

Challenging Occupational Barriers: Lessons from Michigan

Miriam Aukerman, Soros Justice Fellow, Western Michigan Legal Services

Katina, a single mom, had supported her family for the last nine years by working as a certified nurse's aid in nursing homes. Katina also had a ten-year-old felony for welfare fraud, stemming from an incident where Katina had reported a new job after she got paid rather than when she got hired, thereby violating the welfare reporting requirements. Under a new Michigan law, workers who have any felony convictions within the last fifteen years, as well as individuals with certain misdemeanor convictions, are barred from working in nursing homes. The law did "grandfather" in current employees like Katina. Unfortunately, however, Katina was not getting enough hours at the care center where she worked, and could not make ends meet.

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Advocacy on the Legal Front

This is a series that highlights the work of individual attorneys, public interest and private law firms, and law schools that represent the interests of qualified workers and job seekers with criminal records.

The Georgia Justice Project of Atlanta, GA

Susan Hallett

The Georgia Justice Project of Atlanta, GA is an innovative, non-profit organization that integrates restorative justice principles into the setting of a criminal defense practice. Doug Ammar, Executive Director, defines restorative justice as the status of the relationships (attorney-client, client-victim, client-community) that create the opportunity for restoration – restoration for defendants, victims, and the community.

As a private, non-profit organization, Georgia Justice Project has complete discretion in choosing the clients they will represent. (Support for GJP comes from foundations and private donations; no government or public money is received to serve over 300 clients per year.) Their focus has been to accept clients willing to make a serious commitment to changing their lives, thus ensuring that clients move beyond the social, emotional, and personal challenges that may have contributed to their legal problems.

GJP's unique approach to criminal defense and rehabilitation is based on relationship building and community-oriented ethic. GJP's long-term involvement with those in the criminal justice system is one aspect that makes the program unique. If a client serves prison time, GJP maintains contact with that client. GJP's social service unit identifies a client's needs for successful re-entry ranging from housing, to individual/group counseling, drug/alcohol treatment, to employment and addresses those needs. The social service unit works to provide an arena in which a client can change.

Another unique aspect of GPJ is the development of a business that offers job training and actual paid employment. New Horizon Landscaping is currently thriving in the landscaping business providing a "first job" which is key for someone re-entering society from incarceration.

For more info, visit GJP's website at www.gjp.org or contact them directly at GPJ, 404-827-0027. ❖



Although her employer, a large health conglomerate, had hundreds of open positions where Katina could have worked a full forty-hour week, she was denied a transfer based on the employer's understanding that she was only "grandfathered in" to her current job. Moreover, Katina could not find another nursing home that would hire her, because employers generally understood the law to apply to all new hires, regardless of how long the applicant had worked in the nursing care field.

The law itself was vaguely written, and simply stated that the prohibition on employment of people with criminal records did not apply to anyone employed prior to the effective date of the statute. The question was: did that just mean that nursing homes could keep current employees with criminal records? Or did it also mean that people who were working in nursing care before the law was passed could move into new jobs? The answer was critical because there is a tremendously high turnover rate in low-wage healthcare. Under the employers' interpretation of the statute, a healthcare worker who got laid off, moved, had a baby, or took time to care for sick parents could not go back into the workforce if he or she had a disqualifying conviction.

I tried for Katina, like I had tried for many other clients, to convince her employer that she was eligible for employment under the law. I argued that if the law "grandfathered in" experienced employees, those employees should be allowed to transfer from one job to another. But Katina's employer, like so many others, was not willing to rely on my interpretation of the statute. After all, if the enforcing agency decided to interpret the statute differently, the employer would be violating the law by hiring my client. I realized that I needed to be able to give employers something official.

