

**Testimony of Damon Hininger,
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For the Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections**

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As a partner to the federal government for more than 30 years, Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) appreciates the opportunity to provide testimony to the Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections. While under longstanding policy CCA does not draft, lobby for or in any way promote policies that determine the basis or duration of an individual's incarceration or detention, we do want to provide background on our significant commitment to rehabilitation and re-entry programming. We believe CCA and the entire criminal justice community must increase its focus on reducing recidivism if the American corrections system is to be successful.

According to the latest studies, about 1.6 million people in the U.S. are incarcerated in federal and state prisons.ⁱ Ninety-five percent of inmates in prisons will, at some point, be released back into the community.ⁱⁱ Likewise, according to a recent Department of Justice study, over two-thirds of inmates will be arrested within three years of their release.ⁱⁱⁱ And over that same period of time, half of all inmates commit a new crime or parole violation that returns them to prison.^{iv}

These statistics are unacceptable. Inmates who recidivate inflict pain on themselves, their families and the victims of their crimes. Their re-incarceration drives up costs for governments and taxpayers, and their cycle of behavior only becomes more difficult to break with time.

Given this information, it is clear that the challenge of recidivism is a persistent drain on not just the criminal justice system, but also communities and families.

The criminal justice community must do more to provide inmates with the opportunity to succeed when they are released. CCA's government partners have been working hard to deepen their understanding of re-entry programs and enhance their offerings. Because of that, they have higher expectations for companies like CCA.

In the past, some have said that working to reduce recidivism is at odds with CCA's business model. They are wrong. In addition to flexibility in managing populations, safety and cost savings are why CCA exist. Effective re-entry programming saves governments money while increasing public safety.

One example of CCA's growth in this area is our investment in community corrections. In August 2013, CCA acquired a company in San Diego, Correctional Alternatives Inc. (CAI), and we are planning to further expand the scope of solutions we provide our partners. Through CAI, we help motivated, drug-free residents find jobs and living situations in a setting that mirrors life after release. About 55,000 inmates are released from federal prison every year in America, but only one in seven is placed in a community corrections center.^v We believe we are going to continue to see governments seeking these types of services, and we believe we are well positioned to offer them.

Additionally, in September 2014, CCA made a number of commitments to enhance and expand re-entry programming and make it an even bigger part of the company's business. These commitments will help CCA meet the needs of its government partners, while providing life-altering benefits to inmates and their communities.

CCA's first commitment is that re-entry will be a "Day One" priority at its facilities.

Many public and private facilities currently engage inmates with re-entry programming approximately 16 weeks before they are released. For some facilities and situations, this can make a lot of sense, but research shows that working with inmates as early as possible in their sentence can make a significant difference.

CCA is expanding its programming focus from 16 weeks before release to the moment an inmate comes into care. Beginning on day one, CCA will assess the risk level and supervision requirements of every inmate, in addition to what tools, resources and programs they need for successful re-entry.

Based on the results, a multi-disciplinary team will design an Individual Program Plan to address inmates' needs throughout their incarceration. CCA's focus will be to strengthen the inmate's educational foundation. The company will provide vocational training and skills development, create good work habits for employability and get them as ready as possible for release.

CCA's second commitment is that every professional with the company will be a re-entry professional. CCA employs more than 50 chaplains and nearly 600 principals, instructors, counselors and addictions specialists. They do everything from treating substance abuse, to helping develop life skills, to teaching a trade. These men and women are extraordinary professionals and extraordinary people.

Overall, we employ 14,000 professionals, all of whom have a role to play in re-entry. To this end, CCA has combined the operations and inmate programs departments. They are now one, as the correctional programs department. Security without programs, or programs without security, makes facilities less safe. It increases the potential for misconduct and leads to uncertain re-entry outcomes. An inmate who is focused on earning a GED is focused on improving his or her life and returning to their family. Their energy and attention are not spent on activities that would create a security risk.

At CCA, there is no dividing line between operating safe facilities and providing quality re-entry programming.

Our third commitment is about delivering value. Every dollar CCA's government partners invest in re-entry will be a dollar that is proven to reduce recidivism. CCA is shifting our resources to evidence-based programs. Over the past year, the company has catalogued all of the programs in its system and reviewed the data and research about their impact on recidivism. After robust analysis, CCA has created a number of re-entry goals for the future:

Education opportunities: Over the next five years, CCA will increase high school equivalency credentials by 5 percent annually based on the current inmate population. CCA expects to graduate more than 12,000 inmates with high school educations by the end of 2019.

Vocational training: Currently 7,000 inmates in CCA facilities participate in vocational programs every day. Over the next five years, CCA will increase the number of industry-recognized certificates by 5 percent annually based on the current inmate population. CCA expects to award more than 25,000 industry-recognized certificates by the end of 2019.

Faith-based programs: Over the next five years, CCA will enroll between 1,900 and 2,300 inmates in faith-based residential programs and achieve a 95 percent completion rate for those who participate.

Victim impact programs: Since 2011, over 1,000 inmates have completed CCA's victim impact program in the four Tennessee facilities where it's offered. Over the next three years, we will quadruple access to this program to as many as 16 facilities. Four thousand inmates will complete CCA's victim impact program over the next three years.

Addiction treatment programs: CCA's average monthly enrollment in substance abuse treatment programs is 2,000 inmates, and average annual completions add up to 2,500. Over the next five years, CCA will provide this treatment option at no less than a 60 percent completion rate.

The fewer crimes people commit, the safer their communities are. The more people stay out of prison, the lower the cost to taxpayers. Reducing recidivism should be a main priority of our justice system.

The Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections seeks to develop practical, data-driven policy responses. CCA's own experience has shown that the data on reducing recidivism and investing in re-entry programming is real. Over the next five years, CCA will track each of its new commitments and hold itself accountable to the public and our government partners.

A RAND study found that every dollar spent on inmate education reduced incarceration costs by \$4-\$5 in the first three years post-release.^{vi} Exploding costs and overcrowding are immense challenges facing our correctional systems, but we can work together to solve them. As CCA expands and invests in re-entry programming, so too should the entire criminal justice system. And it can do so to the benefit of governments, inmates, communities and the country as a whole.

ⁱ Hughes, Timothy and Doris James Wilson. “Reentry Trends in the United States: Inmates returning to the community after serving time in prison.” U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p12tar9112.pdf>

ⁱⁱ Kearney, Melissa and Benjamin Harris. “Ten Economic Facts about Crime and Incarceration in the United States.” The Hamilton Project; The Brookings Institution. Retrieved http://www.hamiltonproject.org/papers/ten_economic_facts_about_crime_and_incarceration_in_the_united_states/

ⁱⁱⁱ Durose Matthew, Alexia Cooper Ph.D., and Howard Snyder, Ph.D. “ Recidivism of Prisoners Releases in 2005: Patterns from 2005 to 2010.” U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/rprts05p0510.pdf>

^{iv} *Ibid,*

^v Glaze, Lauren and Eriin Herbermann, Ph.D. “Correctional Populations in the United States, 2012.” U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/cpus12.pdf>

^{vi} Davis, Lois, Robert Bozick, Jennifer Steele, Jessica Saunders, and Jeremy Miles (2013). “Evaluating the Effectiveness of Correction Education.” RAND Corporation. Retrieved from https://www.bja.gov/Publications/RAND_Correctional-Education-Meta-Analysis.pdf