

COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE HEARING

STATE CAPITOL
MAIN BUILDING
ROOM 140
HARRISBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2014
9:30 A.M.

PRESENTATION FROM
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS &
BOARD OF PROBATION & PAROLE

BEFORE:

HONORABLE WILLIAM F. ADOLPH, JR., MAJORITY CHAIRMAN
HONORABLE KAREN BOBACK
HONORABLE JIM CHRISTIANA
HONORABLE GARY DAY
HONORABLE BRIAN ELLIS
HONORABLE GLEN GRELL
HONORABLE SETH GROVE
HONORABLE ADAM HARRIS
HONORABLE TOM KILLION
HONORABLE DAVID R. MILLARD
HONORABLE MARK T. MUSTIO
HONORABLE DONNA OBERLANDER
HONORABLE BERNIE T. O'NEILL
HONORABLE MICHAEL PEIFER
HONORABLE SCOTT A. PETRI
HONORABLE JEFFREY P. PYLE
HONORABLE CURTIS G. SONNEY

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BEFORE (cont.'d):

- HONORABLE JOSEPH F. MARKOSEK, MINORITY CHAIRMAN
- HONORABLE MATTHEW D. BRADFORD
- HONORABLE MICHELLE F. BROWNLEE
- HONORABLE MIKE CARROLL
- HONORABLE H. SCOTT CONKLIN
- HONORABLE MADELEINE DEAN
- HONORABLE DEBERAH KULA
- HONORABLE TIM MAHONEY
- HONORABLE MICHAEL H. O'BRIEN
- HONORABLE CHERELLE L. PARKER
- HONORABLE JOHN P. SABATINA
- HONORABLE STEVEN SANTARSIERO
- HONORABLE JAKE WHEATLEY

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:

- DAVID DONLEY, REPUBLICAN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- DAN CLARK, REPUBLICAN CHIEF COUNSEL
- MIRIAM FOX, DEMOCRATIC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
- BERYL KUHR, DEMOCRATIC CHIEF COUNSEL
- HONORABLE BRYAN BARBIN
- HONORABLE TOM CALTAGIRONE
- HONORABLE DOM COSTA
- HONORABLE SHERYL DELOZIER
- HONORABLE JOSEPH HACKETT
- HONORABLE RON MARSICO
- HONORABLE MIKE REGAN

JEAN M. DAVIS, REPORTER
NOTARY PUBLIC

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MICHAEL POTTEIGER, CHAIRMAN, BOARD OF PROBATION AND PAROLE	9

1 P R O C E E D I N G S

2 * * *

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Good morning,
4 everyone.

5 I'd like to reconvene the House Appropriations
6 Committee Budget Hearings.

7 This morning we have the Secretary of the
8 Department of Corrections as well as the Chairman of the
9 Board of Probation and Parole with us.

10 We'll just go through some housekeeping before we
11 get going. I'd ask everyone to turn off their iPads, their
12 iPhones, any other electronic devices that you may have.
13 It does interfere with the PCN coverage.

14 As is the custom, Chairman Markosek and I also
15 invited the standing Chairs of the Judiciary Committee to
16 be with us today. It's certainly a pleasure to have
17 Chairman Marsico and Chairman Caltagirone with us. Good
18 morning, gentlemen.

19 REP. MARSICO: Good morning.

20 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Good morning.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: We'll just go through
22 a little introduction by the members so the Secretary and
23 the Chairman will know who's asking you the questions.

24 My name is Bill Adolph. I'm the Republican
25 Chair. I come from Delaware County, the 165th Legislative

1 District.

2 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Thank you, Chairman.

3 I'm State Representative Joe Markosek, 25th
4 Legislative District, which I live in Allegheny County and
5 represent Allegheny, parts of Allegheny, and parts of
6 Westmoreland Counties. And I'm the Democratic Chair of the
7 Appropriations Committee.

8 To my immediate right is Miriam Fox, who is our
9 Executive Director of the Committee.

10 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Chairman Marsico.

11 REP. MARSICO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

12 Representative Marsico, Chair of the Judiciary
13 Committee, and I represent the 105th Legislative District
14 in Dauphin County.

15 REP. GRELL: Good morning, gentlemen.

16 Glen Grell. I represent Cumberland County, 87th
17 District.

18 REP. PEIFER: Good morning.

19 Mike Peiffer, the 139th District, which is Pike,
20 Wayne, and Monroe Counties.

21 REP. MILLARD: Good morning.

22 David Millard, 109th District, Columbia County.

23 REP. O'NEILL: Good morning.

24 Representative Bernie O'Neill, 29th District,
25 Bucks County.

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REP. DAY: Good morning.

Gary Day, representing Lehigh and Berks Counties,
187th District.

REP. MUSTIO: Good morning.

Mark Mustio, Allegheny County.

REP. SONNEY: Good morning.

Curt Sonney, Erie County, 4th District.

REP. KILLION: Tom Killon, Delaware and Chester
Counties.

REP. PYLE: Good morning.

State Representative Jeff Pyle, 60th Legislative
District, Armstrong, Indiana, and Butler Counties.

REP. ELLIS: Good morning.

Brian Ellis, 11th District, Butler County.

REP. CHRISTIANA: Good morning, gentlemen.

Jim Christiana, Beaver County.

REP. OBERLANDER: Good morning.

Representative Donna Oberlander, representing
Clarion and part of Armstrong County.

REP. BOBACK: Welcome, gentlemen.

Karen Boback, House District 117, parts of
Luzerne, Wyoming, and Columbia Counties.

REP. SANTARSIERO: Good morning.

I'm Steve Santarsiero, Bucks County, 31st
District.

1 REP. BRADFORD: Matt Bradford, 70th District,
2 Montgomery County.

3 REP. WHEATLEY: Jake Wheatley, Allegheny County,
4 city of Pittsburgh.

5 REP. DEAN: Good morning.
6 Madeleine Dean, Montgomery County, 153rd
7 District.

8 REP. CONKLIN: Scott Conklin, Centre County, 77th
9 District.

10 REP. MAHONEY: Tim Mahoney, 51st District,
11 Fayette and soon to be Somerset.

12 REP. KULA: Good morning.
13 Deberah Kula, 52nd District, Fayette and
14 Westmoreland Counties.

15 REP. CARROLL: Good morning.
16 Mike Carol, Luzerne and Monroe Counties.

17 REP. O'BRIEN: Good morning.
18 Mike O'Brien, 175th District, Philadelphia.

19 REP. BROWNLEE: Good morning.
20 Michelle Brownlee, 195, Philadelphia.

21 REP. PARKER: Cherelle Parker, 200th District,
22 Philadelphia.

23 REP. SABATINA: Good morning.
24 John Sabatina, 174th District, Philadelphia.

25 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Good morning.

1 And I hope it doesn't snow tomorrow. Tom
2 Caltagirone, 127th District, Berks County.

3 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you, everyone.

5 As you can see, we have a full house. And we
6 have a Committee that represents just about every area of
7 the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania.

8 Chairman Markosek for some opening comments.

9 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: Thank you,
10 Mr. Chairman.

11 Gentlemen, welcome.

12 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

13 MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you.

14 MINORITY CHAIRMAN MARKOSEK: This is a very
15 important hearing this morning. These are very important
16 issues that we have to talk about today. And I'm sure the
17 members will have a lot of very interesting and perhaps
18 some tough questions for you.

19 I want to welcome you and thank you for coming.

20 I'll turn it back to Chairman Adolph.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

22 Also with us today are State House members,
23 Sheryl Delozier and Mike Regan. Welcome.

24 Secretary Wetzel, Chairman Potteiger, thank you
25 for being here. We're going to have kind of a joint

1 hearing. Secretary, if you would go first with some brief
2 opening comments.

3 MR. WETZEL: I submitted testimony, so I'm not
4 going to be real long. I just want to, first of all, on
5 behalf of Governor Corbett, thank you, the General
6 Assembly, for your partnership in really addressing or
7 starting to address the issues with corrections.

8 Over the past three years, we've seen the
9 smallest growth of population in four decades. No one
10 elected has seen a double-digit growth in our population.
11 And so we are at a point where we've made some progress.
12 We've got a lot of work to do.

13 I look forward to -- I understand there may be a
14 question or two today. So I'll leave it at that. I look
15 forward to the questions.

16 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

17 Chairman.

18 MR. POTTEIGER: I just want to say on behalf of
19 Governor Corbett also, we appreciate the opportunity today
20 to discuss the Board's '14-'15 budget and looking forward
21 to answering any questions that you have.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Thank you.

23 Chairman Marsico.

24 REP. MARSICO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 I do have a series of questions that the

1 Judiciary has, the members and the staff. So if you'll
2 allow me to ask a number of questions to the Secretary and
3 to the Chairman, I'd really appreciate that opportunity.

4 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Sure.

5 REP. MARSICO: First of all, with the Secretary
6 -- both of you actually. I just want to thank you for your
7 dialogue over the years, your openness, your interaction
8 that you've had with me and my staff. I think it says a
9 lot for both of you to come forward to us. While we do
10 have questions, we ask for your input. Some of those
11 questions, as you know, have been tough questions.

12 One of the things, Secretary, that you had spoken
13 about, testified about, to the Committee at a hearing that
14 we had on the heroin epidemic. And I know Chairman
15 Caltagirone has a question regarding that as well.

16 But I just wanted to see your response again.
17 Can you give us an idea on some estimate of how many
18 offenders under your supervision are there for drug-related
19 offenses? Do you have an idea on that?

20 MR. WETZEL: I don't have that offhand. I can
21 tell you that about 70 percent of our offenders would meet
22 the criteria for addiction. So whether the crime was
23 directly related, selling drugs, or stealing for drugs,
24 that's a number I'm comfortable with. And I'd be happy to
25 get you the other number.

1 REP. MARSICO: Well, I guess, with that also,
2 could you let us know then if you have an estimate on how
3 many of these people are released and then re-offend,
4 coming back into the corrections system?

