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Andrew M. Cuomo - Governor

Governor Cuomo Announces Council on Community Re-Entry and Reintegration

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Council to Provide Comprehensive and Data-Driven Solutions to Alleviate Barriers to Re-Entry Experienced by Formerly Incarcerated New Yorkers

Council Builds on Governor Cuomo's Accomplishments with Pay for Success and Work for Success Programs, which connect formerly incarcerated people to employment opportunities

Albany, NY (July 8, 2014)

Governor Andrew M. Cuomo today announced the formation of the New York State Council on Community Re-Entry and Reintegration, which will address obstacles formerly incarcerated people face upon re-entering society. Fulfilling the Governor's pledge from the 2014 State of the State address, the Re-Entry Council will promote collaboration among state, local, and private agencies as well as community groups in order to address a wide range of issues pertaining to successful re-entry, including housing, employment, healthcare, education, behavior change, and Veterans' services.

"We have made great progress toward creating a safer state over the past few years - our prisons have fewer people in them and crime is down - but we must do more to stop the revolving door of recidivism once and for all," Governor Cuomo said. "Reducing the state's recidivism rate will mean safer communities, stronger families and fewer taxpayer dollars spent on prisons. This Re-Entry Council will strengthen the support that we provide to formerly incarcerated individuals as they transition back into mainstream society, and help ensure that those transitions are lasting and effective. I thank the councilmembers for signing on to this important public service, and I look forward to their recommendations to create an even safer and fairer New York."

Each year, approximately 25,000 individuals leave New York State prisons and face challenges when reintegrating into society that include legal identification, employment and education barriers, lack of health care access, substance abuse and mental health service needs, anti-social behavior, and homelessness. In the face of the difficult task of overcoming these stated challenges, 40 percent of the formerly incarcerated in New York State recidivate within three years of their release.

In February 2012, Governor Cuomo launched an employment training and placement program called "Work for Success" which has prepared and assisted more than 2,000 formerly incarcerated people in their pursuit of obtaining jobs. Approximately two years later, the Governor launched the nation's first state-led "Pay for Success project", an initiative funded by private investors to train and employ formerly incarcerated individuals. Building on the success of those programs and using evidence-based strategies, data-driven analysis, and a large network of advisors and partners, the Re-Entry Council aims to alleviate additional collateral consequences individuals face upon release from prison.

The goals for the Re-Entry Council in 2014 are as follows:

1. Identify barriers to successful re-entry in New York State through an examination of state laws, regulations, and administrative policies pertaining to the formerly incarcerated.
2. Solicit feedback from a host of stakeholders relating to potential policies, laws and practices aimed at improving outcomes for the formerly incarcerated.
3. Assess existing programs for effectiveness and identify evidence-based best practices in support of positive outcomes.
4. Develop coordination strategies between state, local, private and community-based groups in support of successful re-entry.

The Council will submit recommendations to the Governor's Office for review and potential implementation. Marta Nelson, currently the Executive Director for the New York City Office of the Center for Employment Opportunities, will serve as the Executive Director of the Council. Alexander Rose will serve as Special Assistant to the Council.

Members of the Council on Community Re-Entry and Reintegration are listed below:

Rossana Rosado, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Board of Trustees Member (Chair)
Alphonso David, Governor's Office, Deputy Secretary and Counsel for Civil Rights
Ann Jacobs, Prisoner Reentry Initiative at John Jay College, Director
Anthony Thompson, New York University School of Law, Professor
Brenda McDuffie, Buffalo Urban League, President and CEO
Danielle Sered, Vera Institute of Justice, Director, Common Justice
Elizabeth Glazer, New York City Office of Criminal Justice, Director
George McDonald, DOE Fund, Founder and President
JoAnne Page, The Fortune Society, President and CEO
Julio Medina, Exodus Transitional Community, Founder, Executive Director and CEO
Elizabeth Gaynes, The Osborne Association, Executive Director
Louisa Chafee, Governor's Office, Deputy Secretary for Human Services
Marsha Weissman, Center For Community Alternatives, Executive Director
Paul Samuels, Legal Action Center, Director and President
Rick Jones, Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem, Executive Director
Robert Burns, Monroe County Office of Probation, Chief Probation Officer
Sam Schaeffer, Center For Employment Opportunities, CEO/Executive Director
Thomas Abt, Governor's Office, Deputy Secretary for Public Safety

The following individuals will serve on sub-committees with specific subject matter focus and expertise:

Angela Jimenez, Special Advisor
Chauncey Parker, Manhattan District Attorney's Office, Executive Assistant District Attorney for Crime Prevention Strategies
Chris Watler, Center for Court Innovation, Harlem Community Justice Center Project Director
Glenn Martin, Just Leadership USA, Founder and President
Georgia Lerner, Women's Prison Association, Executive Director
Jessica Roth, Cardozo Law School, Assistant Professor and National Center for Access to Justice, Board Member
Joanne Schlang, Treatment Alternatives for Safer Communities, Executive Director
Leroy Gadsden, NAACP, Jamaica Branch President
Mary Kornman, Westchester County District Attorney's Office, Chief of the Bureau of Strategic Planning and Crime Control
Max Kenner, Bard Prison Initiative, Founder and Executive Director
Sean Pica, Hudson Link, Executive Director
Seymour James, Legal Aid Society, Attorney-in-Charge of the Criminal Practice
Soffiyah Elijah, Correctional Association of New York, Executive Director

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