

Megan Quattlebaum:

Good afternoon, everyone, and welcome. My name is Megan Quattlebaum, and I'm the director of the Council of State Governments Justice Center. I'm so happy to have hundreds of you tuning in today from across the country to launch an exciting new initiative, Reentry 2030. This initiative seeks to achieve better and more equitable reentry and reintegration outcomes. It seeks to unite leaders from all 50 states around a bold goal: successful reintegration for every person; to design reentry systems in a way that meet the needs of people and break down the barriers they face; to work towards a future of reentry that is human-centered, coordinated, transparent, and equitable for all communities.

Megan Quattlebaum:

Today, you'll hear more about what that means and how we plan to achieve this goal. We're thrilled to have a really incredible program lined up for you. You'll hear from those who work in reentry and correction services, who understand what it takes to create effective systems. And you'll hear from those who've lived through the reentry experience and who can speak firsthand to the changes that desperately need to happen. And finally, you'll hear from elected leaders, who've served as strong advocates for improving policies to make successful reintegration available for all.

Megan Quattlebaum:

But before I introduce you to our keynote speakers, I want to acknowledge some important folks who are here with us today in this virtual room. We are launching this initiative along with two exceptional collaborators, the Correctional Leaders Association and JustLeadershipUSA. We are so grateful, I'm so grateful, for their thought leadership and for their work to ensure that the voices and insights of their members and stakeholders are always at the center of the reentry conversation. And the work our three organizations are launching together today would not be possible without partnership and support of Arnold Ventures and of the United States Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance. I also want to say a very special thank you to Microsoft and to the Tow Foundation for providing critical funding for this project. Finally, thank you so much to each and every one of you for being here today and for making this initiative into a movement.

Megan Quattlebaum:

As you watch this broadcast, I encourage you to participate. Join the discussion, tell us your thought, share your vision for the future of reentry and reintegration. You can do that on social media using the hashtag Reentry 2030, or in the Vimeo comments box, which you should find at the bottom of your screen. We're going to hold time at the end of the program for Q&A, so think of those questions, use the hashtag, use the comment box, submit them, tell us what you're thinking. We hope to get to as many of those questions as possible at the end of the broadcast. And soon after today's event, we'll post a video recording, a transcript, and our presentation decks at reentry2030.org and on the CSG Justice Center website. You can join our email list to receive updates when they're available.

Megan Quattlebaum:

All right, let's get to it. We have a great program lined up for you today. We're thrilled and delighted to have Senator Rob Portman of Ohio and Representative Danny Davis of Illinois here to share remarks. Both have been champions for reentry during their time in Washington, and we're grateful they're here. Next, you're going to hear from my colleague, Dr. Nicole Jarrett. She's the director of the Corrections and Reentry Division here at the Council of State Governments Justice Center. She's going to present on the state of reentry and discuss challenges people face all across the United States every day as they're

exiting jail and prison. After that, you'll hear the voices of people who have faced reentry challenges firsthand in a very special video presentation. After that, we're thrilled to welcome Tom Robbins of The Marshall Project, along with a group of expert panelists who are going to discuss and explore what the future of reentry looks like.

Megan Quattlebaum:

But first, please join me in welcoming Amy Solomon, principal deputy assistant attorney general at the United States Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs. Amy leads the department's principal funding, research and statistical components, overseeing grants and other resources to support state, local, and tribal criminal and juvenile justice activities, along with victim services programs. Before joining OJP, Amy was vice president of Criminal Justice at Arnold Ventures, where she launched and led their corrections reform portfolio. She worked on criminal justice initiatives under the Obama administration as director of policy for OJP. And prior to that, spent 10 years at the Urban Institute, directing projects relating to reentry and public safety. Amy's expertise in this area of reentry, her passion, and commitment for it are absolutely bar none. Amy, it is a pleasure and a privilege to have you here with us, welcome. I'll hand it over to you.

Amy Solomon:

Good afternoon. I'm so pleased to take part in today's launch of Reentry 2030. And I want to thank everyone who's work to bring this initiative to life. I'm so encouraged by the energy around this effort, and I'm eager to build on the momentum that we're seeing across the country to scale up reentry efforts that can make such a difference in people's lives. This issue touches so many lives. Nearly half of American adults report that they've had an immediate family member incarcerated, while an estimated one in 12 children has experienced the incarceration of a parent.

Amy Solomon:

Those who spend time in prison and jail pay a high price, even beyond their sentence. When they return home, they often find it hard to access employment, education, and housing, or even to engage in fundamental civic activities like voting, serving on a jury, or volunteering at their kid's school. No one wins when reentry fails. And until everyone coming home has on ramps to services and opportunity, our nation's network of reentry programs will fall short of its full potential. Fortunately, jurisdictions across the country are working to remove barriers to successful reentry and to build bridges to full participation. They're creating reentry councils and hiring reentry coordinators, and expanding reentry programs, policies and practices, tackling not only public safety, but also health, employment, education, and housing.

Amy Solomon:

I am very proud that the Office of Justice Programs is helping to support this vital work through the leadership of our Bureau of Justice Assistance and the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. Our investments under the Second Chance Act are felt in virtually every corner of the country, and these programs have helped raise the bar for better reentry outcomes. I hope that some of the policy and personnel actions that we've taken here at the department and across the federal government have also helped encourage city-states and business leaders to think differently about our community members who are returning home.

