

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR SENSORY
IMPAIRED PROGRAMS (TASIP)
150 S. PROGRESS AVENUE
HARRISBURG, PA 17109
717-657-5840

September 24, 1991

Mr. Donald Vaughn, Superintendent
State Correctional Institute at Graterford
Box 244
Graterford, PA 19426

Dear Mr. Vaughn;

I am writing this letter to thank you for allowing us to establish a braille production station at the State Corrections Institute at Graterford. As a result of your willingness to participate in this project, students with visual impairment in Pennsylvania are getting brailled text books which they so desperately need in order to compete with their sighted peers in the classroom. Last year, we processed approximately 2,000 orders for braille text books for students in Pennsylvania. In order to fill this need, we are dependent on the services of volunteer braillists and contractors from around the state and across the country. Even with a well established braille production network, we do not have adequate resources available to keep up with the need for text books in braille. As a result, students occasionally have to wait months for their text material, placing an undue burden on the student, teacher and family, not to speak of the impact this delay has on student performance and self esteem.

It is with this in mind, that I am requesting that you consider ways to increase the amount of time available to Mr. Martin to braille his assignments for us. He currently has two books that he is working on, but because of the limited number of hours available to type the material into the computer, he is falling behind when compared with the students' need for the material. Please be assured that this is in no way intended to be a criticism of the braille production project at Graterford nor is it a criticism of Mr. Martin or his efforts. To the contrary, the quality of the braille produced by Mr. Martin is of such high quality, that I am requesting that you consider the possibility of allowing us to increase the amount of time available to him for increased production.

In a phone conversation with Messrs. Cunningham and Couturier, I explored the feasibility of the following ideas geared toward increasing the braille output at your facility:

- Increase Mr. Martin's braille production by expanding the hours during which he could have access to the computer for this purpose. Currently he is able to work on braille production approximately two and one half hours per day
- Change the location of the computer from it's current location to an area which could be accessible to him during evening hours. If the existing computer can

TALKING POINTS
JOSEPH D. LEHMAN, COMMISSIONER
PENNSYLVANIA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
PUBLIC HEARING ON HOUSE BILL 2375
"JOINT VENTURES BETWEEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND PRISON INDUSTRIES"
FEBRUARY 12, 1992; MAIN CAPITOL BUILDING, HARRISBURG, PA

I. OPENING

- * I APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY TO APPEAR BEFORE THE COMMITTEE IN SUPPORT HB 2375. THIS BILL WOULD ENHANCE OUR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE PRODUCTIVE WORK EXPERIENCES FOR INMATES INCARCERATED IN STATE AND COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES.

II. HISTORY OF JOINT VENTURES

- * THIS IS NOT A NEW CONCEPT.
- * IN 1984 THE JUSTICE ASSISTANCE ACT REMOVED SOME OF THE LONGSTANDING RESTRICTIONS ON INTERSTATE COMMERCE OF PRISON-MADE GOODS, THEREBY OPENING NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR TO COME INTO OUR INSTITUTIONS.
- * BY 1987 "JOINT VENTURES" BETWEEN PRIVATE SECTOR WORK PROGRAMS AND PRISON INDUSTRIES WERE UNDER WAY IN 14 STATE CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS ACROSS THE NATION AND IN 2 COUNTY JAILS.

III. TREND OF LABOR--INTENSIVE MANUFACTURING

- * WE ALL REALIZE THE UNFORTUNATE TREND OF AMERICAN MANUFACTURING AND SERVICE INDUSTRIES MOVING OVERSEAS TO PACIFIC-RIM COUNTRIES LIKE KOREA AND TAIWAN, AND COUNTRIES SOUTH OF OUR BORDER LIKE MEXICO.
- * THE REASON IS SIMPLE -- WHERE LABOR ACTIVITY REQUIRES RELATIVELY SPEAKING A LOWER LEVEL OF SKILL AND IS LABOR INTENSIVE THEY CAN NO LONGER OPERATE PROFITABLY IN THE U.S. LABOR MARKET.
- * BUT THERE IS A READILY AVAILABLE POOL OF U.S. WORKERS WHO WOULD WELCOME THE OPPORTUNITY TO PARTICIPATE IN ENTRY-LEVEL POSITIONS THAT CAN EVENTUALLY LEAD TO BETTER JOBS. THOSE PEOPLE ARE IN OUR STATE AND COUNTY PRISONS.
- * PERMITTING LABOR INTENSIVE COMPANIES TO ENTER INTO A JOINT VENTURE WITH A PRISON FACILITY IS A WIN-WIN PROPOSITION - THE PRISON, THE INMATE, THE TAXPAYER AND THE PRISON ADMINISTRATOR.
 - THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS GAINS A PROGRAM THAT PROVIDES MEANINGFUL WORK FOR A SEGMENT OF ITS PRISON POPULATION, USUALLY AT LITTLE COST TO THE PRISON.