5 MR. WETZEL: Well, you know, we did a baseline
6 recidivism study. And the overall recidivism rate was 43
7 percent.

8 REP. MARSICO: Okay.

9 MR. WETZEL: But if you included rearrests, 50
10 percent were rearrested. And the combination of those two
11 numbers was about 62 percent. I don't believe that drug
12 offenders were any different. So I think that our overall
13 recidivism rate is pretty indicative of that group.

14 REP. MARSICO: Okay. Switching gears a little
15 bit.

16 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

17 REP. MARSICO: There was a highly publicized
18 report of an assault against a DOC employee at the SCI
19 Rockview last year.

20 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

21 REP1 MARSICO: Can you please describe the
22 security measures in place for DOC employees, particularly
23 at your older facilities?

24 MR. WETZEL: Yes. After that terrible event, we
25 brought several assessment teams in to really look, first

1 of all, at how that happened, look at how it happened at
2 that facility, and changes we need to make at that
3 facility, but then also look systemwide at enhancements we
4 had to make.

5 REP. MARSICO: Okay.

6 MR. WETZEL: So specifically we had, since 1993,
7 clerical staff on housing units. Once the unit management
8 concept was introduced after the Camp Hill riot in 1989,
9 clerical staff got put on the Housing Unit. We pulled them
10 off the Housing Unit.

11 REP. MARSICO: Okay.

12 MR. WETZEL: Also some of our older facilities
13 didn't have modern duress alarms. So we now have modern
14 duress alarms everywhere. Now, we made some leadership
15 changes at SCI Rockview also.

16 REP. MARSICO: Okay. Earlier in 2013, DOC closed
17 SCI Cresson and SCI Greensburg. Can you tell us, have you
18 had any cost savings with that as you experience it today?

19 MR. WETZEL: Yes. I mean, because SCI Benner is
20 less expensive to operate than the combination of those
21 other two. So essentially we replaced those two with SCI
22 Benner. I hesitate a little bit because we had some other
23 issues that are increasing some costs in other areas. So
24 to be able to draw a straight line is not that easy.

25 REP. MARSICO: Sure.

1 MR. WETZEL: But certainly if you just look at
2 how much those two cost to operate versus how much SCI
3 Benner costs to operate, it's less expensive.

4 REP. MARSICO: Okay. Well, speaking about costs,
5 what is the average cost today to house an inmate for a
6 day?

7 MR. WETZEL: About \$98 a day.

8 REP. MARSICO: Okay. Then what was the average
9 per diem the State pays community corrections centers that
10 have contracts with the State? My understanding is -- I
11 think it's around 68 to 72.

12 MR. WETZEL: It's \$70.

13 REP. MARSICO: Well, if you average -- if you
14 figure those out, I mean, doesn't it make more sense if
15 you're allowed to, if you're able to, use those community
16 correction centers, you know, for cost-saving purposes?

17 MR. WETZEL: Yes. To put the appropriate people
18 in community corrections, absolutely.

19 REP. MARSICO: So do you anticipate that
20 happening more as we go along?

21 MR. WETZEL: Yes. I mean, that was the plan.

22 REP. MARSICO: Okay.

23 MR. WETZEL: And we're certainly working towards
24 that.

25 REP. MARSICO: Okay.

1 MR. WETZEL: And I don't know, Mike, if you want
2 to jump in.

3 MR. POTTEIGER: In reference to the utilization
4 of community corrections, July of last year, prerelease
5 went back to the institution, to the Department of
6 Corrections. And at that time, we started transitioning
7 some of our offenders through the community corrections as
8 a diversion.

9 REP. MARSICO: Okay.

10 MR. POTTEIGER: We created our parole violators
11 centers at the community corrections, which are secured
12 facilities, which houses offenders up to 71 days compared
13 to six months when they are incarcerated. And they're
14 given their treatment right away.

15 REP. MARSICO: Okay.

16 MR. POTTEIGER: So we are in the process of
17 diverting our individuals. Instead of going back to the
18 Department of Corrections, we're diverting them into the
19 community corrections centers according to justice
20 reinvestment.

21 REP. MARSICO: So you feel comfortable with the
22 community corrections system as it's in place today? I
23 mean, you don't have any issues across the board?

24 MR. POTTEIGER: I have no issues with the
25 community corrections at all.

1 REP. MARSICO: I think you're looking at a
2 savings of approximately \$17 million a year if you are able
3 to do that. So it makes sense.

4 MR. POTTEIGER: I think one of the things that we
5 continue to work on with the Department of Corrections with
6 our collaboration and our partnership is making sure we
7 identify the right people to go through the community
8 corrections centers, those that don't compromise public
9 safety.

10 REP. MARSICO: Sure.

11 MR. POTTEIGER: Because ultimately that's the
12 goal of Governor Corbett and obviously this Administration.

13 REP. MARSICO: Sure. We would want the same
14 thing.

15 MR. POTTEIGER: Correct.

16 REP. MARSICO: Thank you.

17 I think that's all I have, Mr. Chairman. I
18 appreciate the time.

19 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Okay. Thank you.

20 REP. MARSICO: Thank you.

21 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Chairman Caltagirone.

22 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 Just for the record, you know, the three of us
24 have worked together, along with many other people, on the
25 JRI. And it's been very rewarding because one of the

1 things that I know we've been striving to do with both
2 Chairman Potteiger and Secretary Wetzels, former Berks
3 County, which I appreciate working with you on, both of
4 you, is cost.

5 The driving force behind a lot of this with the
6 budget -- and that's what this hearing is all about -- is,
7 how do we save money?

8 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

9 REP. CALTAGIRONE: And I'm glad that you closed
10 two prisons. When I got up here, we had seven or eight
11 prisons. Now we have twenty-six or -seven thousand, now we
12 have 50-some thousand. I just hope we can continue on the
13 same track as we started out, to close more prisons, No. 1,
14 to reinvest that money back at the front end because,
15 Secretary and Chairman, we've got to do the right thing
16 here.

17 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

18 REP. CALTAGIRONE: And trying to convince my
19 brothers and sisters in the Legislature that minor offenses
20 -- and I'm talking small amounts of drugs and other stupid
21 things that people do that get them caught up in the
22 judicial system -- in trying to give the judges more
23 flexibility in sentencing to put them into treatment or to
24 get full treatment when they get out .

25 Technical parole violators, I wish you'd talk

1 about that a little bit. Because one of the things that I
2 keep hearing from a lot of people around the State is that
3 they get whacked for doing stupid things.

4 As an example, a gentleman in my District,
5 sitting in front of a closed-down bar, was picked up
6 because he was there waiting for a ride to go to work and
7 they jacked him. You know, you're at a place where you
8 shouldn't be. And I'm saying, that's just crazy. That
9 stuff should not be happening.

10 The other thing is with the prisons. I have a
11 study that's being conducted. It was unanimous in the
12 Committee and on the Floor of the House on the mental
13 health issues. And we've talked about this numerous times.
14 And I think both you are in agreement that those that have
15 that problem need to be treated differently. And rather
16 than incarceration in prisons, except for major offenses, I
17 get it, minor offenses, they need to be put in other types
18 of facilities.

19 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

20 MR. CALTAGIRONE: And we've talked about this in
21 my office about trying to divert money to some of the
22 mental health facilities that we've closed down.

23 I mean, the reports that I've read, 1.2 million
24 people that have had some kind of infraction with the law
25 in Pennsylvania -- 1 out of 12 people -- can't get jobs

1 when they come out. They have difficulty because they have
2 a record. Trying to change a lot of those things, it's
3 going to take time. I get it. You know, it is what it is.

4 MR. WETZEL: Right.

5 REP. CALTAGIRONE: But I also would like it if
6 either one of you want to comment about the Vivitrol. And
7 I know there's been some experimental situations going on.
8 I don't know how that reflects on Pennsylvania. But I'll
9 shut up now and let both of you jump in now.

10 MR. WETZEL: All right.

11 REP. CALTAGIRONE: And I enjoy working with you,
12 by the way. We've done a lot of good things. And I agree
13 with Chairman Marsico. The bottom line to this is a \$2
14 billion budget. You know, I'm dating myself. But when I
15 got up here, that budget was three to four hundred million.
16 So we've got to turn things around somehow in this State.

17 Gentlemen.

18 MR. WETZEL: Let me start on that last point
19 first.

20 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Sure.

21 MR. WETZEL: Because I think it's a great point.
22 And I think if you look historically -- in the package we
23 handed out, we showed by Administration how the population
24 grew. This has been a growth over a series of time. You
25 know, we saw a growth of about 900 inmates a year under the

1 Thornburg Administration. And under the Casey
2 Administration, we saw a growth of 1,600 inmates a year.

3 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Right.

4 MR. WETZEL: So at that point, we're talking
5 about building a new prison every year and a half.

6 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Okay.

7 MR. WETZEL: And then under the Ridge
8 Administration, we saw, you know, nearly 1,470 a year. And
9 then under the Rendell Administration, we saw 1,420 a year.
10 So there we have a 24-year period where we averaged a
11 growth of 1,500 inmates a year.

12 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Okay.

13 MR. WETZEL: And the bottom line is when you say
14 we need to do something different, let's be honest about
15 how we get there. This is a logical consequence of policy
16 decisions that were made by this body, by folks sitting in
17 the Governor's office. So listen, nobody wants to spend
18 this amount of money. But this is a logical consequence of
19 policy decisions over the past 30 years. So the answer is
20 a change of policy decisions.

21 And I think we've taken a good first step in
22 doing that. Really when you talk about behavioral health
23 issues in criminal justice, when you talk about mentally
24 ill offenders coming to the DOC, when you talk about
25 addicted individuals coming to the DOC, at the end of the

1 day, what we want out of our criminal justice system is
2 that, first of all, the response is equal to the crime and
3 the response yields a result. And that result is that the
4 person is less likely to commit a crime.

5 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Sure.