Amy Solomon:

The movement to build second chances has established a foothold all across the country. Now we're ready to take it to the next level. We need to focus on scaling up access, clearing unnecessary barriers, working to advance racial equity, and using data and evidence to lead the way. That is what Reentry 2030 is all about. So a big thank you to the Council of State Governments Justice Center with support from Arnold Ventures for putting on this very important event. We're proud to be part of an amazing set of partners supporting this ambitious initiative. Working together, we can expand the universe of opportunity and we can do it in a way that recognizes the dignity and humanity and the potential of everyone who comes into contact with the justice system.

Amy Solomon:

It is now my privilege to introduce our next distinguished speakers, two champions of reentry and the forefathers of the Second Chance Act. First, we'll hear from Representative Danny Davis, who represents the 7th congressional district of Illinois and serves on the House Committee on Ways and Means. He's also a member of the Oversight and Reform Committee and the Congressional Black Caucus. And he co-chairs the Congressional Caucus on Reentry. As the person chiefly responsible for ushering the Second Chance Act through the House of Representatives, Congressman Davis is one of the true heroes of the reentry movement.

Amy Solomon:

We'll then hear from Ohio senator, Rob Portman. As a representative in 2005, he was a co-author of the original Second Chance Act. Later as senator, he sponsored the bipartisan Second Chance Reauthorization Act, which was incorporated in the First Step Act. He has been a long-time champion of reentry and is one of the chief reasons that we're seeing such broad and bipartisan support. I have been awed by the leadership of Senator Portman and Congressman Davis over many years, and I'm so glad they could join us here today.

Congressman Danny Davis:

I am Congressman Danny Davis, and I want to pay tribute to all of the reentry activists around the country, all of the legislators, all of the organizations, all of those who have been actively and intimately involved in this activity. I want to thank the Council of State Governments because we are all a part of what I call the solution, and I understand that the Council of State Governments is about to initiate a new bold approach to pushing seriously, actively, and fully engaged in promoting reentry.

Congressman Danny Davis:

We've made a tremendous amount of progress. We've come along way from where we have been. Many people in our country now recognize that one of the best things that we can possibly do is provide opportunities for all of those returning citizens, all of those individuals who have records and backgrounds, to get them fully prepared, to be involved in helping to move America forward, helping by providing for them opportunities to do work, to be fully citizens, to be fully vested in helping to make America what America has the potential of being, and not just America as we have known it. With millions of people unable to access resources, have jobs, and work opportunities, this is the year, this is the month, and this is an excellent way to approach reentry month in 2022. Thank you all and let's get at it.

Senator Robert Johns Portman:

Great to be speaking with you at the Council of State Governments Justice Center while you launch your Reentry 2030 initiative. I wish we could be together in person, but it's good together at least virtually. When it comes to the issue of reentry, we've come a long way over the last decade, but there's still a lot more to do. We know that the vast majority of people who are incarcerated will be released, in fact, it's about 95% plus. And more than half of those people released in prison each year are rearrested again within just a few years. This means more crime in our communities, more families split apart, fewer people in the workforce at a time when workers are badly needed, and in general, individuals not meeting their potential in life. It also means that the tax parents are picking the picking up the tab, something I've talked to my colleagues about, both with the cost of prosecution again but also with the cost of incarceration. Some of my colleagues who aren't otherwise interested in reentry have found that to be interesting.

Senator Robert Johns Portman:

Too often, when individuals finish their prison terms, they're released into the community, only to find no form of assistance waiting for them when they're at their most vulnerable. With the record, it's hard to find employment, and many lack the skills needed to fill the in-demand jobs today. If there's not treatment available for those with substance abuse or mental health issues, many of these individuals can't provide for themselves and often find themselves falling into old habits. It puts them back on the path toward prison. This is all also an area where the government can and should help.

Senator Robert Johns Portman:

One of my proudest moments in Congress was introducing along with Danny Davis the Second Chance Act. This law has helped break the cycle of incarceration around the country. It was recently reauthorized in the First Step Act of 2018. As you know, this broader legislation, the First Step Act, was a stride toward a fair, better justice system. It reduced the mandatory minimum sentencing, and it gives nonviolent low-level vendors a fair treatment they deserve. But it also helps prisoners stay in touch with their families better by assigning prisoners to facilities closer to home, and it invests more in treatment, education, and job training programs, again, to keep released inmates healthier, more productive, and to reduce that recidivism. As a co-author of the Second Chance and a sponsor of First Step, I'm excited to support this new initiative of yours, which leverages these federal investments and helps states lead the charge in the next decade to ensure that every person has what they need to reintegrate into their communities after incarceration.

