



A PREVENTION AND SOCIAL JUSTICE AGENCY

Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections Committee Testimony

March 5, 2025 9:30 am

Chair Abrams, Vice Chair, Ranking Member, and members of the Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections Committee, thank you for allowing me to testify in favor of the Governor's Budget Proposal on reentry services.

My name is LaToya Logan, I am the CEO and Founder of Project LIFT Services, a prevention and social justice agency that prioritizing the wellness and joy of Black boys and men who have experienced adverse experiences, such as abuse, trauma, suicidal ideation, homelessness, poverty, and mental health distress. In my 23-year career as a social worker, I have worked in the field of criminal justice with both juveniles and adults. I am writing to express my strong support for increased funding for pre-release reentry services that prioritize restorative justice practices, technological training, and housing advocacy for returning citizens. I have seen firsthand the significant challenges faced by individuals reentering society after incarceration, and I urge you to allocate the necessary resources to programs that ensure their successful reintegration.

Restorative justice practices offer a critical avenue for resolving interpersonal conflicts within an incarcerated individual's family and support network. Reentry is not just about securing employment or housing—it is about rebuilding trust and repairing relationships. Many returning citizens face strained familial ties due to past conflicts and the stigma of incarceration. Funding programs that facilitate restorative justice dialogues between incarcerated individuals and their families can reduce recidivism and foster a stable support system post-release. These efforts should include structured mediation, facilitated by trained professionals, to promote healing, accountability, and community reintegration.

Additionally, training on vital technology is essential for successful reintegration. Many incarcerated individuals have been disconnected from technological advancements that are now integral to daily life, employment, and civic engagement. Programs that provide digital literacy training—including the use of email, online job applications, virtual communication platforms, and financial management tools—will equip returning citizens with the necessary skills to navigate modern society effectively. Without these resources, they risk falling behind and facing additional barriers to employment and social reintegration.

Housing stability remains one of the most significant obstacles for returning citizens. Many individuals face rejection from landlords due to their criminal history, making it difficult to find secure and affordable housing. Increased advocacy for housing solutions should include partnerships with the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) to provide rental vouchers for returning citizens. Additionally, offering incentives to landlords—such as tax credits or rental guarantees—could encourage them to rent to individuals with prior justice system involvement. Secure housing reduces recidivism, fosters community safety, and allows individuals to rebuild their lives with dignity.

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Investing in these pre-release reentry services is not just a matter of social justice; it is a matter of public safety and economic responsibility. Programs that strengthen family ties, provide essential skills, and ensure stable housing contribute to lower recidivism rates, reducing the financial burden on our criminal justice system. By prioritizing these areas, we empower individuals to become productive members of society, breaking cycles of incarceration and strengthening our communities.

I urge you to support increased funding for pre-release reentry services that integrate restorative justice practices, technological training, and housing advocacy. Thank you for your time and consideration. I welcome any opportunity to discuss these matters further and collaborate on solutions that benefit both returning citizens and our communities.