So, I sought a declaratory ruling, which is an interpretation of a law by the agency responsible for enforcing the law, in this case the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH). I had tried to get such a ruling before. But each time I asked for a ruling, the agency refused to issue one, claiming that it was up to employers to interpret the law. This time, when I got the denial, I sued. Eventually the lawsuit settled, and the agency agreed to issue a ruling, though their lawyers warned that I should be careful what I wished for: I might not like the ruling I got.

The ruling, when it finally came down, was terrific. MDCH found that employees who were working in nursing homes prior to the effective date of the statute could transfer to new jobs. MDCH reasoned that:

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North Carolina Department of Correction "Going Home Initiative"

Glenn Martin

At the request of Nicole E. Sullivan, Assistant Manager of the Office of Research and Planning of the North Carolina Department of Correction (NC DOC), HIRE recently had the opportunity to make a presentation at the NC DOC Going Home Initiative (GHI) Annual Training Conference: Changing the Odds II (funded by the Serious & Violent Offender Reentry Initiative). In addition to having the opportunity to discuss HIRE's work on the national and state level to an audience that was very engaged and motivated, we had the chance to learn more about the extent of collaboration between NC DOC and their community partners. GHI may serve as an example of a model approach for other DOCs around the country that want to contribute to the success of people reentering society.

GHI is targeted to formerly incarcerated people ages 18-35, released under community supervision (parole or post release), with at least a ninety-day term and returning to one of 13 targeted communities. The GHI process involves providing education, parenting instruction, vocational training, treatment and life skills programs while a person is incarcerated, ongoing services and supervision as they reenter the community, and a network of agencies and individual support, as they become law-abiding members of their communities.

GHI collaborators include other state agencies such as Commerce, Health and Human Services, and the NC Community College System. NC DOC divisions involved with GHI include: Division of Alcoholism and Chemical Dependency Programs, Division of Prisons, Division of Community Corrections, Office of Victim Services, and the Criminal Justice Partnership Program. Local partners and transition team members include various faith-based partners, TASC, JobLink Career Centers, Employment Security Commission, Division of Social Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, housing authorities, affordable housing providers, community-based treatment providers, private employers, and a host of other stakeholders.

The National HIRE Network would like to extend an enthusiastic Shout Out! to the NC DOC GHI program for serving as an example of outcome-focused collaboration between DOC and other state agencies and community partners to increase the chances of success for people with criminal records who are reentering society. For more information,

please visit <http://www.doc.state.nc.us/rap/goinghome.htm>. ❖

It would be counterproductive to interpret the statute so that an individual with a criminal record who is already employed in the health care industry would lose the right to work in the field simply because of a job transfer or temporary break in employment. For example, a nurse who left a job in Grand Rapids for one in Detroit in order to marry or be closer to ailing parents, or even due to illness, would no longer be able to work in the industry. Similarly, a nurse who was subjected to racial or sexual harassment by his/her current employer, might be reluctant to seek other employment, since changing jobs would mean giving up his/her profession entirely. Conversely, a practitioner who is highly regarded because of his/her superior skills could not accept an offered promotion at another facility, as the promotion would cost him/her the right to work in the very field in which he/she had excelled. The public interest would be ill served by depriving the health care industry and elderly nursing home residents of otherwise well qualified and experienced care providers.

In Re Sherrills, Michigan Department of Community Health Declaratory Ruling 2005-001 (Jan. 21, 2005). The effect of the ruling was to open up thousands of jobs to hundreds of experienced caregivers who would otherwise be unemployable as a result of their criminal records.

The task of opening up the healthcare field for Michigan workers with criminal records is far from over, however. First, it is important to educate employers about the ruling. I have been working with nursing home trade associations to get the word out. The ruling will only have an impact if nursing homes realize that, under certain circumstances, they can hire people with criminal records.

Second, the ruling does nothing for individuals with criminal records who were not working in nursing homes prior to May 2002, when the statute became effective. Initially, I had wanted to litigate this issue. I held off because virtually all of the clients I was seeing were individuals who would be affected by a ruling on the "grandfathering" issue and because I wanted to try a more collaborative approach. I decided to bring together senior rights advocates, unions and other involved groups to see if we could reach some common ground.