Senator Robert Johns Portman:

Also important to breaking the cycle of incarceration is to make sure that folks have the skills they need to find meaningful employment when they reenter the community. I introduced the bipartisan Reentry Employment Opportunities Act to fix this, with Senator Gary Peters of Michigan. This legislation will codify into law the US Department of Labor's Reentry Employment Opportunities program, which supports national, regional, and local organizations that administer skills training programs. This REO program provides critical opportunities for returning citizens to be able to have a smooth transition back into society and learn skills that will help them secure good jobs. And we should continue to support it. I will also continue to push for solutions in Washington to ensure that federal resources are there to help in this important work more broadly, but ultimately, it's going to be all of you engaging with the community at the state, at the local level, at the community level, who are going to make the biggest

difference to help every person live up to their God-given potential. Again, thanks for all you do, and God speed in your important mission.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

Thank you. We are so thrilled to have champions in DC on these efforts. I'm excited to share our vision for the next decade of reentry and reintegration. I'll spend some time first discussing the state of reentry. Next, I'll describe the Reentry 2030 strategy and how you can be involved. When the bipartisan Second Chance Act became law in 2008, the country ushered in more than a decade of improvements in reentry policy and practice. As a result, successful reentry and recidivism reduction are now central to the missions of federal state and local agencies; and a diverse set of constituencies outside of the justice system as they embrace the same goals. The science about what works to reduce recidivism has advanced considerably. And this research is increasingly being applied to policy, programming and practice decisions.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

But serious challenges remain. And second chances are too often cut short for people on supervision or those reentering their communities. One of the first challenges is the lack of coordination. Reentry consists of multiple systems, and although multiple systems overlap and have a shared population, they often operate in siloed ways. Next, despite the innovative programs and evidence-based interventions that exists, people continue to reenter without the needed supports to be successful. And next, there are tens of thousands of structural barriers to reintegration that exist in state legislative and administrative policies. These collateral consequences hinder access to jobs, business and occupational licensing, housing, education, public benefits, civic participation, and other rights and opportunities for people with criminal records. And lastly, reentry systems have not addressed inequities that impact access to quality services and affect outcomes.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

We've identified three key strategies. So to work towards successful reintegration for every person, these are the three big moves that we see that are needed. First, we need to scale up access to education, skill training, behavioral health treatment, and stable housing for people with criminal records. States have begun to invest in reentry programs and services over the past decade, but funding levels in most states still only reach a small fraction of the millions of people recently release or on supervision. We need to clear away barriers to opportunity that are unnecessary for public safety. More than 40,000 legal and regulatory barriers ensnare even the most motivated, over 70% are employment related and 38% are indefinite. Informally, criminal records cause millions of individuals and their families to be ineligible or denied housing due to their conviction. We need to advance racial equity by reducing disparities in recidivism and reintegration outcomes. Successful reintegration means looking beyond recidivism as the only measure. You must track housing stability, employment, and other measures to ensure that we are eliminating disparities.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

We envision states will lead the way in this effort. By joining Reentry 2030, states will commit to the three large strategies, but will also establish a team to set bold population based reentry goals that will indicate where they intend to be in improving access and improving outcomes to things like employment in treatment and housing. And that they would share that with us, the national organization, and the rest of us so that we can have a clearer picture about where we're moving in a

collective direction on reintegration. They will then track progress and, again, share them with the field, and receive resources and support.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

The four guiding principles guiding this work: We see that the future of reentry is human centered. The state leaders will incorporate the perspectives of people who have gone through the reentry process to do design their reentry systems. The future of reentry is coordinated. Leaders from service systems at the federal, state, and local levels being fully engaged in their role as a part of a collective. Equitable, improved information to drive federal and state investments to the people and communities with the most need. And transparent, that states set public goals and metrics and report out regularly and consistently on progress.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

By joining this movement, you commit to systems change that build up people's lives, learn new innovations and best practices, connect with peers and experts across the country, collaborate with each other in your state and community, transform reentry systems to support reintegration for every person. To join, please visit our website at reentry2030.org.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

And now, I am so excited to welcome our next guest. Tom Robbins is a contributing writer to The Marshall Project and an investigative journalist in residence at the CUNY Graduate School Of Journalism. He's been a columnist and staff writer at the Village Voice, the New York Daily News, and The New York Observer. He was recognized as a Pulitzer Prize finalist in investigative reporting for his New York Times series on the culture of violence in Upstate New York prisons. Tom, we are thrilled to have you with us today to lead our panel discussion. But before I pass the mic over to you, Tom, we have a very special video presentation.

James Hodgkins:

What a lot of people don't realize about reentry is that what it really is, is resocialization. For most people that are incarcerated, especially people that such as myself, I'm 32 years old, I've been incarcerated for about 14 of that, from ages of 40 to 18, from the ages of 19 and 29, so for people like myself, the reentry process started much years before I was actually released. It's about a whole new set of, for some people, beliefs, principles, moral compass readjusting. So reentry really is resocialization. And that process for me was difficult because while you're trying to do that, what a lot of people don't realize is that, bills do not take that in consideration, your restitution does not take that consideration, car insurance, car payments. Your employer does not take that in consideration. So that process can be really difficult for people in that circumstance.

John Agnew:

I'm a huge recovery coach and peer mentoring fan. I'm biased. When it comes to peer mentoring, recovery coaching, I think myself and my colleagues are doing exactly what we want to see happen to us. Everywhere I go, it's almost like, "Hey, John, we need three more of you because you've helped these guys out so much." And that's really not really patting myself on the back, but I am proud of it, but just knowing where I came from and how hard it was for me to reintegrate back into society and to be able to get a little bit of education and come back inside the prisons, where I was incarcerated. I work in the same prisons I was incarcerated at, which is a huge, huge deal. And if nothing else, just those guys

seeing me and knowing that I slept in the same bunk, I ate the same food, I had to deal with the same officers, that I had to do those things, and I made it.