6 MR. WETZEL: You can't say that about all our
7 current laws and our current corrections policy. So we're
8 in a place where we have to have real honest conversations.
9 And we passed -- or you and the Administration worked on
10 justice reinvestment. It was a good piece of legislation.

11 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Sure.

12 MR. WETZEL: But since justice reinvestment
13 passed, no less than 23 bills passed out of the House,
14 every one of which has the potential to raise population.
15 So again, you go, oh, we're spending so much money on
16 corrections and you keep passing the same bills.

17 So if that's what we want to do, if this is the
18 policy, if we think that those bills -- and let me be very
19 clear. Those bills were good bills. They made sense. But
20 understand that there's a cost for that.

21 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Okay.

22 MR. WETZEL: I mean, I'm happy to answer
23 questions. But let's answer the questions. And let's look
24 at this factually. If you pass those bills that increase
25 population, don't be surprised when our budget continues to

1 go up. It's just that simple.

2 Vivitrol, we're doing a pilot with Vivitrol. And
3 Vivitrol is a drug that helps people who are addicted,
4 especially to opiates, to not crave them. And I think it's
5 a very exciting opportunity for us.

6 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Sure.

7 MR. WETZEL: So we're doing it for females coming
8 out of SCI Muncy going back to Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, and
9 Philadelphia. And we're actually giving them the first
10 shot. It's one shot a month. We're giving them the first
11 shot while they're still incarcerated.

12 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Right.

13 MR. WETZEL: So we know that first-year period is
14 when half the people who recidivate will recidivate. So if
15 we can remove barriers from that first year, you know,
16 we're going to really give them a better opportunity to be
17 successful.

18 We hopefully will be able to expand that to male
19 inmates. I really think it's one of those things that
20 comes around. And you mentioned the heroin epidemic
21 before. You know, we've just got to be real strategic.
22 And we really have got to get to the root cause of the
23 crime. And if the root cause of the crime is addiction and
24 we don't do anything to impact the addiction, we're just
25 wasting time and wasting money. So I think Vivitrol gives

1 us the opportunity to do that.

2 There was a bunch of questions. I tried to hit
3 them all.

4 REP. CALTAGIRONE: All right.

5 MR. POTTEIGER: Representative Caltagirone, in
6 reference to your question in reference to that one case,
7 if you can give me that information, I can check on that
8 information.

9 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.

10 MR. POTTEIGER: But since justice reinvestment
11 was put in place, there's certain criterias that we have to
12 follow by the new statute that allows only certain
13 offenders to be going back either to a contracted county
14 facility or to an SCI.

15 So obviously in that case, I'd just like to look
16 at that because there are five criteria, that if you're
17 assaultive, you have a weapons charge, that you're an
18 identifiable threat, or you're amenable to supervision,
19 those individuals then go back to a county contracted
20 facility or an SCI.

21 And when we're talking about behaviors, that's
22 one of the hardest things probation and parole really have
23 to deal with, which is trying to change people's behavior.
24 Because if we don't change people's behavior and their
25 thinking patterns, that means we're not doing anyone any

1 good. We're not enhancing public safety. And the only way
2 that we look at enhancing public safety is if we use the
3 proper risk needs assessment tools on individuals that we
4 supervise, which we do.

5 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Okay.

6 MR. POTTEIGER: Because you have to look at, you
7 know, managing the risk. And you manage the risk through
8 supervision, whether that's intensive supervision, curfews,
9 intensive urinalysis. But at the same time as you're
10 managing risk through supervision, you also have to reduce
11 risks through cognitive interventions using evidence-based
12 practices that research has shown to be effective in
13 reducing recidivism.

14 And when you're talking about cognitive
15 interventions, we have been using, the Board has been
16 using, cognitive behaviors life skills to really look at
17 the four top criminogenic needs. And that's shown through
18 values, beliefs, companions, and thinking patterns.

19 And the results that we have had since 2008, last
20 year's results who went through cognitive behavior, we had
21 2,000 offenders who went through the program itself. And
22 of those that completed the program, the recidivism rate
23 was 11 percent compared to the overall 20 percent.

24 This is what justice reinvestment, this Phase 2
25 of the process, allows us to do, is give us additional

1 resources in the field to really tackle those technical
2 parole violator incidents.

3 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Okay.

4 MR. POTTEIGER: When you talk about technical
5 parole violators and the parole violator population in
6 general, 38 percent of those individuals have a pending new
7 charge. So we've really got to look at those other
8 individuals who are violating technically and using
9 additional resources that we receive through the Bureau of
10 Community Corrections in support of the Department of
11 Corrections to utilize them properly and do interventions
12 with people in the community rather than in the Department
13 of Corrections.

14 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you.

15 MR. POTTEIGER: You're welcome.

16 REP. CALTAGIRONE: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

18 I'd like to recognize the presence of
19 Representative Barbin, who has joined us.

20 And the next question will be by Representative
21 Donna Oberlander.

22 REP. OBERLANDER: Thank you, Chairman Adolph.

23 Good morning, gentlemen.

24 MR. WETZEL: Good morning.

25 MR. POTTEIGER: Good morning.

1 REP. OBERLANDER: It's always good to see you.

2 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

3 REP. OBERLANDER: I have several questions. I'm
4 going to start with the Secretary, please.

5 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

6 REP. OBERLANDER: I want to talk about the area
7 of the employee complement. Are you at full complement?

8 MR. WETZEL: No.

9 REP. OBERLANDER: How many vacancies do you have?

10 MR. WETZEL: I can get that number to you. I
11 don't have it on me right now.

12 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

13 MR. WETZEL: And I can get it broken down by
14 position.

15 REP. OBERLANDER: Oh, that would be great.

16 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

17 REP. OBERLANDER: If you wouldn't mind forwarding
18 that to the Appropriations Chairmen, that would be great.

19 MR. WETZEL: You got it.

20 REP. OBERLANDER: My concern is mandated overtime
21 costs and then obviously fatigue and burnout.

22 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

23 REP. OBERLANDER: In your testimony, you said
24 that the new normal is to expect the Department of
25 Corrections to correct. And I appreciate that sentiment.

1 In terms of correcting, when you talk about inmate
2 education and training, your budget has actually been
3 reduced for this year.

4 MR. WETZEL: Right.

5 REP. OBERLANDER: Will this cover all of your
6 expected expenses?

7 MR. WETZEL: I believe so. And I'll tell you
8 why.

9 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

10 MR. WETZEL: One of the things, as you may know,
11 is that there's a new GED testing protocol that is a
12 computer test. So we're really kind of starting from
13 scratch.

14 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

15 MR. WETZEL: So, frankly, this is going to be a
16 slow year for us. I mean, this year, this past year, we
17 had about 1,100 people, maybe a little over 1,100 people,
18 graduate with their GEDs switching. This is a
19 night-and-day switch. The curriculum is switched. So our
20 production is going to go down.

21 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

22 MR. WETZEL: I'm confident that it will cover
23 that.

24 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

25 MR. WETZEL: And then we'll have a better sense,

1 I think, halfway through the year of what is required. At
2 this point with all the flux in place, I feel confident
3 that it's covered.

4 REP. OBERLANDER: Thank you.

5 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

6 REP. OBERLANDER: Would you please share what the
7 impact of this education and training has on reducing
8 recidivism and really what the investment that our
9 taxpayers are making, what they're getting for that
10 investment?

11 MR. WETZEL: Yes. There was recently a study
12 done by Rand that was commissioned by the Correctional
13 Education Association. And it said that people who
14 participate in correctional ed programs had a 23 percent
15 lower recidivism rate. So it has a good impact.

16 REP. OBERLANDER: Good.

17 MR. WETZEL: That's one of those things that pays
18 off in the end. And you know, we're a big proponent for
19 doing evidence-based practices that are going to have good
20 outcomes. And that's why we have the research we do and we
21 measure what we do. And education is a piece of that.

22 REP. OBERLANDER: Sure.

23 MR. WETZEL: And, frankly, if I didn't think that
24 we could deliver education at level -- like I said, we're
25 just going to be -- it's going to be a slow year with the

1 change for us.

2 REP. OBERLANDER: Thank you.

3 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

4 REP. OBERLANDER: And thanks for getting things
5 moving in the right direction. You're doing a great job.

6 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

7 REP. OBERLANDER: Chairman Potteiger, I have a
8 question. Last year I asked you about the county grant and
9 aid. And I'm going to continue to ask you about the county
10 grant and aid.

11 MR. POTTEIGER: Okay.

12 REP. OBERLANDER: Can you tell me -- it's in the
13 budget at 16.2, so it hasn't increased in the Governor's
14 budget. Did you request an increase?

15 MR. POTTEIGER: I requested an increase in this
16 year's budget, yes, I did.

17 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

18 MR. POTTEIGER: Go ahead.

19 REP. OBERLANDER: Do you have any suggestions?
20 Given that the Governor did not increase that line item, do
21 you have any suggestions for improving the situation and
22 investing in this valuable partnership?

23 MR. POTTEIGER: Well, the one thing that has gone
24 in the right direction, there was a House resolution that
25 was passed in reference to letting the legislative Budget

1 and Finance Committee look at grant and aid. And I think
2 that's the first good step.

3 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

4 MR. POTTEIGER: And Governor Corbett has
5 supported the grant and aid in all of his budgets over the
6 last three years and hasn't decreased the funding for grant
7 and aid. So his support for grant and aid is still there,
8 so it didn't decrease in any way.

9 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

10 MR. POTTEIGER: But I think the first start is
11 through the House resolution. And then we continue to
12 communicate and talk with our county counterparts, my
13 colleagues at the county level, and try to figure out what
14 we can do better. And that's an ongoing dialogue that we
15 continue to have with them.

16 REP. OBERLANDER: Okay.

17 MR. POTTEIGER: How we can enhance their training
18 and how we can support their training or any educational
19 benefits that we can do. We have increased our trainings
20 at the county levels, bringing in certified trainers for
21 evidence-based practices and looking at how we can support
22 them.

