

**HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE  
TASK FORCE ON INTERMEDIATE PUNISHMENT  
PUBLIC HEARING THURSDAY, AUGUST 20, 1998**

**TESTIMONY OF THE HONORABLE THOMAS L. COLLINS  
ADAMS COUNTY COMMISSIONER**

**Representative Maitland, distinguished members of the House Judiciary Committee Task Force on Intermediate Punishment, and other invited guests, and interested citizens...**

**Good Morning! And on behalf of my fellow Adams County Commissioners, welcome to Adams County. I appreciate the opportunity to bring to you the County Commissioner perspective on the successes and shortcomings of the intermediate punishment program.**

**You have already heard from several of my colleagues from Adams County who are very familiar with the program. They also have given rise to some very alarming statistics for our county. When Warden Tom Duran assumed his position with Adams County in December, 1997, we had an average daily prisoner population of 110 individuals. This week our total will hit 190! This is an increase of 74% in less than 8 months, projected to next January, we could be struggling with a population approaching 230 persons. A truly staggering number for a facility designed to hold 100 prisoners.**

**I shudder to think where we would be without the intermediate punishment program. House arrest, community service, and electronic monitoring have all served to stem the rising prison population. But we are now faced with the inevitability of constructing a new prison. From a financial standpoint, county**

**prisons are a huge drain for local taxpayers. County Commissioners and Wardens struggle to be as innovative as possible to keep operating costs under control. There is just so far that counties can go to accomplish this end!**

**A number of counties are exploring the possibility of opening community correction centers, an operation that would provide housing for those persons placed in the work release program. It would allow for the physical separation by facility of inmates that participate in work release, away from those whose crimes prevent their participation, thus eliminating the potential introduction of contraband into a secure facility.**

**Any assistance that can come from the state to the counties for the development, financing and implementation of such alternatives to regular incarceration will be enthusiastically received by county commissioners across the Commonwealth.**

**The state's participation in such a program would also go a long way toward helping counties with their costs for housing state-sentenced prisoners serving their sentences in county facilities. I encourage the members of this task force to strongly recommend to their colleagues on the judiciary committee that this become an avenue worth pursuing.**

**As all our secure facilities continue to see staggering growth patterns, it appears that continued pressure will be brought to bear upon all of us to bring forth plans and programs capable of solving this dilemma. Intermediate punishment plays a very important part of that equation. I truly believe the state's investment in county community correction facilities will pay back considerable dividends. Give counties the authority and the funds to build such facilities, and every dollar will return to you many times over. These facilities are considerably less expensive to build and to operate. And, with those**

**within the program paying a considerable portion of the operating costs of such a facility, the bottom line will be more controllable.**

**Thank you for the opportunity to give you my perspectives, and I'll be more than happy to answer any questions you may have.**