MR. SANNITI: Yes. Well, I'd like to say that you saved the best for last, and I have about 40 minutes of testimony here to read, so -- no, I was joking.

I'm a juvenile justice practitioner, and I've managed juvenile detention and correctional centers in Ohio, Florida, Georgia and in Maryland. Prison rape and sexual violence is, within our nation's detention centers and correctional facilities, is an issue that faces every correctional administrator. Youth-on-youth assaults, sexual violence and suicide are not stand-alone issues. Sometimes an assault is a result of a youth attempting to have a sexual relationship with another inmate. Suicide may be a result from a youth's feeling of vulnerability and his being unable to protect himself from a larger sexual predator. He may see suicide as his only way out. I have read many, many incident reports in my capacity as a facility administrator, and sexual misconduct has been cited as a cause in many of the incident reports.

There is no one specific program that will address the reduction of sexual misconduct. There are many actions that we can take, actions we can take immediately, that would reduce the number of sexual misconducts and violence within our facilities. We can ensure that a curriculum and required training is in place for all staff who work with youth, and this curriculum and training would guide the
direct care workers through the steps to be taken when specific to sexual misconduct and how to report sexual misconduct.

We need to ensure that proper staffing ratios are maintained. Detention centers should maintain a staffing ratio of one-to-six in their high risk units and one-to-eight staff-youth ratios in their general population units. We should also maintain a one-to-seven or one-to-five relief factor. Having a relief factor is critical to ensure coverage so staff can attend trainings when vacancies occur and staff want to take training or vacation time. Remember, floor coverage will always take precedence over training. So, if you're a facility administrator, your first priority is to make sure your staffing ratios are correct, and you will many times pull people from training or simply won't let them attend in order to cover your ratios.

Overcrowding impacts all aspects of a center's operation. Overcrowding is a cancer to any facility, and you will see an increase in sexual violence when you have an overcrowded facility. Overcrowding, again, affects every aspect of a facility's operation and it destroys your housing classification system.

We must ensure that juvenile detention centers are used to house only the highest risk youth. We must avoid
using detention as a sanction program for probation.
Centers must utilize a housing classification tool which employs a risk custody housing instrument which is important to ensure that youth are placed in the appropriate housing units. When the facility design permits, having a medically fragile/protective custody unit is also recommended.

Facilities should have shift briefings or roll calls. The shift briefing or roll call is an important means to communicate any information to staff. We need to utilize cameras more in many of our facilities to assist in the supervision or observation of what's occurring on the housing units, and a Detex as the Commission mentioned, or a tour guard system in order to ensure that room checks are being conducted in accordance to policy.

Staff and counselors need to be assigned to the housing units in a unit management format and not a shift management format. A unit management format allows the staff to develop relationships with the youth and -- the counselors develop relationships with youth so the children feel more comfortable in reporting sexual misconduct, their fears, their concerns, to staff.

We need to develop a quality assurance process which includes the development of trend data analysis reports. These trend data analysis reports are generated each month from your incident reports and your grievance
reports, so each month that information is compiled into what we call a trend data analysis report which lets you know what events occur on what shifts and any kind of patterns that are developing.

We need to invest in our front line supervisors, and for just general explanation, I'm talking about our sergeants, what one may call a sergeant or a lieutenant. These front line supervisors are the ones that really run the facility and set the normative culture within the facility. In the evenings, on holidays and weekends, it's the lieutenants and the sergeants that are interacting with the youth and really setting the normative culture within the facility.

I have found that many juvenile detention centers are being used to house non-violent, low-risk offenders. At any given day in the United States the majority of offenders in our detention centers are misdemeanants who do not pose a significant threat to public safety. We know that younger, non-violent offenders are more likely to be victims of sexual violence.

Too often our nation's detention centers are used as, again, as I said, probation sanction programs, not for high-risk aggressive youth, but there are strategies in place and strategies and programs that are have been and are being implemented throughout the United States. The Annie
E. Casey Foundation's Juvenile Detention Initiative Program has developed -- has proven to be effective in ensuring that only the highest risk offenders are in detention, while less serious offenders are placed in the community. Structured decision-making has guided the Casey sites in structuring detention continuums while not sacrificing public safety.

Even with all we do to try to ensure for the safety of our juvenile population, suicides and sexual violence do occur, and it's a very unfortunate and tragic thing, especially if you have one of these happen while you're the superintendent.

The admission orientation process, I feel, is one of the most critical steps in ensuring youth safety, the protection -- youth safety, the protection of youth rights, and the establishment of behavior expectations. Admission units are very busy places. For example, in Atlanta, Georgia, at the Metro Detention Center, it's certainly not unusual to have 30 youth admitted a day, 30 youth released, another 30 kids coming in and out going to various court appointments and coming back from court. The detention staff as these kids come in know little or nothing about the children as they receive them into the facility. A key to reducing the potential for suicide and sexual assault is to have an admission orientation process which reinforces to the juvenile that he or she will be safe while in the
institution. It enables the staff to collect important information and to perform key mental health, substance abuse and medical screenings, the use of a structured classification instrument that assess the risk of the juvenile and places that youth into a housing unit that corresponds to their level of aggressiveness.

An orientation unit allows the staff the opportunity to explain to the youth the center's rules, the disciplinary process, the student rights process, the grievance policy, and how to report child abuse. It allows the juvenile again to be introduced into the facility's normative culture and to know what their expected behavior is. And, again, it helps -- it gives the staff time to identify mental health, medical and substance abuse issues that the child may have.

I'd like to conclude by saying that well run facilities that are well staffed and are operating within their rated bed capacity have fewer incidences of violence, suicide and sexual assaults than overcrowded, poorly staffed, poorly managed facilities. By adopting just standard best practices we can ensure the safety of our youth and staff in our facilities.

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much.

I'm confident that the representations about