Shounda Edwards:

I find that reentry is more than just experiencing as a formerly incarcerated person. Reentry is forever evolving. Reentry is not only new beginnings, but it's a strengthening, it's self-sufficiency, it's sustainability. It is a way to see how you can change yourself in today's life to become better to help people moving forward, especially those who have been formerly incarcerated. Everyone has a voice, but I find that those who've been incarcerated are judged. And again, I experienced not being seen and not being heard so it hurts. It's a pain that's indescribable, and I want to be able to help others be seen and heard. It's very important that we don't judge people because people make mistakes and bad things happen to good people. Either way it goes, I believe in a second chance and I believe that people should just simply not judge, and help one another.

Justin Thomas:

Reentry to me means setting people up for success. It means setting someone up with a path and a guide to move their life forward in a positive manner, to move their life forward in a manner that looks nothing like prior to their incarceration. I mean if there are things that were positive that they want to continue, I think reentry finds a way to continue incorporating those things. But reentry is about positively transitioning men and women from one portion of their life to another portion of their life that looks a lot different.

Tom Robbins:

Good afternoon. My name is Tom Robbins, and I'll be serving as the moderator for today's roundtable discussion. We've got a terrific panel lined up that will be discussing the future of reentry. These panelists are all strong champions for successful reintegration for every person with a criminal record. We're grateful to them for taking the time out today of their busy schedule to share their insights in this critical topic. Panelists as I introduce you, I invite you to turn on your video and join the conversation.

Tom Robbins:

First, I welcome DeAnna Hoskins. She's the president and CEO of JustLeadershipUSA. DeAnna has been, for more than two decades, a leader in the movement for racial and social justice, working alongside those most impacted by marginalization. Her own life experience has been this driving force. She's been directly impacted by the system of incarceration and the war on drugs. Prior to JLUSA, she served as a senior policy advisor at the US Department of Justice, where she oversaw the Second Chance Act program; and she was deputy director of the Federal Interagency Reentry Council; and she was also the founding director of Reentry for Ohio's Hamilton County Board of County Commissioners. Thank you so much for joining us, DeAnna.

DeAnna Hoskins:

Thank you for having me.

Tom Robbins:

Second, I'm delighted to welcome Dylan Hayre. He's the director of Criminal Justice at Arnold Ventures. Dylan helps identify and manage philanthropic opportunities and strategies for the Criminal Justice team there. He's focused on supervision and reintegration. He's committed to advancing evidence-based

policies and partnership with a broad coalition of stakeholders, and elevating the voices of directly impacted communities in this work. Before coming to Arnold Ventures, Dylan served in the American Civil Liberty Union's Justice Division, where he led their advocacy work on clemency and the death penalty repeal. And he also supported state level work on supervision reform and reentry. Thanks too for being here today, Dylan.

Dylan Hayre:

Thank you, Tom. Great to be here.

Tom Robbins:

Third, please welcome Director Anne Precythe. She's had more than three decades of service as a corrections professional. She's currently the director of the Missouri Department of Corrections. And in this role, she's responsible for 19 adult correctional facilities, six community supervision centers, two transition centers, and more than 40 probation and parole offices all across the state of Missouri. She also serves as the president of the Correctional Leaders Association and she's a member of the National Institute of Corrections Advisory Board. Before becoming just the second woman director for the Missouri Department of Corrections, Ms. Precythe served as the director of Community Corrections at the North Carolina Department of Public Safety. It's a pleasure having you here today, Anne.

Anne Precythe:

Thank you, Tom. I'm glad to be here.

Tom Robbins:

Finally, we have Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr. He's the state senator for the 17th Illinois Senate District who previously served nearly four terms as state representative of Illinois's 34th House District. Senator Sims is the chairman of the Illinois Senator Appropriations Committee and he's the vice chairman of the Criminal Law Committee. And he believes deterrents from the criminal justice system requires investments in alternatives to incarceration, including education, stable healthcare, and an abundance of economic opportunities and good-paying jobs. Senator Sims led efforts to pass a comprehensive criminal justice reform bill that the governor signed just last year. He's also helped pass a law to give more Illinois residents with criminal histories the opportunity to obtain gainful employment. Senator Sims, thank you so much for being here.

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

Thanks for having me, Tom. Pleasure to be here.

Tom Robbins:

Okay, we're all aboard so let's get into it. Director Precythe, I'm going to start with you since correction agencies are at the center of reentry. They can make or break reform. You're seeing the opportunities to build upon past successes, what are the reforms that have worked that we can build upon in the coming days?

Anne Precythe:

Thank you, Tom. When I look back, I was a parole officer when reentry first became a real word that people were using. And in the last 20 years, I have seen reentry evolved in many states, some farther

than others. So when I think about some of the basics that reentry does, it's not a program, it's a process, and it's a process that involves helping individuals incarcerated obtain their birth certificate, get a state ID, try to find a job before coming out, the basic things, how do they get work boots, a duty belt, the tools that they need to go into the workforce. Over the years, corrections has really become that entity that helps to prepare the individual to come out into the community. We're not just a trail them, nail them, jail them type of institution any longer. We're the ones that spend more time with the individual than anyone else. So how do we really help get them ready?

