self esteem and other psychological effects of incarceration
5. Poor or limited interpersonal skills
6. Gang and/or drug dealer affiliation
7. Strain of providing financial child support soon after release
8. Maintaining financial obligations to parole, housing, child support, Motor Vehicle Commission [fines, interests and/or penalties], and self-care [i.e., transportation, clothing, food, etc.]
9. Limited literacy/No GED
10. Language barrier [limited or non-English speaking]
11. Lack of funds and lack of knowledge concerning welfare and medical assistance.
12. The lack of proof of training programs/certifications earned while institutionalized.
13. Lack of information concerning self-help recovery groups in one's community, as well as other similar types of community services.
14. Lack of readiness to re-enter/integrate into community.
15. Un-realistic expectations and/or plans for future.
16. Personality/behavioral issues [sense of entitlement, defensive response]

**“Words without actions are the assassins of idealism.”**

Herbert Hoover [1874 – 1964]

### **General Overview**

The Summit, located at the Student Center of Livingston College [Rutgers, The State University], began at 8:00AM with participant registration and a continental breakfast. Each registered participant received a Summit Handbook that provided information about the Summit, including the schedule of events and guidelines for the working track sessions.

Throughout the day the registration area became the central point of contact for informal discussions among Summit participants. Also located in the registration area, several governmental and community agencies highlighted their services with table displays and informational materials; thus, lending itself to a tone encouraging interaction and exchange of information.

A buffet lunch was also provided for all participants; one hour was allotted for this break in the day. Participants used this time wisely by engaging in constructive interaction with others.

### **Organizational Composition of Summit Day**

The Program Day was divided into four distinct working segments with specified time frames allotted for each section:

1. Morning plenary session that included welcoming and special remarks from various organizations' leadership, two keynote speakers, and a special report from the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice [one hour, fifteen minutes];
2. Track sessions [two hours];
3. Afternoon plenary session that included reports from each track session, participant feedback concerning the track reports, and a special project report [one hour, thirty minutes]; and,
4. Closing session that included evaluation of the day, final comments and development of “next steps” [thirty minutes].

### **Morning Plenary Session**

Facilitated by Luis Silva, Ombudsman, New Jersey Department of Corrections, the session opened with the singing of the National Anthem by Trooper Thomas Cavello, New Jersey State

Police, and Invocation given by Reverend Benjamin Rivera, United Chaplains Association of New Jersey. A brief welcome to the college was then given by Arnold G. Hyndman, Dean, Livingston College, Rutgers The State University. Following the welcome, special remarks were provided by the Honorable John D'Amico, Chairman, New Jersey State Parole Board and subsequently, Fred Williams, First Vice Chair, New Jersey Black Issues Convention.

In his remarks, Parole Board Chairman John D'Amico, Jr. recounted the troubling statistics that illustrate the substantial disparity in the incarceration rates among people of color in New Jersey and the nation. Often an individual's concluding chapter in their relationship with the criminal justice system is the Parole Board, an often misunderstood component of the criminal justice continuum. By the time the offender is paroled, he/she has had dealings with the police, prosecutors, courts and prisons. D'Amico added that some studies have explored how crucial decisions made in the application and enforcement of the law along this path exacerbates the disparity incarceration divide.

In describing the mission of the Parole Board, D'Amico pointed to the establishment of specific initiatives intended to:

- Reduce offender recidivism;
- Improve parolees' successful reintegration into the community; and,
- Ensure public safety.

To this end, the Chairman pointed to endeavors in the process of implementation:

- Creation of community based resource centers where parolees can afford themselves of a myriad of services directed at supporting their successful parole.
- Implementing a revised risk assessment tool that has been shown to forecast an individual's likelihood to re-offend while identifying specific areas of need so the Board can promote corrective measures in a proactive manner.
- Improving discharge planning with the practice of case management techniques.
- Expanding the use of community programs to provide additional options for substance abuse treatment, skill building, job training and education.
- Developing graduated sanction methodology that will more aptly manage and supervise individuals who have committed a technical parole violation. While ensuring public safety, graduated sanctions are designed to reduce recidivism among parolees who would



otherwise return to prison for non-criminal offenses; thus, representing a 30 percent decrease.

- Build fruitful partnerships with community based organizations, including faith-based groups, to broaden opportunities for supportive parolee services.

In conclusion, Judge D'Amico reiterated that while the Board has set forth an aggressive agenda for change and improvement, he foresees that these efforts will result in meeting the desired goals; to break the cycle of recidivism with use of skill building, innovation, and partnership,

### **Track Group Sessions**

Pivotal to the success of the Summit was the development of three distinct working tracks. Each track had a discrete focus, but all were charged with the same task: to arrive at a list of recommendations for decreasing the number of people of color in prison and reduce recidivism rates.