23 REP. OBERLANDER: Thank you. I support the House
24 resolution. And I'm glad to hear that you do as well.

25 MR. POTTEIGER: Yes.

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REP. OBERLANDER: Thank you, gentlemen.

MR. WETZEL: You're welcome.

MR. POTTEIGER: Sure.

REP. OBERLANDER: Thank you, Chairman.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

Representative Parker.

REP. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

And welcome, Mr. Secretary, Mr. Chairman. Great to see you.

MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

REP. PARKER: Let me just start. I want to go back to a number that you gave earlier, Mr. Secretary --

MR. WETZEL: Okay.

REP. PARKER: -- regarding the annual cost of housing an individual in one of our state correctional facilities. I've been on the Committee for a few years now. And I remember maybe about six years ago the number was \$35,000. And then I heard a cost of \$41,000.

So I wanted to know if you could just clarify for us for the record, based on \$98 per day, that's \$35,770. And obviously in a community corrections facility that both Chairman Marsico and Chairman Caltagirone referenced it's \$25,550.

From your perspective, I just want to get the accurate count number, with medical attention included, the

1 annual rate for housing an individual.

2 MR. WETZEL: It's the 35,000 number, the number I
3 said earlier. I think the other number you have may be the
4 cost for an inmate in segregation or a capital case inmate,
5 because often we give those two numbers separate. I don't
6 have what we handed to you in front of me. But I assume
7 that that's the difference between the numbers.

8 REP. PARKER: Okay. And the only reason why we
9 referenced that, Mr. Secretary, is because in the
10 Governor's budget book, it references for the '14-'15 year
11 that it costs \$41,000 annually to house an inmate per year
12 in a state correctional facility.

13 So while I hear the number that you gave, I would
14 just cross-reference it with the Governor's Office because
15 we're purporting -- you're purporting \$35,770 and the
16 Governor is saying \$41,000.

17 And my constituents -- we had a roundtable in
18 Chestnut Hill about this. And they pointed out that we're
19 spending \$2 billion on corrections and prisons and only 1.6
20 billion on colleges and higher education. And so even if
21 it's only a five thousand, six thousand dollar difference,
22 we should make sure that we know what it is so that it can
23 be accounted for.

24 MR. WETZEL: Right.

25 REP. PARKER: So I would appreciate any followup

1 on that one.

2 MR. WETZEL: Absolutely.

3 REP. PARKER: Next I want to go back to the issue
4 -- because I think Chairman Marsico and Caltagirone, when
5 both of them pointed out that there's \$17 million a year
6 that we could save using the community corrections
7 facilities, I want to talk about how those contracts are
8 sort of issued.

9 MR. WETZEL: Okay.

10 REP. PARKER: Last year I know that you reviewed
11 and you awarded those contracts. And I think they started
12 on July 1. And now I think you're changing sort of the
13 process and are you implementing some performance based
14 sort of contracting? Tell us, if you will, if those
15 community corrections centers have received those
16 standards. Do they know how they're going to be evaluated
17 so that they know what they should be preparing for?

18 MR. WETZEL: Yes. And the big process -- and I
19 can share with you all the documentation they got.

20 REP. PARKER: Thank you.

21 MR. WETZEL: What we did basically is we
22 performance contracted. So in addition to the standards
23 that we already had in place, we added a standard where
24 we're measuring the recidivism rate of offenders who leave
25 those centers. So we're basing it on outcomes. And this

1 really came as an outgrowth of, you know, just years of
2 being unhappy with how community corrections was operating.

3 REP. PARKER: Okay.

4 MR. WETZEL: What we also did, the other big
5 change in the process -- and legislatively it was actually
6 authorized that we be able to give access to the process,
7 the non-profits and faith-based communities.

8 REP. PARKER: Okay.

9 MR. WETZEL: So for the first time I think in our
10 history we have some kind of more community-oriented
11 groups. I had several meetings in Philadelphia with
12 countless groups who are now involved in our community
13 corrections continuum.

14 REP. PARKER: All right.

15 MR. WETZEL: The other big change is we added a
16 continuum. So we have other services that don't include
17 residential for offenders getting out that are specifically
18 tied to criminogenic factors or factors that would make
19 them likely to recidivate, things like mentoring, family
20 reunification, job training.

21 REP. PARKER: Okay.

22 MR. WETZEL: And we have a couple, you know,
23 really exciting job training programs through that where,
24 you know, warehousing, where it's classroom to practical to
25 job. We're in some early discussions with the Laborers

1 Union --

2 REP. PARKER: Okay.

3 MR. WETZEL: -- about using their training
4 facility for offenders coming out. So I think it really is
5 getting to a place where we're taking what the data says
6 and what the science says is effective and we're focusing
7 our community corrections assets on that which is likely to
8 be effective.

9 REP. PARKER: Thank you for that.

10 MR. WETZEL: You're welcome.

11 REP. PARKER: The next question is, in
12 Philadelphia, Mr. Secretary, you know, you're familiar with
13 legislation that was passed called Ban the Box in an effort
14 to assist the Department of Corrections and to lower the
15 recidivism rates by allowing people who are ex-offenders
16 and/or re-entering into society to sort of not be
17 discriminated against as it relates to employment
18 opportunities.

19 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

20 REP. PARKER: And now we're noticing that other
21 counties in the Commonwealth are saying, let us take a look
22 at that legislation. It's something that we need to
23 address here.

24 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

25 REP. PARKER: Does your Department -- or would

1 you acknowledge that employment opportunities are one of
2 the strongest indicators that will determine whether or not
3 someone re-offends, whether or not they come back into the
4 system if they have access to employment?

5 MR. WETZEL: Yes. That's a piece of the puzzle.
6 I wouldn't rank them because it would depend on the
7 individual. But absolutely. Adequate and appropriate
8 employment is a piece of the puzzle.

9 REP. PARKER: My final question -- and hopefully
10 we'll get a chance to come back during a second round, if
11 possible. I need to thank you for the record for your
12 willingness to entertain my strong push for support for
13 children with incarcerated parents.

14 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

15 REP. PARKER: And one of the things that we've
16 constantly talked about was this computer system that would
17 allow inmates in our state correctional facilities during
18 their entering the process to tell whether or not they have
19 a child.

20 Now, when we talked about your sort of
21 structuring this, we knew that it would have to be
22 voluntary, because some people don't want you to know that
23 they have children, child support payments, and so forth.
24 But we did, during the last year's hearing, talk about the
25 Department possibly adding that in to assist social service

1 agencies, along with the Department of Public Welfare in
2 servicing that unique population.

3 In addition to that, you know, I've been working
4 with the Philadelphia Prison Society. And there's a
5 program called Little Children, Big Challenges:
6 Incarceration, Sesame Street. And I know this is not new
7 to you.

8 MR. WETZEL: No.

9 REP. PARKER: But I want to talk with you
10 afterwards, if we can, about this program and if there's a
11 way that we in the Commonwealth can take advantage of it.

12 MR. WETZEL: We're actually doing it.

13 REP. PARKER: You're using it, great.

14 MR. WETZEL: Sesame Street has a new character
15 that's a child of an incarcerated parent because of the
16 numbers. And we are actually doing it. I think we got
17 10,000 of those kits.

18 REP. PARKER: Good.

19 MR. WETZEL: You know, listen, we're exactly in
20 the same place on children with incarcerated parents. When
21 we talk about numbers and we talk about cost, oftentimes we
22 don't look broad enough at the cost that incarceration has
23 on the community as a whole and especially children who,
24 you know, have no blame.

25 REP. PARKER: That's right.

1 MR. WETZEL: And so one of the groups that we're
2 really excited about, who's now one of our contractors, is
3 Amachi Pittsburgh --

4 REP. PARKER: Amachi, yes.

5 MR. WETZEL: -- which is essentially Big Brothers
6 and Big Sisters for children of incarcerated parents. We
7 also anticipate having -- we're doing a study on the impact
8 of visitation. Our research shop, Mickey Bell and Bret
9 Bucklen, are working on that. And I anticipate that being
10 out this year. Certainly, get one of the early copies.
11 But that's an issue that continues to be on our radar
12 scope.

13 REP. PARKER: Okay.

14 MR. WETZEL: We really have focused on the
15 environment in the visiting rooms to make them as positive
16 as we can. Our Executive Deputy, Shirley, really headed
17 that up. And if you go to any of our visit rooms, you'll
18 see murals. You'll see areas that look appropriate for
19 children. We understand the importance of keeping children
20 in parents' lives, in fathers' lives.

21 We have the partnership with Rep. Waters, the FAC
22 Program at Graterford. And what that is is that's actually
23 a program that was developed by the inmates. And it's kind
24 of working on the relationship between fathers and their
25 children. And sometimes estranged children.

1 We have volunteers bringing the children in.
2 They're using the vehicle of the Mural Arts Program in the
3 visit room as kind of the vehicle to start building that
4 relationship. That program has been going on for about 18
5 months. And it's a pretty cool program to see. So we are
6 exactly on the same page at trying to mitigate the negative
7 impact incarceration has on children.

8 REP. PARKER: Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

9 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

10 REP. PARKER: And thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

12 I'd like to recognize the presence of
13 Representative Joe Hackett from Delaware County.

14 And the next question will be by Representative
15 Bernie O'Neill.

16 REP. O'NEILL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Thank you, gentlemen, for being here today. Nice
18 seeing you again.

19 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

20 MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you.

21 REP. O'NEILL: Nothing controversial, just kind
22 of looking for an update. You're building two new
23 facilities on the grounds of Graterford?

24 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

25 REP. O'NEILL: Okay. In Northern Montgomery

1 County.

2 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

3 REP. O'NEILL: Could you fill us in a little bit?
4 I understand it's 4,100 beds approximately. Is it evenly
5 split? Are they going to be two facilities that are
6 maximum security? Is one going to be minimum security?