Anne Precythe:

And what we've realized is, it really is a community approach. So moving into the future of reentry, how do we involve our communities to help welcome these individuals back? How do we make sure that their mental health needs are being met, that housing needs are being met, that real transportation, things that take law longer than 90 days or maybe even six months. So reentry is really about sustainability for the individual when they get out of incarceration. So I think that's where the discussion really needs to go as we look for this next eight years or 10 years for what we're trying to do, to really help people become stable in their community.

Tom Robbins:

All right. Thank you, Director Precythe. I think that sets the table really well for the discussion. Dylan Hayre, moving on, Arnold Ventures, your organization has invested a lot in improving the way supervision is practiced. What are some of the ways that you see community supervision's role in improving the outcomes from people returning to their communities?

Dylan Hayre:

Yeah. Thank you, Tom. It's a really good question. I think it starts with the idea that, for supervision to improve outcomes or help improve outcomes for people who are coming home, it has to stop impeding good outcomes for people who are trying to come home and get back on their feet. As Director Precythe mentioned, the culture and focus in a lot of supervision agencies either is changing in a positive direction, or we need to encourage it to change in a more positive direction. At Arnold Ventures, we talk about this fundamental shift in supervision policy, from catching or enabling failure to facilitating and supporting success. And so creating a system that encourages and supports people who are trying to get back on their feet or in some cases, trying to get on their feet for the very first time and have this system around them that, Director Precythe's point, is not just sort of a four corners policy document. It is an existential lived experience.

Tom Robbins:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Dylan Hayre:

And so every element of their reentry journey will be defined in shaped in some way by their supervision and by the person who is overseeing their supervision. And so awareness of that is really, really crucial. Of course, this conversation is always urgent, these problems have been around for a long time, but particularly now in the context we're in, we see a lot of opponents to reform coming out and saying, "Well, look at the increases we're seeing in violence or violent crime or things like that." And we at Arnold ventures certainly hear that, and we're very aware of the hard work that's required to move us forward.

Dylan Hayre:

But the reality is that, all the evidence and data we have suggests that actually improving supervision in a way that actually facilitates reentry and reintegration is a way to also address those other underlying problems. There's reason to believe that if we help people get back on their feet and stay on their feet with good jobs, good housing and strong communities, that's a good way to actually tackle some of the larger issues head on while also solving these challenges around supervision and reentry.

Dylan Hayre:

And I think the third thing I would say here quickly is that, supervision and reentry providers need to recognize that failure is not the end of success. It is a part of someone's success story. The perfect supervision system, the perfect reentry system allows for and accommodates an imperfect person. People who are coming out of jail and prison are going to make mistakes. I know that because everyone here makes mistakes. Each of us has probably made a few mistakes just today. The difference is, we're not trying to get out of the criminal legal system and back into our community. And when you're trying to do that, some of those mistakes can become absolutely fatal to your chances of success. And that can no longer be the case.

Dylan Hayre:

So supervision officer supervision agencies, reentry providers need to work together to ensure that we are recognizing and accommodating people for all parts of their journey, whether it's missing a rent check, or being late to job, or missing a single check in whether supervisor, or whatever it may be. All those things are part and parcel of someone's growth in redemption story. And so creating systems that, again, facilitate that, allow for it, accommodate it, and still support the person as they move forward, that, for me, is the absolute essential sort of building block for the next several years of this work.

Tom Robbins:

That's a great insight, Dylan, thank you so much for putting it that way and for helping us remember that this is a system build for imperfect people in an imperfect world, where everything is not going to go the way we'd like it. DeAnna Hoskins, you've lived this and you understand that the crux of the problem is really, how do we make this reentry system more human centered? You have thoughts on that?

DeAnna Hoskins:

One, thank you for that, Tom. One of the ways we make this reentry system humanistic or human centered is centering the voices of those who have experienced it, centering the voices of the people with lived experience to share. And I appreciate Director Precythe for saying that reentry is not a program. It's a process. Right? And I think years ago, everyone was trying to find a solution of, "Let's create a program to get everyone involved in the criminal justice system a job. Let's create a program that actually creates some employability." But what they forgot about was, we didn't have access to an ID to get the job, fill out the W-9. We didn't have access to stable, safe housing to actually get the rest to get up, to get the job. And those conversation and those actual small elements that are actually small to anyone else were huge to individuals reentering the community from incarceration.

DeAnna Hoskins:

So in order to make it a humanistic reality and the impact we're seeking, you have to center the voices of those most impacted. The problem, in the criminal justice system, we've been reluctant to do that. We've done it with substance abuse. We've done it with mental health. We do it with Veterans

Administration. We work with the population we're trying to solve the problem for. But in criminal justice, there still is this actual resistance to actually work with people who have actually lived and walked through the criminal justice system as solutionaries to this problem that's actually addressed in America.

Tom Robbins:

That certainly is true, DeAnna. Thank you so much for laying that out. Director Precythe, the thing that DeAnna raised is about including the voices of the marginalized, the folks who are really the focus of what we're trying to do, is that something you are able to do in your work?

Anne Precythe:

We are. And the saying "I wish I knew then what I know now" is so very true. And so I think it's incumbent upon me and other correctional leaders to recognize that we have a lot to learn from those with the lived experience, and to also recognize that the people working in probation and parole and insider institutions don't have that lived experience. So two people are watching the same movie, but they're seeing a very different movie. And so how we can help learn from each other, how we choose our vocabulary, what kind of outside reading we do by others who've had a lived experience to really learn to be empathetic, not sympathetic, to what's going on with the individuals.