Each track was lead by a moderator who was a member of the specific track sub-committee and worked in the development of the track's agenda, focus and goals. Assisting the moderator to meet the track's mission was a group of panelists considered to be representative of and/or have expertise in the subject matter of the particular track. Panel members were to be given five minutes to present on a specific topic related to the track. Panelists were encouraged to share personal and/or professional views on known/established effective methods and/or resources for change.

A listing of Track moderators and panelists can be found *in Appendix B*.

A substantial portion of the Summit day was dedicated to the track sessions and later, the reporting of track recommendations to the entire group.

#### **Track One: Legislation, Law Enforcement and Sentencing Laws**

What revisions could be made legislatively that could ensure public safety, reduce the state's financial burden and lower the disproportionate numbers of Blacks & Latinos incarcerated?

#### **Track Two: Incarceration Services and Rehabilitation**

Do you believe that it would be cost effective to educate and train prisoners during their incarceration?

### **Track Three: Successful and Sustainable Reintegration**

What barriers exist for individuals leaving prison?

Summit participants were asked to select a track of interest and answer the associated prescribed question as part of the pre-registration process. The purpose of this task was twofold:

- To help each Summit participant focus on relevant issues and problems; and,
- To assist the track facilitator to guide the track meeting into productive discussion of pertinent topics.

A summary of track recommendations is found in Section VII, *Track Recommendations*.

### **Project Reports**

Inclusion of The New Jersey Institute for Social Justice special project reports into the day's agenda was intended to provide objective and constructive information describing the process of prisoner reentry in New Jersey based on data collaborated and analyzed by Institute staff. This report examines the policy context surrounding prisoner reentry in the state, the characteristics of the state's returning inmates, the geographic distribution of returning prisoners, and the social and economic climates of the communities that are home to the highest concentrations of returning prisoners. A second report on the results of the Institute's Reentry Roundtable Project was incorporated into the afternoon plenary session. This report was a summarization of the Institutes' year long initiative gathering policy makers, researchers, community and faith-based organizations, service providers and other key New Jersey stakeholders to take a comprehensive look at the phenomenon of prisoner reentry: how individuals leave the custody and control of the New Jersey criminal justice system and reintegrate into society.

See *Appendix H* for citing of these reports.

# R

## esources and References

## Appendix H

### Internet Resources

|                                                             |                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Families Against Mandatory Minimums [FAMM]                  | <a href="http://www.famm.org">http://www.famm.org</a>                                                                                      |
| Hispanic Directors Association of New Jersey                | <a href="http://www.hdanj.org/">http://www.hdanj.org/</a>                                                                                  |
| New Jersey Community & Corrections Working Summit Newsgroup | <a href="http://www.NewJerseyCommunityandCorrectionsSummit@yahoogroups.com">www.NewJerseyCommunityandCorrectionsSummit@yahoogroups.com</a> |
| New Jersey Department of Corrections                        | <a href="http://www.state.nj.us/corrections">http://www.state.nj.us/corrections</a>                                                        |
| New Jersey Department of Law & Public Safety                | <a href="http://www.state.nj.us/lps">http://www.state.nj.us/lps</a>                                                                        |
| New Jersey Institute for Social Justice*                    | <a href="http://www.njisj.org">http://www.njisj.org</a>                                                                                    |
| New Jersey Parole Board                                     | <a href="http://www.state.nj.us/parole">http://www.state.nj.us/parole</a>                                                                  |
| New Jersey State Police                                     | <a href="http://www.njsp.org/">http://www.njsp.org/</a>                                                                                    |
| New Jersey State Website                                    | <a href="http://www.state.nj.us">http://www.state.nj.us</a>                                                                                |
| Star-Ledger                                                 | <a href="http://www.nj.com">http://www.nj.com</a>                                                                                          |
| The Center for Law and Social Policy                        | <a href="http://www.clasp.org">http://www.clasp.org</a>                                                                                    |
| The Record                                                  | <a href="http://www.northjersey.com">http://www.northjersey.com</a>                                                                        |
| The Sentencing Project                                      | <a href="http://www.sentencingproject.org">http://www.sentencingproject.org</a>                                                            |
| US Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics      | <a href="http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/">http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/</a>                                                                  |
| US Census Bureau                                            | <a href="http://www.census.gov">http://www.census.gov</a>                                                                                  |

\* All referenced reports concerning New Jersey prisoners and prisoner reentry may be located at this website.

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