7 MR. WETZEL: Two facilities share a central
8 corridor.

9 REP. O'NEILL: Okay.

10 MR. WETZEL: So all the supports are kind of
11 shared.

12 REP. O'NEILL: Okay.

13 MR. WETZEL: So it's two separate facilities that
14 share the supports.

15 REP. O'NEILL: And it's going to be both maximum?
16 How is that going to be?

17 MR. WETZEL: I mean, all our physical plants are
18 -- if you go to any other state, if you look at our
19 perimeters, they would call all our facilities --

20 REP. O'NEILL: Well, I guess I'm referring to the
21 inmates, the type of inmates you'll be housing.

22 MR. WETZEL: Probably a medium. I think the
23 latest discussion is kind of medium on one side and a
24 maximum on the other. And one of them is going to have the
25 Capital Case Unit.

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REP. O'NEILL: Oh, okay.

MR. WETZEL: Because one of the rationales was we have about 100-ish people from Philadelphia on the Capital Case Unit. And because of the state of the death penalty in Pennsylvania, they spend a lot of time going back and forth to court. Transporting them from Greene to Philadelphia is expensive and dangerous.

REP. O'NEILL: Okay.

MR. WETZEL: So I assume that the side that we have the Capital Case Unit on will likely be a slightly higher security.

REP. O'NEILL: So they're both going to be kind of almost equal in size?

MR. WETZEL: Yes.

REP. O'NEILL: Okay. What's happening to Graterford?

MR. WETZEL: Graterford, we plan to be done with that and walk away.

REP. O'NEILL: Okay.

MR. WETZEL: We're hoping the roof doesn't leak too much and it stays together for the next year, year and a half, until the other one is built.

REP. O'NEILL: I was just going to ask you, how are you? Is it within budget and time schedule for them to open?

1 MR. WETZEL: Yes. It's '15. We're into, I
2 think, June, July of '15 -- September. Yes. So late '15.

3 REP. O'NEILL: And will the opening of these have
4 any impact on your other facilities?

5 MR. WETZEL: Just Graterford.

6 REP. O'NEILL: Oh, just Graterford?

7 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

8 REP. O'NEILL: Okay.

9 MR. WETZEL: It's a replacement for old
10 Graterford.

11 REP. O'NEILL: Okay. Great. Thank you.

12 MR. WETZEL: You're welcome.

13 REP. O'NEILL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

15 Also with us is Representative Dom Costa. Good
16 morning.

17 REP. COSTA: Good morning.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: And the next question
19 will be by Representative Jake Wheatley.

20 REP. WHEATLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

21 And good morning, gentlemen.

22 MR. WETZEL: Good morning.

23 MR. POTTEIGER: Good morning, Representative.

24 REP. WHEATLEY: This past Sunday I went to hear a
25 sermon. And the sermon by this particular minister

1 basically advised the congregates to not have fear of
2 difficult conversations but to embrace the tensions that
3 happen when you have different views, that all is trying to
4 do good things together, and that you have to be courageous
5 and say the things that are necessary in order for you to
6 advance.

7 And when I looked at the schedule and saw that
8 the Department of Corrections and Parole and Probation was
9 here today, it's always with mixed emotions, because
10 actually I really don't like the fact that you are here and
11 we have to fund you to the degree we have to fund you.

12 MR. WETZEL: Okay.

13 REP. WHEATLEY: Because that means there are many
14 lives, not just the ones that are inflicted in those
15 prisons but where they come from that are being damaged.

16 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

17 REP. WHEATLEY: And by nature of looking around
18 this room, we always can tell where most of the vested
19 interest and concerns are. Because the more packed it is,
20 that means there's more vested interest in what's happening
21 and what we're discussing.

22 The other thing that has always discouraged me
23 when we talk about what you all do, very little are there
24 black and brown faces here as vested interest in the
25 conversation, but most often in those prisons there are

1 black and brown people who are being impacted.

2 So it's always with this mixed emotion that I
3 engage in this conversation. And I'm glad you said
4 something earlier.

5 And by the way, Mr. Chairman, I'm not sure a
6 question is going to come out of this.

7 MR. WETZEL: No. Keep going. You're good.

8 REP. WHEATLEY: But I do have to say that when
9 you mentioned the cost to communities and when we talked
10 about the ever-expanding base that you have, quite frankly,
11 very little of what you do can change that pipeline if we
12 don't change the policy.

13 And you said this earlier, too. The policies we
14 make. But the policy decisions that we make around if
15 we're going to invest truly in quality education for all
16 individuals matters to what happens to you. Because
17 several years back we had someone come in and say, we know
18 by the failure rate in the third grade how many seats we
19 might need in our prisons.

20 Well, that should be an indication. A light
21 should go off to us to say, we want to make sure all of our
22 children are reading and having math skills and all those
23 other good things by the time they finish the third grade
24 and continue.

25 We know that if we lock opportunities for

1 economic advancements, that people are going to do what
2 they need to do to survive. So if we keep having
3 employment positions that say, if you have a blemish on
4 your record, you can't get employment in a certain
5 industry, well, all you're doing is segmenting a group of
6 people through a choice mechanism that will eventually feed
7 back into the Department.

8 So for me, I'm more interested in, one, when you
9 retrain them in the prisons -- and I made this statement a
10 couple years ago at a Department hearing. I said this: If
11 we really don't believe in rehabilitation, then stop
12 wasting taxpayer money faking the funk and trying to train
13 them.

14 If we're putting all this money into training
15 them and trying to get them off drugs and everything and
16 then only to get hit with roadblocks when they come out on
17 the street, we might just as well save that money. Just
18 house them in the prisons and just deal with them when they
19 come back out and have a revolving cycle.

20 That's exactly what we're doing. We're faking
21 the funk, in my opinion. We have too many people who come
22 on the streets, they're trying to better their lives, and
23 then they get hit with the fact they can't get a driver's
24 license because we make these asinine rules around how you
25 can get your driver's licenses restored.

1 We have these things that are mounting on them,
2 like child support, when they are locked away for ten
3 years. And then they come out and they have these
4 barriers, financial barriers, on them so they can't get in
5 a position.

6 So all I'm saying to you, Mr. Secretary, is, I
7 hope that there is some seriousness about the people that
8 you're talking to and, as you go to the Senate, that really
9 want to see these people change. Because if they really
10 want to see these people change, they will stop faking the
11 funk and stop doing the things that we do and when we get
12 to the Chamber on the Floor of the House that prevents
13 people from really getting the economic advancement, for
14 really having true opportunities in education, and really
15 having a second chance at life.

16 So I'm glad you're here. I'm sorry I don't have
17 a question for you. I'm just concerned that there is no
18 real seriousness around changing this reality.

19 Thank you.

20 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

21 MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you.

22 REP. WHEATLEY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Every once in a while
24 the Chairman allows for an opt-ed piece.

25 MR. WETZEL: Well, if you want to change the

1 format and just have everybody do that, that's fine with
2 us.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I had the opportunity
4 to see Jake Wheatley work out in the gym. And that's why I
5 didn't interrupt him.

6 REP. WHEATLEY: That's right, Mr. Chairman.

7 MR. WETZEL: I would like to respond.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I would like you to
9 respond.

10 MR. WETZEL: Great. I would like to respond.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Go ahead.

12 MR. WETZEL: You know, I think the good part
13 about my experience over the past three years has been that
14 we have been able to have real discussions on things that
15 are very emotional and very controversial. And this is one
16 of those issues.

17 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Right.

18 MR. WETZEL: And it's rare. Unfortunately, it's
19 rare in this environment where we can have civil
20 disagreement but everybody is kind of pulling in the same
21 direction. Everybody wants better outcomes out of the
22 corrections system.

23 And I think one of the areas that we really
24 haven't done anything on -- we've made significant policy
25 progress. I mean, now Labor & Industry reviews the

1 programs that we offer, the vocational programs, so it's
2 actually jobs people can get.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Good.

4 MR. WETZEL: We're doing fiber optics inside our
5 facilities. And people are getting jobs wiring things when
6 they get out. And it is frustrating. And I would never be
7 one of those secretaries who brag about a 43 percent
8 recidivism rate. What would happen?

9 But by the same token, when you look at a 43
10 percent recidivism rate, 43 percent of the people coming
11 back, there's 57 percent of the people who are staying out,
12 right? So that's something to build on.

13 You know, you talked about black and brown
14 people. And when you look at our numbers, that's an area
15 that we have had some uncomfortable discussions about. One
16 in every 200 Pennsylvanians is locked up. It's one in
17 every 64 black Pennsylvanians. It's one of every 32 black
18 men. And it's one of every 15 black men between the ages
19 of 20 and 32. It's not acceptable.

20 And the future of our communities, especially our
21 urban communities, certainly relies on education. Nobody
22 can make the argument that the best crime prevention is
23 having strong communities that include strong education.

24 But also, we can't ignore the conditions of
25 confinement that we confine people because we have to be

1 able to create an environment where people who choose to
2 can get rehabilitated.

3 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Right.

4 MR. WETZEL: And frankly, in 2010 we looked at
5 some numbers. And we released 7,000 black men from our
6 prisons. Right? If we don't have a positive impact on
7 those individuals, that is absolutely a piece of the puzzle
8 to improving our communities. And we're serious about it.

9 And from Day 1 of this Administration, we've
10 rolled up our sleeves. We've had these uncomfortable
11 discussions. And frankly, we've gotten great cooperation.
12 We've made great progress. We've got a lot of work to do,
13 though.

14 And again, I'll point to the legislation
15 continues to be passed. And all I'm saying -- I'm not
16 saying that we shouldn't pass legislation. State prisons
17 are for violent, dangerous people. I get it. But the
18 thing is if -- you know, our head researcher, Bret Bucklen,
19 talks about death by 1,000 paper cuts.

20 So this piece of legislation increases the
21 population by 10; this one, by 20; this one, by 30. And
22 next thing you know, you know, we have a budget that's \$2
23 billion. Right?