It soon became clear that many stakeholders, particularly the senior rights advocates, felt strongly about the need

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Funding Opportunities!



Employment and Training Administration Announces Availability of Grant Funding Under Responsible Reintegration of Youthful Offender Program

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA) has announced the availability of approximately \$15 million in Responsible Reintegration of Youthful Offender grant funds to address the specific workforce challenges of youth offenders and to utilize strategies that prepare them for new and increasing job opportunities in high-growth/high-demand and economically vital industries and sectors of the American economy. Projects funded under this competition will be consistent with both the President's High Growth Job Training Initiative and the Department of Labor's Youth Vision.

To view the RFP, see: <http://www.doleta.gov/sga>.

Department of Labor Announces \$1 Million for Grants for Grassroots Organizations

The Employment and Training Administration (ETA), a division of the U.S. Department of Labor (DOL) has announced the availability of \$1,000,000 in grants to eligible "grassroots" organizations with the ability to connect to the local One-Stop delivery system.

The \$1,000,000 comes from the FY 2005 appropriation for One-Stop/America's Labor Market Information System. The agency expects to award approximately 40-50 grants. The grant amount for each grassroots organization is expected to range between \$20,000 and \$25,000. The period of performance will be 12 months from the date of execution by the Department.

Details of the grant announcement can be found in the Federal Register at:

<http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-5907.htm>

Department of Labor Announces Grant Opportunity for Workforce Investment Boards to Build Partnerships Between Faith-Based and Community Organizations and Local One-Stop Delivery Systems

The Department of Labor's Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives and the Employment and Training Administration (ETA), have announced the

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for laws barring people with records from working with vulnerable populations.

At the same time, everyone agreed that some people with criminal records would make appropriate caregivers, and that there should be an appeals process allowing such individuals to demonstrate their suitability for employment. In addition, people agreed that it was unfair that low-wage nursing care workers did not have an appeal process, while higher paid medical professionals, such as doctors and nurses, could appeal a license denial that resulted from a criminal background check. We also discovered that in some other occupations involving vulnerable populations, notably daycare, there were appeals processes for individuals with criminal records.

In part as a result of these conversations, Michigan decided to include the development of an appeals process as part of a successful grant application for federal funding to require fingerprint-based checks in the healthcare area. While it is too soon to tell whether the legislation will be passed, Michigan's Department of Community Health and Department of Human Services are now drafting a bill that would allow individuals with otherwise disqualifying criminal records to obtain a certificate of employability, enabling them to work in nursing homes and similar facilities.

Lessons I learned which might be of use to advocates in other states are:

- Combine a variety of strategies. Try to negotiate solutions first, but don't be afraid to litigate.
- If you sue, wait to find the right client. It was heartbreaking to tell client after client that there was nothing I could do. But the ruling might well have been different if the client, no matter how worthy, had had a more significant record.
- Emphasize irrational outcomes. Among the most persuasive arguments for an interpretation of the Michigan statute allowing people to transfer jobs is that if the legislature thought the "grandfathered" individuals could work in their current jobs, it did not make sense to say they could not work in different jobs.

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availability of up to \$5 million in grants to eligible Workforce Investment Boards (WIBs) that have successfully demonstrated the ability to form working partnerships with grassroots faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs). Grassroots FBCOs may include faith-based and community based organizations, minority organizations, minority-led or immigrant-led non-profit or community development organizations and/ or other small non-profit organizations.

To view the Grant Application, see: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-6022.htm>

VETS Announces Availability of Homeless Veterans Reintegration Program; Local Boards and Faith-Based Organizations in Large Urban Areas Encouraged to Apply

The Veterans' Employment and Training Service (VETS) within the Department of Labor has announced a grant competition under the Veterans Comprehensive Assistance Act of 2001. The grants will be awarded to organizations that provide job training, counseling, and placement services (including job readiness, literacy training, and skills training) to expedite the reintegration of homeless veterans into the labor force.

