Chris O'Brien

From:

Chontell Nelson Washington <chontellnw@gmail.com>

Sent:

Wednesday, July 22, 2020 11:53 AM

To:

Chris O'Brien

Cc:

Rep. Barros, Jean P.; Rep. Diaz, Grace; Rep. Morin, Michael A.; rep-

quattrocchio@rilegislature.gov; Rep. Tobon, Carlos E.

Subject:

Support of the 2021 Criminal Justice Reinvestment Package

Attachments:

Justice Reinvestment support letter July 2020.pdf

Dear Public Safety SubCommittee,

I thank you for the work that you have been doing on behalf of the residents and systems of the State of Rhode Island.

It is my pleasure to support the work of Governor Raimondo and the task force for recommendations to create changes and improvements for Rhode Islanders.

Please see the attachment with support of the 2021 Criminal Justice Reinvestment Package. I am available for more conversation if necessary.

Love,

Rev. Chontell N. Washington

Interim Executive Minister

Rhode Island State Council of Churches

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John 13:34 A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another



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Rev. Chontell N. Washington Interim Executive Minister

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Denominational Representatives Rev. Dr. Thomas Wiles American Baptist Churches



Evangelical Lutheran Church of America

Rev. Andrew Foster United Methodist Church

Ms. Helen Schall United Church of Christ



and the Rhode Island Bible Society

To Rep. William Obrien and the public safety sub-committee of the House **Finance Committee**

I am writing in support of the Fiscal Year 2021 Criminal Justice Reinvestment Package (CJRP) being proposed. It is our hope that this package is considered to make necessary improvements for the equity of those who are incarcerated and released from prison. The facets of this CJRP offers them a greater opportunity for discharge preparation, employment training, and assistance finding jobs upon their reentry into society.

Hopes for gainful employment should not be a pipe-dream for people being released from prison. The possibility is great for reducing the return-to-prison rate with a new and innovative discharge planning approach. Discharge planning services within the facility in advance to release will be a major improvement and contributor to success.

The expansion of real jobs within the Adult Correctional Institutions (ACI) is a major improvement to the equity of incarcerated people who are able to participate in apprenticeships. Currently the inmates creating the state's license plates and other office furniture for the state offices and colleges do not have fair licensing opportunities after learning their jobs and fine-tuning those skills. They come out knowing how to create the intricate details of wooden podiums, bunk beds, mattresses, and the various steps to make license plates. Having the Department of Corrections work with the Department of Labor and Training to develop a structured program will allow for a greater sense of personal self-worth but also nurture the desires to be able to use their transferrable skills.

Finding jobs for the formerly incarcerated, especially those with sex offenses has been historically difficult. There are so many people who can hire this population but choose not to take a chance. The role identified in this package will not be filled by a miracle worker, but it does speak to the commitment to have at least a designated person working diligently on the options for work after release from prison.

The preventative care program for healthcare would be a tremendous leap to aide reentry to society by helping with additional withdrawal resources for detox and substance abuse. Those with addictions struggle and will likely have a long road of temptation and challenge in their lives, but having the potential for support will make the difference. We strongly encourage your works toward these reforms.

Sincerely,

Rev. Chontell Washington Interim Executive Minister