Anne Precythe:

People still need to be held accountable, but as Dylan said, failure is part of success. They say that using is part of recovery. Mistakes are part of becoming a better citizen. And we need to understand that and become tolerant of imperfect behavior, yet still holding individuals accountable and reporting that behavior in a complete story to the controlling authority. If all we ever report is the negative of what people have done, but we haven't highlighted the positives of what they've done, then we've only told half of that individual's story. And I think it's only fair to the controlling authorities that they hear both sides of what's going on with this individual. So it's really complex, but I think where we're headed in today's corrections, affords leaders the opportunity to help educate the new workforce that we have coming along and remind our tenured staff of why we got into this business to help people to begin with.

Tom Robbins:

All right, well put, thank you for that.

DeAnna Hoskins:

You know what, Tom, I want to follow up on that.

Tom Robbins:

Sure.

DeAnna Hoskins:

Because I appreciate something Director Precythe said that I think has always been my struggle. We have a country and we quote a recidivism rate of 35% individuals who are released or are actually returning to incarceration in the first three years. But that really says that we look at it from a asset

base, 65% were successful, but we refused to tap into the 65% to find out what was there, what was necessary that helped them in that transition to be successful.

DeAnna Hoskins:

And it kind of is that, we continue to look at reentry supervision and those encounters from the deficit perspective of what you've done and have a no tolerance for the mistakes, instead of looking at it from an asset base of, what have you done since that last incident? And is whatever you have done that has actually returned you to incarceration, was it still to the magnitude of what the past was, or was it simply child support? Was it simply driving without license? Not looking at the deescalation of harm but actually looking at the person as a whole of making progress. But also tapping into, I think we don't pay attention into the 65% number when we quote recidivism rates. That's a huge majority that was successful that we don't even talk about. We continue to talk about criminal justice from a deficit perspective.

Tom Robbins:

What a great observation, DeAnna Hoskins. Thanks. Thanks so much for adding that to our conversation. Senator Sims, you're kind of in the legislature where the rubber meets the road. What kind of opportunities do you see for state lawmakers to advance the kind of reintegration goals that we're talking about here?

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

Thanks for that question, Tom. Ironically enough, I just came back from the signing ... where our governor just signed our budget for fiscal year 2023. And our budget makes significant investments in the types of activities we're talking about. And I think one of the things that, building on something that DeAnna just said, and I think it's been hanging over all of our discussions this morning, is the shadow of Willie Horton hangs over all of the discussions that we are having. The barriers and the fears that individuals we use, political expediency and the fearmongering, to keep reform from really happening. That's why you hear that discussion of the focus on the 35.

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

There is a discussion here in Illinois, where there was some pushback on part of the law that you mentioned that I passed in my introduction about electronic monitoring. Individuals who are on electronic monitoring, they get eight hours per week to go look for a job, go to a doctor's appointment, go to their children's school for parent-teacher conference. 99% of the individuals were going through the electronic monitoring program do it successfully. They commit no more crimes. They engage in no more criminal activities. 1% has become the focus. The 1% become the focus of the electronic monitoring program.

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

So in order for us to move forward, we've got to continue to have these investments in activities that support individuals, the whole individual, recognizing that there are challenges, there are instances where an individual going to engage in bad behavior, holding them accountable for that behavior, but then also addressing the root causes. And that's where we're not having enough discussion about. What are the root causes? And why is an individual going into the criminal justice system in the first place? And how do we keep them out? The way to create safe communities is to keep individuals out of the criminal justice system in the first place. That means addressing healthcare deserts, that means

addressing food deserts, that means addressing economic deserts. And when we are having those discussions and investing in those opportunities, you'll see that the crime rates will reduce.

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

Again, I just said at our press conference that the budget is a moral document. It's a statement of your priorities. As my wife and I do our budget review monthly, we look at where we are spending our money. The same is true with the state government. When you look at how a state spends this money, are we spending more money to incarcerate or more money to educate? Are we spending more money to rehabilitate and address someone who has trauma or substance abuse issue? Or are we spending more money to house that person? Are we spending more money to reintegrate an individual back in the community after they have completed their term in a correctional facility? Or are we just continuing to house individuals?

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

Correctional facilities, whether they are county jails or state correctional facilities, they have to be institutions of rehabilitation so that individuals go back into the communities where they came from better than they went in. When you see those investments happening from state governments, from local governments, that's when you're going to start to see changes in our criminal justice system. And that's really where I think the discussion that we're having here is so important because we have to focus on the investments, and the investments are going to lead to those positive outcomes.

Tom Robbins:

Well, you've had so many successes Senator in this work. I just wonder briefly, is there an aspect that you have found that counters the 1% argument, that you were saying is so much of an impediment, to getting people to put their shoulder behind the wheel and get some of these reforms done?

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

Tom, the focus on data. And what has been so critical in this work is getting individuals who are both pro-reform and anti-reform to focus on hard data. Don't focus on the anecdotal evidence, the heinous nature of the crime, focus on how often that happens, but focus on how often successes happen. We don't want to talk about success because the success, they're not glamorous, the success when an individual comes out of a correctional facility and they go and they get a job, and they're on the job and they're making a positive impact on the community, but then they're also going to church and they're giving back to their community. They're speaking to young people to keep them from going into the system in the first place.