To view the grant announcement, see: <http://a257.g.akamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-6132.htm>

\$2.4 Million Available for Jail Diversion Grant Programs

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) announced the availability of FY 2005 funds for Targeted Capacity Expansion Grants for Jail Diversion programs to divert individuals with mental illness from the criminal justice system into community-based, integrated mental health and substance abuse treatment and appropriate support services.

It is expected that approximately \$400,000 will be available per grantee in Fiscal Year 2005 and will fund six grants will be funded for up to three years. These grants will promote the transformation of systems to improve services for justice-involved adults with mental illness. The grants will be administered by SAMHSA's Center for Mental Health Services. Applications for No. SM-05-011 are available by calling SAMHSA's clearinghouse at 1-800-729-6686, or by downloading the application from www.grants.gov.

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- Educate employers about whom they can and cannot hire. When in doubt, employers will not take a risk.
- Respect legitimate concerns about people with criminal records. No one wants their grandma cared for by someone who might abuse her or take her things.
- Refocus the debate away from the danger presented by people with criminal records to the fact that some people with criminal records do not present a threat.
- Find common ground in the idea that some people with records are dangerous and some people are not, and then use that idea as a bridge to the concept of individualized consideration and appeals mechanisms.

For more information about the ruling, see: http://thurgood.mplp.org/ialerts/displayia_public.php?id=196 ❖



H.I.R.E. on the Hill

Alexa Eggleston and Gabrielle de la Gueronniere

This past month, there has been progress on several pieces of legislation that could have significant implications for people with criminal records. The House and the Senate have both approved a budget for the 2006 fiscal year, reentry legislation has been introduced in the House of Representatives, and discussion about reauthorization of both the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) and the Higher Education Act (HEA) has continued in the Senate. For more information on these issues please see the attached recent editions of **Legal Action Center's Washington Weekly Roundup (WWR)**. The WWR provides information on Federal and Congressional activities relevant to drug and alcohol treatment and prevention, and to people with criminal records. It is published every week that Congress is in session. If you would like to be added to the email distribution list, please email wmurray@lac-dc.org.

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President's Prisoner Re-entry Initiative: DOL Announces \$19.8 Million in Funding for Faith-Based and Community Organizations; Expects Awards for 30 Communities

The President's Prisoner Reentry Initiative seeks to strengthen urban communities with large numbers of returning prisoners by funding employment-centered programs that incorporate mentoring, job training, and other comprehensive transitional services. This initiative, which involves several federal agencies, is designed to reduce recidivism by helping ex-prisoners find work when they return to their communities, as part of an effort to build a life in the community for everyone. The Department of Labor (DOL) will be awarding grants to faith-based and community organizations (FBCOs).

For more information, visit:

<http://a257.gakamaitech.net/7/257/2422/01jan20051800/edocket.access.gpo.gov/2005/05-6484.htm>

HHS Announces \$31,900,000 from Compassion Capital Fund Will Help Faith-Based and Community Groups Build Capacity, Serve Those in Need

HHS announced the availability of \$31,900,000, consisting of two sets of funding streams. The first set of \$16.9 million, from CCF Demonstration Program, is available to up to 17 intermediary organizations to provide technical assistance and sub awards. These intermediary organizations serve as a bridge between the federal government and faith-based and community organizations. The second set of \$15 million, from CCF Targeted Capacity Building Program, is available to 300 faith-based and community organizations for capacity building, to address the needs of at-risk youth, and the homeless, to provide voluntary marriage education and preparation services, and to offer social services to those living in rural communities.

The CCF was created by President Bush in 2002 as a special initiative to help faith-based and community organizations improve their effectiveness, enhance their ability to provide social services and emulate model social service programs.

