children, to get them to be successful after they leave that facility, is not an opportunity to be missed, and I'm hopeful that by working together we can change that ethos so that it's unacceptable and people look at it as a matter of concern, not a matter of levity. And, so, I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you this morning.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much for your testimony.

Ms. Chunn, thank you for being here.

MS. CHUNN: Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Nice to see you.

MS. CHUNN: It's my pleasure.

Distinguished members of the Commission, let me just begin by saying the American Correctional Association has a longstanding track record of trying to make sure that it stems the flow of young people from the juvenile system into the adult system. While our organization began in adult corrections, it's very clear that the commitment that's demonstrated through the policies and resolutions that we've promulgated make it clear that our commitment is not just a passing fancy. My written comments speak very much to the notion that there are very few organizations who really understand the connection between the juvenile system and the adult system, while, in fact, the general public does, and most other persons outside the system understand
that there is a growing flow from the juvenile system to the adult system that all of us want to see reduced.

I'd like to spend my time talking to you a little bit about things that you probably already know but I'd like to remind us of as we move through this. One thing is, there's a real issue about who's being locked up too often. We began to look at what happens with poor and inadequate representation of juveniles, parents who are often confused completely about the system, and the notion of selection of people. There are a lot of politics involved in selecting leadership in juvenile justice at the state and local levels. Since kids don't vote, their parents don't vote, and their communities don't generally support in financial ways candidates for office, it becomes a no win proposition. As one legislator in my home state said to me when I was Director of Youth Services, there's just nothing in it for us, there isn't really a payoff, except that you have a moral and an ethical responsibility to move forward. Most people don't see it as what gets you elected or keeps you elected. Add to that that the field has little consensus about what is good practice.

In the thirty years that I've been in juvenile justice, I've watched us move from positive peer culture, WEDWING (phonetic) was the thing to do, to close all the training schools -- Massachusetts sort of led the way to
that -- to now let's have small facilities, we jump from one 
thing to another, which shows a true lack of consensus about 
what good practice can be. If there's an organization 
that's done something to really intervene in that lack of 
consistency, I would submit it's been the work of the 
American Correctional Association. While our accreditation 
efforts began for adult facilities in 1974, by 1979 we were 
doing accreditation for juvenile facilities. I was a part 
of the landmark conditions of confinement study in the early 
'90s that was commissioned by Congress and carried out by 
the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, and 
while we looked at assaults, we did not place a lot of 
emphasis on sexual assaults. Perhaps now we recognize that 
perhaps we should have done more than that. It is very 
difficult to get some consensus on what is important in this 
field. Add to that that you don't run for the Supreme Court 
based on your track record as a person who's worked in 
juvenile justice. So, there's no money, there's no status, 
there's very little payoff and respect. As the kids would 
say on the street, "You don't get no respect" for having 
worked in juvenile justice.

Leaders more often than not are appointed at the 
state and local level for reasons other than their 
experience in the criminal justice system. At times they 
are appointed because they need to meet other issues like do
we have anybody in the cabinet who's a minority person, or do we have the representation of women, or do we have somebody that will work well with the legal community. So, there are various other reasons that often hold more sway than does this person bring experience to the field.

More often than not, advocates have led the way in making some changes, but it's rarer that these advocates have concerns for children in trouble. More often, they are interested in foster care children, and there is a link between the two, but these children in juvenile justice are destined to become the backbone of America by being our minimum wage people and, so, we have to look at what are the outcomes that we can structure for them.

Besides the inconsistency, we also don't get resources. It's quietly kept, majorly speaking, the resources that come to the criminal justice system come last to juvenile justice. So, it means, then, while we understand that these are the young people who move through the system, we are often reluctant to provide the money and the support that they need.

Being a good juvenile justice executive means having a personal commitment to wanting to see children do better. Often when one is appointed, that is not part of the Governor's agenda. He doesn't say to you, I want to make sure you do a great job. More often than not, they
say, do the best that you can with what you have. Well, unless you have a personal commitment to the values that you believe are important in public service is very different. Every system is unique, and like brothers and sisters, when we were coming through we didn't want to be compared to Massachusetts, and now people don't want to be compared to Missouri. Each state has its own roots in how its system evolved; therefore, any objective oversight that is not already a part of the system begins to complicate and add layers of bureaucratic response that perhaps are not warranted.

What we can do is retrofit and revise some of the things that we are doing already, because we know that through, for example, accreditation, that people do the right thing because they want the pride that comes with having been accredited. You distinguish yourself as an organization when it is clear that your work force and your community and your constituencies have a great deal of respect for how you do business and they can expect that from you consistently.

What do we need to do? First of all, we need to make sure that those who are appointing authorities, we need to influence folks like the state council -- the Council of State Governments, the National Governor's Association. We need to provide them with the leadership information that
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1. You can choose someone who can structure a safe and therapeutic community. We need to encourage child advocates to be as concerned about delinquent kids. For a while, the ACA, as I was told, is not your friend. I found that not to be true. The ACA, the ACLU, the ABA, all of those organizations have demonstrated over time an interest in doing the right thing, notwithstanding the hard and long work of the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention. We need to encourage people to be involved in some kind of accreditation. That is the outside measure that helps people to look at whether or not they're changing the culture of the organization rather than simply complying. Not everybody can do performance-based standards. Not everybody can do ACA accreditation, even though ours is performance-based, too, but you need to look at some measure that changes the culture rather than just getting things in shape for some outside person who's going to oversee what's going on.

And last but not least I'd say we need to do some things about empowering parents to understand how juvenile justice systems work, and there needs to be a way for parents to have some guidance besides having those people who are court involved who are desperate a lot of times just to look at the response that they need to make.

Thank you.