Senator Elgie R. Sims, Jr.:

That's not the person who we focus on. We focus too often on that 1%, the individual who makes the sensational story, who folks can say, "See? I told you reform has failed." But the 99% of the folks who are doing the work, or in the case of the recidivism rates, 65% of people who are being successful, who have gone and gotten a job, who go and they go back and they get an education, they go and become productive citizens, that's who we should be focusing on. We should be focusing on what works, not on the sensational.

Tom Robbins:

Thank you so much for expanding on that.

Dylan Hayre:

Tom, can I add a couple of quick points to that too?

Tom Robbins:

Quickly, yes, Dylan.

Dylan Hayre:

I want to so echo everything that Senator Sims just said. And sort of two points that speak to the work we're doing, and I think that a lot of people are, are getting behind is, number one, this idea that evidence is more than just a way to figure out what's working and what's not and tweak it. Evidence is resilience. Evidence is a way to look at the programs that are in effect and say, "Okay, these are working. So yes, there'll be opposition and counter narrative, but we know these work," or to look at what's not working on some agreed upon outcomes, and I think we can all agree that the outcomes should be holistic and person-centered, and say, "Why aren't we hitting those outcomes?" And so building up that evidence base that Senator Sims just said is the baseline sort of foundational requirement for resilient systems and resilient change.

Dylan Hayre:

And the second thing I want to say too, and this sort of goes back to my prior life as an advocate in this space, the number one thing you hear from opponents of reform and legislatures across this country when you talk about we need to get housing and jobs and food and all these sorts of resources and human needs to people who are coming home, it's, "Well, where do the resources come from? How do we pay for it? How are we going to afford this?" It is eating up resources to not support people. You are throwing away resources to put people in a system where they continue to trip and fail and find no avenue to success. That is costing money. That is costing time. That is costing human capital. That is costing community strength.

Dylan Hayre:

So I hear you. Yes, it will cost money to house people, to feed people, to get people healthcare, to make sure people have long-term good-paying jobs, but it's costing you money to not do those things. And oh, by the way, in the long run, it's way more cost effective to just sort of support people and help them move forward than it is to sort of just hope they stop tripping over the several traps that are out there for them due to these failures in public policy. So I appreciate you Senator Sims for sort of reframing the way you think about budgets that way because inaction is a decision and it's a very, very costly one and much more stark in dire terms than positive forward thinking action would ever be.

Tom Robbins:

Thanks for adding that to the discussion, Dylan. Well, last question here, and I guess most crucially, DeAnna Hoskins, how do we ensure that any of these policies that we're talking about here have their intended impact to the community that we're looking to help?

DeAnna Hoskins:

Thank you, Tom. In order to have the impact, you have to build relationship with the community you're trying to have the impact with. One of the things that we have noticed is that, when policy changed, I think there was a state who expanded their expungement law, expected for people to flood the gates,

to apply for expungement and get jobs. And they found out 1% of people with criminal records actually apply for expungement. And the reason why, is because there's never been a trust with the system. So the system doesn't always work for the people most impacted, and there's no liaison to even communicate how this change in policy is going to directly impact them in their lives. So there's no engagement with the community.

DeAnna Hoskins:

We're changing policies and we're saying this is best for the community, but because we didn't center the community that wasn't inclusive of the community, the community doesn't even know it changed. Right? And then, is that what the community actually needs? Do we need a new one policy that expand expungement laws when technically, your record will never go away after 9/11? Some people are still going to always have access to it. The internet is not erasing it, even when you get it expunged. So understanding the processes that people in the communities are actually dealing with is huge, but also communicating. I think one of the things when I was director of reentry and I went to the Bureau of Justice Assistance, working with the Second Chance portfolio, it was amazing to me how many people on the ground didn't understand federal laws and the myths that were utilized in the community to stop people. And I'll give you some examples.

DeAnna Hoskins:

One of the myths was, when you apply for public housing, they would say, "Because of your criminal record, you're not eligible for housing based on federal government." Well, the federal government guidelines only bars to criminal conviction, if you were manufacturing methamphetamine while living in public housing, or if you were registered as a lifetime sex offender. All other policies were implemented locally and can be changed locally and don't require funding to change them. It requires that board or that local housing authority to actually see the human need in the individuals in their community to say, this is a barrier we have created that is contributing to the American crisis of homelessness in some kind of way. There's a federal policy that I learned, that we talk about child support. People get incarcerated, come out with huge child support amounts. Well, there's actually a federal rule that states that if a person is sentenced to a term of incarceration, their child support could actually be reduced to zero while they serve their time.

Tom Robbins:

Amazing. Isn't it? So many of these things that are sitting there, and they have not been able to be implemented successfully because of what you had said in terms of including those people who are at the table. We're at the end of our time here for the discussion among the panel. And I want to thank all of you so much for taking part in this discussion. We've got just about five minutes for questions from the audience here. We've got one that's come in. Try this one on for size. As states who want to be part of Reentry 2030 develop state teams to identify goals, an action plan, who needs to be at the table? How do you ensure that they will have an impact? Director Precythe, do you want to take a bite at that?