24 So we really need to look at this. And if
25 there's a group, if there's a particular crime, a

1 particular characteristic that needs to be locked up
2 longer, let's find a group on the other end who we can deal
3 with another way. So at least, let's stop the bleeding.

4 And listen, if you guys are serious about it and
5 you want to do that, we're here, sleeves rolled up, ready
6 to work. But, you know, I've been here three years and,
7 you know, we passed justice reinvestment. And then again,
8 all this stuff passes afterwards and you go, why are we
9 spending so much money on corrections?

10 Look at the facts. We're not splitting the atom
11 here.

12 Thank you.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you for your
14 comments.

15 Representative Brian Ellis.

16 REP. ELLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

17 Mr. Secretary, gentlemen, one of the things -- I
18 mean, and you just kind of finished on that, that we are
19 inadvertently raising the costs of corrections year after
20 year.

21 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

22 REP. ELLIS: But one thing I wanted to get your
23 opinion on is ways that you can internally lower the costs.
24 And one of the things we see across the State in a lot of
25 different capacities, whether it be the local jails or in

1 the schools, you see taking folks out of the food service
2 and going with a company to manage that for you.

3 MR. WETZEL: Right.

4 REP. ELLIS: Is that something the Department is
5 seriously considering looking at in Pennsylvania?

6 MR. WETZEL: We've certainly explored that. In
7 this budget environment, we're exploring everything.

8 REP. ELLIS: Sure.

9 MR. WETZEL: And most recently you had Ohio who
10 switched to private food service. You've had Michigan
11 switch to private food service. So for us to say that we
12 wouldn't look at it -- there's some significant differences
13 between Ohio and ours.

14 REP. ELLIS: Sure.

15 MR. WETZEL: And one of the significant
16 differences is when you privatize food service, oftentimes
17 you're talking about privatizing the staff. We call them
18 food service instructors here. That's not an option for
19 our Administration.

20 REP. ELLIS: Okay.

21 MR. WETZEL: Because our food service instructors
22 serve a dual function. Not only do they oversee the making
23 of food, they provide a security function. So in essence,
24 they're correctional officers.

25 REP. ELLIS: Okay.

1 MR. WETZEL: And as an Administration, we don't
2 believe in private corrections. We don't believe in giving
3 that -- and neither has the Commonwealth -- power.

4 With that being said, any look at something like
5 food service privatization would entail removing the
6 security function, having our staff redo the security
7 function, still do the security function, and then see if
8 the savings are still significant taking that different.

9 So, yes, we've explored that as an
10 Administration. It's something that we need to do very
11 deliberately. We need to do it in a manner that's not
12 going to have a negative impact on security. So the
13 timeline isn't such that we are ready to look at this, you
14 know, pre-budget. But, yes, we'll certainly continue to
15 explore everything we can to reduce food service costs.

16 REP. ELLIS: And I appreciate that answer. And
17 certainly in Pennsylvania we're a little unique in the way,
18 you know, you guys use the food service as guards as well.

19 MR. WETZEL: Right.

20 REP. ELLIS: Now, a lot of the talk about moving
21 in this direction gets muddled up in the word
22 privatization. But the reality is there's a method that
23 you guys could do where no one is going to lose a job. The
24 security is going to remain intact.

25 And if we continue to go down that path and we

1 look at it, do you think that would be like a one-time
2 savings or do you think that would be a recurring savings
3 if we could go in that direction?

4 MR. WETZEL: If we could go in that direction, it
5 would be -- I mean, if the numbers are -- if you use Ohio's
6 per-meal cost versus Pennsylvania's per-meal cost, since
7 Ohio privatized, it's significantly cheaper. It's probably
8 in the 30 million-ish range. But then you take off from
9 those savings the fact that we're not privatizing our
10 staff.

11 REP. ELLIS: Right.

12 MR. WETZEL: So that would cut through the
13 savings. But it would be an annual savings.

14 REP. ELLIS: Okay.

15 MR. WETZEL: I mean, the key here is not
16 necessarily pushing and doing this fast. It's making sure
17 a structure is such that we keep the integrity of our
18 security, we keep our good solid corrections practices so
19 we do it in a safe manner. And so we'll continue to move
20 down the road very deliberately.

21 REP. ELLIS: And then my final question, if you
22 were going to go in that direction, is that something that
23 you could make the decision on yourself or would you need
24 legislative encouragement?

25 MR. WETZEL: I don't know what legislative

1 encouragement we would need.

2 REP. ELLIS: Would you need us to pass a bill
3 that says you have to outsource?

4 MR. WETZEL: You'd have to encourage me to do a
5 lot of stuff. And most of it I don't want to do.

6 REP. ELLIS: Fair enough, Mr. Secretary.

7 But, I mean, is that something that we can
8 continue to work with you on? Would you need legislation
9 to move in that direction?

10 MR. WETZEL: I don't believe so.

11 REP. ELLIS: Is that just something you could
12 consult with us on as we go forward in the conversation?

13 MR. WETZEL: Yes. I believe it's the latter. I
14 don't believe it would require any legislation. And we'll
15 certainly -- whatever process we put in place will
16 certainly be an open process.

17 REP. ELLIS: Well, I appreciate that.

18 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

19 REP. ELLIS: And I just want to commend you
20 personally, Mr. Secretary. When you come to testify before
21 us, it's actually a conversation. And a lot of the
22 testimony that we hear over the weeks is not as fluent and
23 natural. And you always do a great job. So thank you for
24 your time.

25 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

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REP. ELLIS: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

Representative Scott Conklin.

REP. CONKLIN: I want to thank you, Mr. Chairman.
Mr. Secretary, I want to compliment you on your
conservative outfit today. You look very dapper.

MR. WETZEL: Why thank you. I've got the uniform
on.

REP. CONKLIN: I can't go in-depth up in Centre
County up in Rockview of the incident that occurred there
because litigation is pending, not just through the State
and inmate, but I expect other litigation to be pending
from that as well.

But what I do want to ask you about is the
Auditor General's report of August 2013. I know you've
read it. It clearly states that the Academy failed to
monitor training conducted at corrections facilities,
failed to conduct effective audits in employee training,
failed to ensure compliance with or provide guidance on
corrections.

Can you tell me what steps have been taken thus
far to be able to correct some of the findings of the
Auditor General's report?

MR. WETZEL: Yes. And included in that package
is the Auditor General's press release. I think he says in

1 there that the Department is already working to mitigate
2 these.

3 REP. CONKLIN: Yes.

4 MR. WETZEL: So we changed leadership at the
5 Academy. We did a national search and brought a guy who's
6 been working in the field for a long time. He worked at
7 the National Institute of Corrections. Actually he started
8 a lot of the training programs we're doing. And we're
9 reshuffling our entire training process.

10 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

11 MR. WETZEL: We've also completely switched up
12 our audit process because we're coming up short. And, you
13 know, the Auditor General's report kind of happened after
14 we discovered that we weren't delivering training like we
15 were supposed to.

16 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

17 MR. WETZEL: We're supposed to deliver 40 hours
18 of training. In some places it was happening and some
19 places it wasn't. It was very inconsistent in the way we
20 did audits.

21 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

22 MR. WETZEL: We do a bunch of different types of
23 what we call operational audits. The training audit was
24 laid out in a manner that we'd have a place that would have
25 an 18-month lapse between audits.

1 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

2 MR. WETZEL: And so, you know, I think somebody
3 said, trust but verify. And we weren't doing that. So
4 we've restructured the entire audit process. We're an
5 American Correctional Association accredited system.

6 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

7 MR. WETZEL: We actually went to the American
8 Corrections Association and said, we want to change how you
9 do audits. We're going to do nine facilities a year, so a
10 third of our facilities.

11 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

12 MR. WETZEL: We're doing American Correctional
13 Association audits and training audits and we're also doing
14 the Prison Rape Elimination Act audits all on the same
15 cycle. So we're much more coordinated. We've automated a
16 lot of our audits now so it's easier to oversee.

17 So we've put a bunch of checks and balances in.
18 And lot of it is consistent with the recommendations from
19 the Auditor General.

20 REP. CONKLIN: Thank you. And I just have
21 another quick follow-up, just a quick comment.

22 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

23 REP. CONKLIN: Sometimes when we're talking about
24 we'd like to keep people out, you know, we can look at
25 different ways but we also have to remember that although

1 some of our inmates there do stupid things, some are very
2 dangerous people that are locked up there as well.

3 MR. WETZEL: Oh, absolutely.

4 REP. CONKLIN: Just one last question.

5 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

6 REP. CONKLIN: We're talking the finances of it.
7 And I see that you've requested an additional 5 million
8 supplement for the Medicare, another 15 million supplement
9 for the appropriations.

10 Do you think there's going to be any other
11 supplemental requests before this budget season is over in
12 June?

13 MR. WETZEL: I don't anticipate it, but I don't
14 know.

15 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

16 MR. WETZEL: I'm glad you asked that. So we
17 asked for a \$20 million supplemental. The vast majority of
18 that, over 50 percent of that, is in response to the
19 Disability Rights Network lawsuit and the Department of
20 Justice investigation of our mental health system.

21 I don't think my chief counsel is here so he's
22 not going to shut me down when I talk about this. What
23 happened was we got an investigation, like a bunch of other
24 systems, on our mental health.

25 And basically what the allegation was is that we

1 were overusing segregation for mentally ill offenders. So
2 we spent the past two years, two and a half years, really
3 reengineering our entire mental health system.

4 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

5 MR. WETZEL: And one of the key components of
6 kind of the new approach to mental health -- first of all,
7 the key component is training all our staff in how to deal
8 with mentally ill offenders.

9 REP. CONKLIN: Sure.

10 MR. WETZEL: So the feedback I got from officers
11 a lot of times wasn't, you know, what are we doing here?
12 They're saying, you're not giving me the tools to deal with
13 these offenders. And 21 percent of the offenders who are
14 coming through the front door now have some kind of mental
15 illness.