For more information on these funding opportunities, go to: <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/grants/>. ❖

Legislation Introduced to Restore Voting Rights to Certain People Convicted of Felony Offenses

Recently, two pieces of legislation were introduced in Congress that would secure voting rights for certain people who have been convicted of felony offenses.

Congressman Charles Rangel (D-NY) introduced H.R. 663, the Ex-Offenders Voting Rights Act of 2005 and Congressman John Conyers (D-MI) introduced the Civic Participation and Rehabilitation Act of 2005, H.R. 1300. In his introductory comments, Rep. Conyers stated that his legislation was intended to clarify and expand voting rights for people with criminal records, and to help people with felony records to reintegrate into society. Citing that approximately 2.3 percent of the voting age population, or 5 million people, was prohibited from voting in the recent federal elections because of state felony disenfranchisement laws, Rep. Conyers asserted that federal action was required to resolve the confusion in the voting system.

Both H.R. 663 and H.R. 1300 would restore the right to vote in Federal elections to all individuals who have fully satisfied their criminal sentence. Individuals who, at the time of the election, are serving a felony sentence in a correctional institution or facility would not be eligible to regain voting rights under either piece of legislation. However, under H.R. 1300, individuals on parole or probation for a felony offense would also be eligible to regain voting rights.

In addition, both H.R. 663 and H.R. 1300 would establish enforcement mechanisms to ensure that the law would be followed; both pieces of legislation would allow the Attorney General to bring suit to remedy violations and would also create a private right of action for individuals to challenge a violation of the Act. H.R. 663 and H.R. 1300 also make clear that States would not be precluded from developing less restrictive laws concerning voting rights.

The Ex-Offenders Voting Rights Act of 2005 has nine Democratic co-sponsors. After introduction, the legislation was referred to the House Judiciary Committee, where it awaits review in that committee's Subcommittee on the Constitution.

The Civic Participation and Rehabilitation Act of 2005 has thirty Democratic co-sponsors. The legislation was referred to the House Judiciary Committee following introduction where it awaits review.

More information on these pieces of legislation can be found at: <http://thomas.loc.gov>.

Access to Criminal Records: A Hot Issue Around the Country

Roberta Meyers-Peebles

Many individuals with criminal histories who are seeking the chance to move beyond the stigma of having a criminal record often feel that it's almost impossible when employers and others have unlimited access to their history for an indefinite amount of time. Since there are currently only 14 states that have statutes that prohibit employment discrimination against people with criminal records, in a majority of the states, job seekers with criminal records are denied employment opportunities based solely on their arrest and conviction record(s) and do not have any recourse for challenging the denial of employment. Therefore, advocates have recognized that limiting access and use of criminal record information for purposes of employment is critical to giving qualified people with criminal histories a chance to successfully enter and remain in the workforce.

Several states are seriously considering legislation to limit the impact of unlimited access to criminal record information and the extensive harm it brings to rehabilitated and qualified job seekers who have criminal histories. In addition, even those states that already limit employers' access to criminal record information, particularly conviction records, are seeking ways to expand their sealing or expungement legislation by decreasing the time frame for when an individual becomes eligible for expungement. For example, in Rhode Island, advocates have been promoting legislation to decrease the waiting period for expungement of certain felony convictions from 10 years to 5 years. In Massachusetts, there is pending legislation to shorten the waiting period for sealing felonies from 15 years to 7 years and for misdemeanors from 10 years to 3 years.

Additionally, after a two-year battle, advocates in Illinois scored a victory. Illinois State policy maker, Representative Connie Howard, tenaciously fought for legislation to automatically expunge arrest records that did not lead to conviction as well as expungement opportunities for individuals who were convicted of misdemeanors and felonies. Initially, none of her peers would consider such legislation.

However, in 2003 she and her allies were victorious in getting sealing and expungement legislation passed that included certain misdemeanor convictions.