Anne Precythe:

Yeah, Tom. I mean I think that's a great question. So the first thing I would do would be, look at the Reentry 2030 website and look at all the different at things that could be done as part of reentry. When states think about who's the best state, who's doing everything, there's no one state doing everything, but there are a lot of things states can do from looking at collateral consequences, providing IDs, transportation, housing, mental health, mental illness health, all of that kind of stuff. So you would want

to start there, but you also want to include your other state departments, department of social services, health, and senior services, your department of mental health, department of public safety, where are your housing authorities, all of the different people, higher ed, elementary and secondary education. You want to bring all of those stakeholders to the table because everybody has something to do with a family and with people who need community supports.

Anne Precythe:

So instead of marching out and doing your own thing, why not partner together and see how you can help each other? Include your juvenile justice system. So don't try to do it by yourself. I would include as many people in the conversation as possible. Because if everybody has a little bit of money to bring to the table, we can get much more accomplished than trying to just funding our own funding. And then the other thing is, you begin to change the mindset of the people that have come in contact with formerly incarcerated individuals. And that's a mindset that everyone in the community needs to think differently about.

Tom Robbins:

Terrific. Thanks so much Director Precythe. So we got one last question here and that'll be the end of our round today. But it goes, what do you say to places that point to resources as the reason why we can't see more progress in reentry? DeAnna Hoskins, I know you've heard it a million times. What's your response to that?

DeAnna Hoskins:

Thank you for that question. One, I've discovered through my work is that, we don't even know where all the resources are. Typically, people look at the Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs when they're looking for funding on a federal level to support this, but there are so many other agencies. And I use the analogy of, you go to an amusement park with all these rides, but you only enjoy the water slide. Right? And you miss the fun of all the other rides within that amusement park because you were not aware. Department of Transportation, Department of Labor, all have resources that are allocated to states that actually states dispersed out into the community. But because we haven't connected the dots and we stay on this one ride, the water slide of Department of Justice funding, we haven't even explored or even tapped into the abundance of resources that filter into our states and localities to have an impact.

Tom Robbins:

That's great. All right. The carnival water slide metaphor, that should be an inspiration to everybody. So thanks again to this terrific group for hanging in and taking the time today for this discussion about the problems of reentry. It's been a pleasure for me and a learning experience to be here and listen. And now, back over to you, Megan Quattlebaum.

Megan Quattlebaum:

Wow, thank you so much to our incredible presenters and panelists today for such a fascinating and insightful conversation. And thanks so much to all of you who tuned in. I hope you'll stay. After I'm finished speaking we're going to have a short campaign video, highlighting all of our partners and supporters who've pledged to join this Reentry 2030 movement. We hope you leave here inspired and excited to join the movement yourself.

Megan Quattlebaum:

If you could, we'd really appreciate it if you take a minute to tell us what you thought about this event. A survey link is available now on social video and in the Vimeo chat. And it's also going to be delivered to you by email if you're one of the folks who preregistered for this event. We really value your feedback, and it'll help us to improve our events going forward. So don't be shy, tell us what you think. If you preregistered with us today, we'll send an email with a recording of our discussion. If you didn't preregister, you're going to be able to access this recording on the Reentry 2030 website. And finally, I really hope you'll join the Reentry 2030 email list to learn about future events and resources. You can sign up at the link you should be seeing on your screen. And with that, thanks so much for joining us today. It's been an absolute pleasure being with you all in this virtual room. Have a safe and pleasant week.

Dylan Hayre:

Each year, more than 600,000 people are released from state and federal prisons to return home to their families and communities.

Richard Ramos:

Another nine million cycle through local jail.

Veronica Cunningham:

And while we know a job, a home, and medical care go a long way to prevent a person from going back...

Crissa Blankenburg:

... many of these individuals do not have a place to live, a source of income, or access to adequate medical care.

Lucretia Murphy:

For quite some time, reentry supports have been fragmented, inequitable, and insufficient.

Nicole Sullivan:

And millions of people have been shut out from the opportunities they need to successfully reintegrate into their communities.

Walthea Yarbrough:

Having a criminal record triggers legal and informal barriers that diminish access to services and opportunities, especially for people of color.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

These barriers impact tens of millions of people with records and their families.

Diane Sierpina:

By 2030, the transition home from prison hopefully will be more coordinated, person-centered, transparent, and equitable.

John Agnew:

Reentry 2030 propels this vision forward by uniting leaders across the country at the state and local levels.

Dr. Richard Cho:

Across justice, workforce, health, and housing sectors.

Cam Ward:

All around, a bold goal.

Kevin Kempf:

Successful reintegration for every person.

Dr. Nicole Jarrett:

By scaling up access to clearing away unnecessary barriers to advancing racial equity.

James Hodgkins:

We are determined now more than ever to make this vision into reality.

Amelia Murphy:

That is why we're calling on you, leaders across the sectors and across the communities, to join the Reentry 2030 movement.

Justin Thomas:

This is why we are calling on you, our state leaders, our elected officials, our policy makers to join the Reentry 2030 movement.

Dr. Dion Clark:

That is why we're calling on you, our advocates, families, and people whose lives have been touched by the justice system.

Megan Quattlebaum:

People who believe that better reentry is possible.

Earl Bloodworth:

That is why we are calling on you to join the movement.

Shounda Edwards:

Join the Reentry 2030 movement.

Richard Ramos:

Join the movement.

Nicole Sullivan:

Join the movement.

John Agnew:

Join the movement.

Kevin Kempf:

Join the movement. Let's go.

James Hodgkins:

Join the Reentry 2030 movement today.