16 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

17 MR. WETZEL: You know, if you would have said 30
18 years ago that I would be responsible for more mental
19 health provisions than the Secretary of the Department of
20 Public Welfare, no one would have believed that. But
21 that's the reality of where we're at today.

22 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

23 MR. WETZEL: We've not necessarily armed our
24 staff with the tools that they need to be successful. So
25 we're training every staff member in the Department of

1 Corrections on mental health first aid over the next year
2 to year and a half. Right. So training is the first piece
3 of that.

4 The second piece of that is looking at who we
5 define as a seriously mentally ill offender. So we went
6 back and re-diagnosed -- or are still in the process of
7 re-diagnosing all our -- we agreed with the Disability
8 Rights Network on a definition for who is seriously
9 mentally ill.

10 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

11 MR. WETZEL: That number will likely with be
12 about 10 percent of our population who meet that criteria
13 for seriously mentally ill. We'll still have another 10 to
14 15 percent who get mental health services. But for the
15 seriously mentally ill, it will be about 10 percent.

16 REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

17 MR. WETZEL: With that group in particular, we
18 have to treat them differently because they're different.
19 And historically, we haven't done that. So that entails if
20 they -- let's say two seriously mentally ill offenders get
21 in a fight and they get a disciplinary period, they need to
22 be -- any longer than 30 days, they need to be out of their
23 cell 20 hours a week. Ten hours structured, ten hours
24 unstructured. All right. So that's kind of our new
25 approach.

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REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

MR. WETZEL: And that's kind of the national floor for how you deal with mentally ill offenders.

REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

MR. WETZEL: But what that means in costs is that we're talking about potentially dangerous individuals, as you alluded to before. So that means that we don't just have to increase mental health staff, which we do; we don't just have to increase nurses to give medication, which we do; but we also have to increase security staff because these individuals need to be out of their cell more. But we need to have them out of their cell in a safe manner so they're not hurting each other or staff are getting hurt.

REP. CONKLIN: Sure.

MR. WETZEL: So we've made these changes. We've spent \$10 million this year already in augmenting our mental health system. And there will likely be more as we move forward.

REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

MR. WETZEL: We're doing a couple things that mitigate that cost. We're only putting those seriously mentally ill offenders in 11 facilities. So we should be able to align our resources at those 11 facilities, really focus our training, make sure we have an ample number of psychiatrists.

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REP. CONKLIN: Sure.

MR. WETZEL: But, you know, the cost of a psychiatrist, you know, in any community is very expensive. So we really have historically not increased the infrastructure of the mental health system at the same rate that the number of mentally ill offenders have increased. And what you see is reflective of trying to catch up.

REP. CONKLIN: The only reason I was asking is if we are under the Affordable Care Act, would you be able to use any of that money to help offset some of the costs you have?

MR. WETZEL: No, not in state prison. Not for state prison inmates.

REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

MR. WETZEL: Now, you guys passed -- in 2011, you passed Act 22 that allows us for outpatient and overnight stays to get Medicare and Medicaid rates respectively.

REP. CONKLIN: Yes. That was what I was asking about.

MR. WETZEL: And we're able to -- we can do that right now.

REP. CONKLIN: Okay.

MR. WETZEL: The difference is if Healthy PA is accepted, we'll be able to get 100 percent match versus -- we get 85 or 82 percent match now . So that's really the

1 -- oh, we get 53 now. We'd get 100 percent if Healthy PA
2 is accepted by DC. So that's really the only opportunity.
3 At the county jail level, it may be different. We haven't
4 explored that yet.

5 REP. CONKLIN: Thank you.

6 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

7 REP. CONKLIN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

9 Representative Jim Christiana.

10 REP. CHRISTIANA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

11 Gentlemen, good morning. Thanks for being here.

12 MR. WETZEL: Good morning.

13 MR. POTTEIGER: Good morning.

14 REP. CHRISTIANA: If the Chairman would give me
15 just 45 seconds of latitude from the budget, I would like
16 to thank you, Secretary and Governor Corbett, for your
17 personal commitments to one-to-one evidence-based
18 mentoring.

19 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

20 REP. CHRISTIANA: It wasn't but an hour after
21 this Governor got sworn in that his first stop as Governor
22 was to the Big Brothers Big Sisters Chapter of this county
23 that we're in, of Dauphin County.

24 And clearly your Department has made
25 life-changing investments in the 2013 and 2014 budget.

1 Some of the initiatives that you mentioned -- last year you
2 made a statement, Mr. Secretary, that stuck with me. And
3 you alluded to it today. If I may paraphrase those
4 statements, you said, quote, there was nothing more
5 effective on reducing recidivism than mentoring, one-to-one
6 evidence-based mentoring.

7 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

8 REP. CHRISTIANA: And we also talked about the
9 initial investment on a kid in their adolescent years and
10 their teens, the front-end investment with mentoring helps
11 to hopefully stop them from going to prison. I ask for
12 your continued commitment, obviously, in the next budget
13 year. And if there's anything I can do to assist you in
14 that, I would be honored to do that.

15 And once again, thank you. And thank you to
16 Governor Corbett for his commitment on that idea.

17 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

18 REP. CHRISTIANA: I do have a little bit of a
19 concern from the description of the Healthy PA program as
20 it relates to the Corrections Department. And this is a
21 description that I'm getting from staff.

22 MR. WETZEL: Okay.

23 REP. CHRISTIANA: It says that we would be
24 transferring recipients into private coverage options and
25 pharmaceutical rebates. I'm assuming what that means is

1 we're taking inmates and we're putting them on a private
2 insurance through the Affordable Care Act; is that
3 accurate?

4 MR. WETZEL: Inmates while they're incarcerated,
5 no.

6 REP. CHRISTIANA: No. Okay. So can you just
7 tell me the Healthy PA program as it relates to how the
8 savings are going to come about that you just mentioned in
9 the previous question?

10 MR. WETZEL: The part I was talking about -- so
11 in 2011, the General Assembly passed Act 22. And what that
12 did was that allowed us to -- inmates who are sent out for
13 outside care, there's two levels that they're sent out for
14 outside care, outpatient care and overnight.

15 REP. CHRISTIANA: Okay.

16 MR. WETZEL: So when they're sent out, you passed
17 legislation that allowed us to get charged Medicaid rates
18 and Medicare rates. And then we draw down a Federal
19 matching from that, right now at a 53 percent level.
20 Healthy PA would allow us to draw that Federal match and
21 get a 100 percent level. That's the only implication as
22 far as incarceration proper at the State level.

23 REP. CHRISTIANA: So when we're saying we're
24 putting them on private coverage, we're not taking inmates
25 and signing them up for individual plans through the

1 Affordable Care Act?

2 MR. WETZEL: Not while they're incarcerated, no.

3 REP. CHRISTIANA: Not while they're incarcerated.
4 Okay. And if I may -- you know, I'm guilty of this, too.
5 During this process, so often we focus on the line items.
6 And we're all trying to maximize efficiency. And we
7 sometimes forget about the people that are affected by
8 those line items.

9 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

10 REP. CHRISTIANA: And a lot of the conversation
11 today is about the inmates and the facilities. But I think
12 we all would be remiss if we didn't pay attention to those
13 that keep themselves safe, their colleagues safe, and the
14 inmates safe 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a
15 year.

16 MR. WETZEL: Right.

17 REP. CHRISTIANA: While we're trying to maximize
18 efficiency, I think it's important to thank those men and
19 women who truly risk their lives every day. We all hear
20 about the unfortunate crashes. We don't hear about the
21 landings enough.

22 MR. WETZEL: Right.

23 REP. CHRISTIANA: And those employees, those
24 corrections officers you have, do a tremendous job. And
25 I'm as guilty as anyone to try to maximize those line

1 items. The Attorney General testified yesterday. She's
2 doing a great job locking up bad guys. And I think that's
3 wonderful. Your folks also have the responsibility of
4 keeping everybody safe. And I don't think they get enough
5 credit.

6 So thank you, Mr. Secretary, and thank you,
7 Mr. Chairman.

8 MR. WETZEL: I would agree with that. Thank you.

9 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I figured you would.

10 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

11 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

12 Representative Deb Kula.

13 REP. KULA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

14 Mr. Secretary, good morning.

15 MR. WETZEL: How are you?

16 REP. KULA: I am well.

17 MR. WETZEL: Good.

18 REP. KULA: And I'll try to be a little calmer
19 than I was last year in asking some of these questions.

20 MR. WETZEL: It's always exciting over here in
21 the House.

22 REP. KULA: Really. I'm sure.

23 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

24 REP. KULA: But I just want to follow up on the
25 closing of Cresson and Greensburg.

1 MR. WETZEL: Okay.

2 REP. KULA: I know last year you testified, you
3 know, that there would be cost savings. But then I think
4 earlier when you were asked here today, it really wasn't
5 what you -- as much as you anticipated; is that correct?

6 MR. WETZEL: That is correct.

7 REP. KULA: And can you give me some number as to
8 what those savings were? If you can't provide it, could
9 you --

10 MR. WETZEL: I will provide it.

11 REP. KULA: Thank you.

12 MR. WETZEL: But, again, what I said at the
13 earlier question was, it was mitigated by some of the
14 things -- like we just talked about the supplemental budget
15 increasing out-of-cell time. Some of that stuff drove
16 costs up that we didn't anticipate.

17 REP. KULA: Okay.

18 MR. WETZEL: So it's not as easy to draw a
19 straight line. But I will get that for you.

20 REP. KULA: And maybe that leads back to the
21 original part of my complaint last year when we were doing
22 this, that it seemed to be a very -- as far as all of us
23 were concerned, a very quick decision that was not fully
24 vetted by everyone that was involved in the situation. And
25 we're not going to dwell on that.

1 MR. WETZEL: Right.

2 REP. KULA: But, you know, maybe just looking
3 back now, had we sat down and really looked at what the
4 consequences could have been, maybe we could have -- or the
5 decision may have been different.