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Upcoming Conferences of Interest

July 17-22, 2005

National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice 32nd Conference and Training Institute: "Committed to the Cause of Justice and the Spirit of Unity"

Adams Mark Hotel
Dallas, TX
Tel: 919-683-1801

July 18-20, 2005

NIJ Annual Research and Evaluation Conference

JW Marriott Hotel
Washington, DC

Contact: <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/nij>

July 24-27, 2005

30th Annual American Probation and Parole Association Training Institute

Marriott Marquis
New York City, NY

Contact: <http://www.appa-net.org/Training%20and%20Tech%20Assistance/callfor1.htm>

August 6-8, 2005

American Correctional Association 2005 Conference

Baltimore Convention Center
Baltimore, MD

Tel: 301-918-8198

Contact: <http://www.appa-net.org>

September 11-14, 2005

National TASC Conference on Drugs and Crime Developing Safe and Healthy Communities: Recover, Reenter, Restore

Renaissance Cleveland Hotel
Cleveland, OH

Contact: www.NationalTASC.org

September 18-21, 2005

6th Annual Conference on Addiction and Criminal Behavior

Marriott Downtown Hotel
St. Louis, MO

Contact: GWC, Inc.

Tel: 800-851-5406

Email: info@gwcinc.com

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Advocates immediately went to work to extend the expungement legislation to include individuals with low-level felony convictions. In February 2005, they claimed another victory when SB 3007 was signed into law to allow class 4 felony drug related and prostitution convictions to be expunged. This is especially significant in this state since over half of those individuals convicted of drug offenses in Illinois were convicted of class —4 felony convictions (see Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority, *Research Bulletin*, August 2003, Vol.2, No. 1). This legislation will have a considerable impact on eligible Illinois residents who are eager to minimize the stigma associated with their criminal record. In addition, in April 2005, after several years of effort, Maryland advocates were successful in getting legislation passed to expunge convictions for certain minor crimes after completion of the sentence.

The Legal Action Center's report *After Prison: Roadblocks to Reentry, A Report on State Legal Barriers Facing People with Criminal Records (2004)*, www.lac.org/lac, identifies access to criminal records as a roadblock to reentry and points out that, "Virtually anyone with an Internet connection can find information about someone's conviction history online without his or her consent or any guidance on how to interpret or use the information." The effect of this practice led the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC) decided in March 2005 to remove "all of those individuals who are no longer in the department's custody, on parole or on probation" from the Offender Tracking Information System (OTIS), their online database. Dawson Bell's article, "Keeping tabs on ex-convicts to get harder" (March 10, 2005), *Free Press*, reported that MDOC was very concerned that their database was being used for improper purposes because on average they received 120,000 searches each day. In Michigan individuals could pay \$10 to conduct a name and date of birth search on the Michigan State Police's online system, but why would an employer pay when they could get it for free from MDOC? Although MDOC officials stated that their decision to purge their database was not out of concern for prisoner reintegration, they clearly could not argue that purging the old and incomplete files of approximately 215,000 individuals they no longer had contact with from MDOC's database would truly be in the best interest of those individuals who have served their time and deserve the full opportunity to move on. The National HIRE Network encourages all states to enact legislation to provide for the automatic sealing or expungement of any arrest that never led to conviction and of conviction records after an appropriate period of time passes and evidence of rehabilitation is established. ❖

October 11, 2005

**2005 Ohio Criminal Justice Reentry Conference:
Theory and Application of Evidence Based Practices
in Criminal Justice**

The Midwest Hotel and Conference Center
Columbus, OH

Contact: <http://www.drc.state.oh.us/web/conference.asp>

October 11-13, 2005

**Collaboration between Fatherhood and Domestic
Violence Programs in Communities of Color: A Focus
on Prevention**

Wyndham St. Anthony Hotel
San Antonio, TX

Contact: imedaris@cffpp.org

October 28-30, 2005

**Transition of Prisoners, Inc. 4th Annual National
Prisoner Re-Entry Conference: "Refreshing the Fire"**

Sheraton Nashville Downtown Hotel
Nashville, TN

Tel: 313-875-3883 x27

Contact: www.topinc.net ❖

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***Hot Off the Press:
Recent Reports***

