



TESTIMONY OF DR. SAMANTHA KURTZ

Mr. Chairman and Committee Members, I am Dr. Samantha Kurtz, a managing partner of Right Time, which is a data collection and reporting company that has the capacity to reliably measure real-time offender rehabilitation.

Right Time was referred to the Ohio Horizon Program by the Florida Horizon Program for the purposes of providing immediate offender impact measurement. We believed there were compelling reasons to study the Ohio program:

- 1) It held promise for better outcome analysis due to the fact that its programming was more controlled and intensive than the Florida Horizon programming (Florida Horizon is forced to have serial arrival and departure of its program participants, thereby resulting in some offenders only “passing through” dorms as opposed to being exposed to the full duration of programming).
- 2) Ohio Horizon programming had lower reported recidivism rates (11%) than its Florida counterpart (Florida reporting an average of 15% recidivism in the first year of post incarceration).
- 3) Horizon programming in general appeared to defy the historically accepted body of corrections research findings which state that behind bars “soft skills” programs (ones that teach social/interpersonal skills, as opposed to “hard skills” programs that teach educational/occupational skills) have a tendency to lose impact over time when the offender is exposed to the “hardened” culture of a general prison environment.

Right Time performed the initial Horizon testing for the 2014 participants and found substantive changes in the areas of Criminal Thinking, Resiliency, and Motivation as detailed in the Data Summary provided to you.

The data presented is best considered trend data, because until the records recently obtained in 2015 are added to the 2014 records will statistical standards be met to establish reporting certainty. Those records are currently being analyzed, the results of which will be made available for Committee review upon completion.

NOTE: At this point in my testimony I intend on doing an in-depth review of the attached Data Summary Report with the Committee.

What the combined data seem to indicate, in the most basic of terms, is the Horizon Program engenders prosocial offender personality change on both a short-term and long-term basis. This finding potentially holds vast fiscal implications.

For example, when looking at the DR's (disciplinary reports) graph (see attachment), measured for Horizon Florida programming, participants show a 50% reduction in DR's two years after graduating from the Program – thus implying sustained behavioral change. In Florida the cost of addressing and processing a DR is estimated to be \$912. Therefore, for the 410 graduates (which accounts for the number of graduates currently in Tomoka, one of the prisons in which the program operates), there is a savings to the prison of \$130,182 per year. This holds true for every year those graduates are incarcerated (the number, of course, fluctuating depending on the number of former graduates who are released, transferred to other institutions, etc.).

From a financial standpoint, considering the fact that Horizon graduates remain incarcerated for multiple years, both the immediate and long-term budgetary benefits seem clear: 1) there are more Horizon graduates currently incarcerated in Ohio than in Florida; 2) if the Ohio DR numbers hold at anywhere close to the Florida figures the cost savings at each prison in which Horizon Ohio operates could more than cover the cost of the programming; and 3) that when combined with the reported Ohio recidivism numbers (see attached Batelle economic impact findings) the long-term savings to the public could easily equate to millions of dollars per annum.

From a psychological standpoint, effective rehabilitation is measured by permanent behavioral change. Recidivism is an outcome measure; meaning reduced recidivism is actually the result of improved offender rehabilitation. If there is no sustainable offender personality change, then there will be no real, long-lasting fiscal benefit of reduced recidivism – it's just that simple. Therefore, from a programming perspective, the DR and recidivism data from Horizon would clearly indicate that ODRC appears to be getting more than its rehabilitative money's worth: decreasing operating costs while increasing public safety.

I look forward to answering any questions the Committee may have regarding the data.

Respectfully –

Samantha L.B. Kurtz, Ph.D.