- THE PRISON GAINS ACCESS TO PRIVATE-SECTOR EXPERTISE AND ALSO BENEFITS FROM THE PRESENCE OF PRIVATE-SECTOR PERSONNEL, WHICH HELPS TO "NORMALIZE" PRISON LIFE.
- BY EARNING A REAL-WORLD WAGE DURING INCARCERATION, PRISONERS ARE ABLE TO PROVIDE FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO THEIR FAMILIES, AND THE TRAINING AND EXPERIENCE GAINED THROUGH PRIVATE-SECTOR EMPLOYMENT ENHANCES THE POSSIBILITY OF BEING HIRED UPON RELEASE.
- VICTIM RESTITUTION IS MANDATORILY PAID FROM THEIR EARNINGS ALONG WITH AN ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTION TO THE VICTIM COMPENSATION PROGRAM.
- THE TAXPAYER BENEFITS FROM PRIVATE-SECTOR PRISON INDUSTRIES IN THAT FUNDS GENERATED THROUGH WAGE DEDUCTIONS FOR ROOM AND BOARD CONTRIBUTE TO STATE REVENUES. STATE AND FEDERAL INCOME TAXES WITHHELD FROM PRISONER WAGES ADD TO THE GENERAL REVENUE.
- PRIVATE-SECTOR BUSINESSES, CONFRONTED IN THE MID-1980S WITH OVERSEAS COMPETITION AND THE NEED FOR WORKERS WHO CAN MEET FLUCTUATING PRODUCTION AND SERVICE NEEDS, GAIN A VALUABLE LABOR RESOURCE.

IV. EXPERTISE OF THE BILL

- * I AM PLEASED TO NOTE THAT REPRESENTATIVE CALTAGIRONE SOUGHT THE ADVICE AND ASSISTANCE OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE INSTITUTE, BASED IN PHILADELPHIA, IN PREPARING THIS LEGISLATION.
- * MR. GEORGE SEXTON, THE PRESIDENT OF THE INSTITUTE, IS CONSIDERED THE NATION'S FOREMOST EXPERT IN PRIVATE SECTOR PRISON INDUSTRIES, AND HAS ASSISTED WITH THE LEGISLATION ON THIS ISSUE ENACTED IN MANY OF THE STATES ACROSS THE COUNTRY.

V. KEY PROVISIONS

- * A KEY PROVISION TO THE BILL IS THE JOINT VENTURE ENTERPRISE BOARD. FOR THIS TRULY TO BE A JOINT VENTURE THE PA BUSINESS COMMUNITY AND LABOR'S INTERESTS MUST BE ATTENDED TO. THIS IS ADDRESSED THROUGH THE POLICY ROLE OF THE BOARD AND LANGUAGE OF THE ACT ITSELF.
- * THE 9 MEMBER BOARD IS IN FACT COMPOSED OF THE SECRETARY OF LABOR AND INDUSTRY, THE COMMISSIONER OF CORRECTIONS, 2 COUNTY COMMISSIONERS, ONE MEMBER FROM THE HOUSE AND SENATE, A REPRESENTATIVE OF ORGANIZED LABOR, A REPRESENTATIVE OF PRIVATE INDUSTRY, AND A CORRECTIONAL ADMINISTRATOR FROM A COUNTY CORRECTIONAL FACILITY.

- * THE BOARD IS RESPONSIBLE FOR DETERMINING WHETHER A PROSPECTIVE JOINT VENTURE COMPLIES WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE PROGRAM.
- * FINALLY, THIS LANGUAGE MAKES IT CLEAR THAT PRIOR CONSULTATION WITH A LOCAL UNION AND BUSINESS MUST TAKE PLACE BEFORE A JOINT VENTURE ENTERPRISE IS ESTABLISHED; THIS LANGUAGE SPECIFICALLY PROHIBITS JOINT VENTURES THAT MAY RESULT IN THE DISPLACEMENT OF LOCAL EMPLOYEES.
- * I HAVE HAD OPPORTUNITY TO MEET WITH BILL GEORGE, PRESIDENT OF PA AFL-CIO AND MIKE FOX OF AFSCME COUNCIL 13. I HAVE EXPRESSED OUR INTEREST IN WORKING CLOSELY WITH THEM. THEY HAVE AGREED TO REVIEW HB 2375 AND PROVIDE REP. CALTAGIRONE WITH ANY SUGGESTED AMENDING LANGUAGE THEY FEEL IS NECESSARY.

VI. INMATE EMPLOYMENT A CHALLENGE

- * AS YOU MAY WELL IMAGINE, ONE OF CORRECTIONS' BIGGEST CHALLENGES IS TO PROVIDE ITS INMATES WITH THE SKILLS AND WORK EXPERIENCE THAT MAY ASSIST THEM IN ACQUIRING EMPLOYMENT AFTER THEY ARE RELEASED FROM PRISON.
- * JOINT VENTURE PROGRAMS OFFER SUCH AN OPPORTUNITY.
- * THEY BRING PRIVATE SECTOR INSIDE. INMATES APPLY FOR JOBS JUST LIKE THEY WOULD ON THE STREET.
- * THEY MUST PERFORM TO STANDARDS.
- * THEY ARE SUBJECT TO BEING FIRED AS THEY WOULD ON THE STREET.
- * THEY ARE PAID MINIMUM WAGE OR PERCENT OF THE PREVAILING.
- * RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYING ROOM AND BOARD, RESTITUTION TO THE VICTIM, FAMILY SUPPORT AND SAVINGS.
- * JOINT VENTURE PROGRAMS CAN BENEFIT THE INMATE. SUCCESS BREEDS SUCCESS. THEY CAN BE EXCELLENT MANAGEMENT TOOLS -- INMATES WANT THE JOBS, THEY HAVE KNOWN TO CLEAN UP THEIR ACT IN ORDER TO GET THE GOOD JOBS AND TO RETAIN THEM.

VII. CONCLUSION

- * I WOULD HOPE YOU SEE FIT TO SCHEDULE THIS LEGISLATION BEFORE THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE IN THE NEAR FUTURE.
- * AT THIS TIME I WOULD BE MORE THAN GLAD TO RESPOND TO ANY QUESTIONS THIS COMMITTEE MAY HAVE. THANK YOU FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO PRESENT MY TESTIMONY TODAY.