Does Parole Work? Analyzing the Impact of Postprison Supervision on Rearrest Outcomes, by Amy Solomon, Vera Kachnowski, and Avinash Bhati of the Urban Institute (March 2005). The study compares the arrest rates of former prisoners released under parole supervision with that of their unsupervised counterparts, and concludes that parole has little impact on recidivism for certain classes of offenders. Responders suggest that, despite its somewhat misleading title, the report reiterates what parole experts have recognized for some time - that "parole must balance treatment, surveillance, and enforcement to work with offenders, their families and community providers to more effectively reduce recidivism." To view the report, see: http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311156_Does_Parole_Work.pdf

School Yard or Prison Yard: Improving Outcomes for Marginalized Youth, by Marsha Weissman, M.P.A., Elaine Wolf, Ph.D., Kathryn Sowards, Ph.D., Christine Abate, M.R.P., Pamela Weinberg, M.A.Ed. and Charlee Martia, M.A. of the Center for Community Alternatives (CCA). This paper presents findings from a longitudinal study that examined a school-based intervention to reduce re-suspensions of students sent to alternative schools. The study is based upon a program evaluation of the Center for Community Alternatives' Strategies for Success a program that helps students suspended to alternative schools successfully return to mainstream schools. Prompted by the growing evidence of "the school-to-prison pipeline", and the role that school suspensions play in that pipeline, the Strategies for Success program is designed to help young people step off the prison track.

To read the entire report, visit: http://www.communityalternatives.org/articles/school_yard.html

Defending Justice, an Activist Resource Kit, edited by Palak Shah of Policy Research Associates (April 2005) is a new analytical tool to help progressive activists understand and resist the Right, the State, and the System. The 275-page resource analyzes the role of the Right and the State in the criminal "Justice" system. It includes overview articles, fact sheets, Q&A with activists, and organizing advice on topics such as the modern "Tough on Crime" Movement, War on terrorism and Immigrants, Profits

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from Incarceration, Youth, Faith and Religion, and Women and Reproductive Rights. For more details, visit www.defendingjustice.org.

But They All Come Back: Facing the Challenges of Prisoner Reentry by Jeremy Travis, current President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice and formerly of the Urban Institute, continues his pioneering work on prisoner reentry (April 2005). He describes the new realities of punishment in America and explores the nexus of returning prisoners with seven policy domains: public safety, families and children, work, housing, public health, civic identity, and community capacity. Travis proposes a new architecture for our criminal justice system, organized around five principles of reentry, that will encourage change and spur innovation. It is a Herculean synthesis and an invaluable resource for anyone interested in prisoner reentry and social justice. For more information, see <http://www.urban.org/pubs/AllComeBack>.

Prison and Jail Inmates at Midyear 2004 by the U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs (April 2005) Presents data on prison and jail inmates, collected from National Prisoner Statistics counts and the Annual Survey of Jails in 2004. This annual report provides for each State and the Federal system, the number of inmates and the overall incarceration rate per 100,000 residents. It offers trends since 1995 and percentage changes in prison populations since midyear and yearend 2003. To view the report, visit <http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/pjim04.htm>.

A Look at Arrests of Low-Income Fathers for Child Support Nonpayment: Enforcement, Court and Program Practices by Rebecca May and Marguerite Roulet of the Center for Family Policy and Practice (2005). The Center for Family Policy and Practice has published another report in its series on incarceration and child support. The report is a 3-paper publication, with each paper taking a different approach to assessing practices as they relate to arresting noncustodial parents for the nonpayment of child support. To view the report, see <http://www.cfpp.org/publications>.