6 MR. WETZEL: Well, I don't think so. I mean, we
7 didn't make the operational changes to the mental health
8 system until the end of the summer. And that's really the
9 driver.

10 REP. KULA: But those mental health problems were
11 still there. And even if someone didn't tell us we needed
12 to change, you know, maybe we could have all collaborated
13 to realize that this mental health issue was a problem.

14 And I think on the Judiciary Committee, we have
15 dealt with that. And how do we reduce the amount that's
16 necessary to fund the mental health issues we have in our
17 prisons? How far along now are the Phoenix facilities?

18 MR. WETZEL: About a year and a half until
19 completion.

20 REP. KULA: Okay.

21 MR. WETZEL: So about halfway through.

22 REP. KULA: And once those are completed, then
23 Graterford is gone?

24 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

25 REP. KULA: So how many inmates do we currently

1 have in Graterford?

2 MR. WETZEL: We're right around 4,000 right now.

3 REP. KULA: Okay. So we have 4,100. The Phoenix
4 ones will house 4,100. So, you know, we have closed two
5 prisons. We're going to close another prison that's going
6 to have to move 4,000 inmates. That kind of leaves us 100
7 extra beds.

8 MR. WETZEL: Right.

9 REP. KULA: I don't think the numbers have gone
10 down as much as last year when you testified. You seemed
11 to feel that crime was decreasing. And I think the
12 recidivism rate is increasing. The parole violators are
13 somewhat increasing to the point that we have other
14 facilities besides what we have in our prisons.

15 The correctional facilities, you have your
16 community facilities. So these violators are going into
17 some of those that can, you know, if they are eligible. So
18 we're not looking at just the correctional facilities we
19 currently have. We're now expanding out into the
20 communities with other ones.

21 MR. WETZEL: That's not an expansion. I mean,
22 those community corrections centers have always been there.

23 REP. KULA: Right. But we're using them, maybe
24 utilizing them in a different way now or the intention of
25 them now is to kind of keep the hardened criminals in the

1 SCIs and kind of move people out of the correctional
2 facilities, correct?

3 MR. WETZEL: Yes. And that was the intent behind
4 the legislation you guys passed, Senate Bill 100.

5 REP. KULA: Correct. And I believe there was
6 always -- or at least we talked about a problem on
7 Judiciary about what criteria needs to be met within the
8 SCIs before they can be moved to the community facilities,
9 correct? There's certain courses, classes, whatever they
10 have to take before they can go there.

11 MR. WETZEL: No. They have to be paroled before
12 they can go there. That's one mechanism to get in.

13 REP. KULA: Okay.

14 MR. WETZEL: The other mechanism is parole
15 violations. The other mechanism is people who are starting
16 to screw up on parole and get put in a halfway house in
17 lieu of before they actually violate.

18 REP. KULA: Okay. So let me just ask you one
19 more question.

20 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

21 REP. KULA: With what you're looking at now in
22 the opening of the Phoenix prisons and the closing of
23 Graterford, do you right now foresee that there will be
24 other correctional facilities that you will be looking at
25 closing?

1 MR. WETZEL: Not at this point.

2 REP. KULA: Okay. And you will certainly keep us
3 all informed as to that; is that correct?

4 MR. WETZEL: Absolutely. And we committed to a
5 completely different process.

6 REP. KULA: I appreciate that.

7 And can I ask you also -- you indicated your
8 complement was down as far as employees. What has that
9 done to overtime?

10 MR. WETZEL: It's gone up.

11 REP. KULA: Okay. By how much? I mean, do you
12 have an amount?

13 MR. WETZEL: I can get you the amount of
14 overtime.

15 REP. KULA: If you could get that amount --

16 MR. WETZEL: I don't know how much you can
17 account to complement versus how many you can account to
18 unforeseen events. But I'll get you both.

19 REP. KULA: But you probably could break that
20 down somewhat.

21 MR. WETZEL: We'll break it down to the extent we
22 can.

23 REP. KULA: Okay. I would appreciate you sending
24 that to the Chairmen.

25 MR. WETZEL: You got it.

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REP. KULA: Thank you so much.

MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

REP. KULA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

Representative Karen Boback.

REP. BOBACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

My question has to do with programs that you have for the inmates prior to parole.

MR. WETZEL: Okay.

REP. BOBACK: Do you actively look for jobs, decent-paying jobs, for those who would go on parole before they leave the prison?

MR. WETZEL: No. We focus on the skills before they leave the prison. In our halfway house system, we often have the ability to do that. The nonresidential lot for job training is really trying to do that in community corrections, trying to improve job skills, specific job skills to a specific job, and plug them into that.

REP. BOBACK: I see.

MR. WETZEL: And, in essence, what you're talking about is the program that we're discussing with the Labor Union in Philadelphia, to put offenders in their training program with a Union card and a job at the back end of that.

REP. BOBACK: I'm glad that's in the discussion

1 stage. Because I can't help but think that so many inmates
2 when they leave, they don't have a safety net. There are
3 no jobs. And this is what I'm hearing. They have a
4 record. They cannot get a decent-paying job.

5 And I would at least suggest that perhaps
6 something in the program should be looking for a job prior
7 to the inmate leaving the establishment, probably a cost
8 factor that you would have to go through or a counseling
9 session or something. But they need a lifeline. They need
10 something before they leave the prison.

11 MR. POTTEIGER: Representative, one thing, once
12 they are paroled, the Board has employment groups, offender
13 workforce developments. And one of the things that we
14 focused on last year was creating job fairs in each of our
15 districts throughout the Commonwealth and really targeting
16 our offenders with employers who look to give an
17 opportunity for second chances for offenders.

18 We were able to push that out and really
19 communicate with the employers in that situation. We also
20 now can utilize funds through the Bureau of Community
21 Corrections. And we are partnering with Harrisburg Area
22 Community College for job training in culinary, welding,
23 and warehouse work, accredited courses through an
24 accredited college and then working with Labor & Industry.

25 REP. BOBACK: Okay.

1 MR. WETZEL: And our staff is working on trying
2 to get them -- once they get the certificate for the
3 program, to get them self-sustaining jobs. It's one thing
4 about getting jobs, but we want to make sure they get
5 self-sustaining jobs, jobs that they can retain and become,
6 you know, taxpayers instead of tax burdens.

7 REP. BOBACK: And if you'd consider my idea
8 anyway, I still think you need to have something where
9 before they leave the prison there is a job waiting for
10 them. It sounds like you're on the track.

11 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

12 REP. BOBACK: You can train anybody with
13 anything. But if there's no job for them, I can see 43
14 percent recidivism. That to me is very concerning because
15 if they don't get a job and they don't have health care and
16 they can't provide for themselves or their family, they'll
17 come back because you do provide that for them, correct?

18 MR. POTTEIGER: Correct.

19 REP. BOBACK: And then another question.

20 MR. POTTEIGER: Sure.

21 REP. BOBACK: Do you know of any states that have
22 any type of programs for their inmates where they actually
23 produce products? maybe joined with the private sector
24 where they can do a manufacturing kind of a thing so that
25 the inmates would be able to contribute and not only

1 contribute for their stay, but a feeling of self-worth? Is
2 there anything out there where inmates can participate in
3 doing a product or manufacturing or can you partner with
4 somebody?

5 MR. WETZEL: Yes. There's a bunch of states that
6 do that. We have a pretty sizable correctional industries
7 program. What is lacking from our correctional industries
8 program is that partnership with the community and with the
9 private sector. And that would require legislation. It's
10 a national standard. It's called PIE. I don't remember
11 what the acronym stands for. I apologize for that.

12 REP. BOBACK: That's okay.

13 MR. WETZEL: But I will get that information to
14 you. That would require legislation.

15 REP. BOBACK: Would you work with me on that?

16 MR. WETZEL: Absolutely.

17 REP. BOBACK: Because if it's something viable so
18 that you could get a private company that might come to the
19 prison, manufacturer of sorts, where the prisoners can
20 actually work, help earn their keep in the prisons,
21 contribute to their costs, is what I'm looking at, and then
22 have viable means when they leave the prison.

23 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

24 REP. BOBACK: Does that make sense?

25 MR. WETZEL: Yes. That's the explanation of PIE

1 programs around the country.

2 REP. BOBACK: And you'll work with me on that?

3 MR. WETZEL: Absolutely.

4 REP. BOBACK: Great deal. Thank you, sir.

5 MR. WETZEL: All right.

6 REP. BOBACK: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

8 Representative John Sabatina.

9 REP. SABATINA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

10 Thank you, Secretary.

11 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

12 REP. SABATINA: Thank you, Chairman.

13 MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you, Representative.

14 REP. SABATINA: Good to see you guys again.

15 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

16 MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you.

17 REP. SABATINA: I just wanted to touch on what
18 Representative Boback just said as well as Representative
19 Parker and Representative Wheatley.

20 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

21 REP. SABATINA: It's one thing when we
22 incarcerate people. And it's another thing when they're
23 ready to get out and re-enter society and hopefully
24 re-enter the workforce.

25 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

1 REP. SABATINA: I know that Chairman Potteiger
2 was just basically stating the employment scenarios for
3 individuals. I was just wondering if you could elaborate
4 even more on the rate, the employment rate?

5 MR. POTTEIGER: Sure.

6 REP. SABATINA: Because I'm a firm believer once
7 people re-enter society, they need a job to prevent them
8 from being re-offenders. Could you just elaborate on that?

9 MR. POTTEIGER: Yes. Employment is definitely a
10 barrier to recidivism. There are a lot of challenges for
11 individuals who are being released from the Department of
12 Corrections. They face a lot of issues.

13 REP. SABATINA: Sure.

14 MR. POTTEIGER: And one of those is through our
15 offender workforce development specialist to really look at
16 job skills, job trades, teaching them, when they come in,
17 how to represent themselves, how to dress, how to write a
18 resume.

19 REP. SABATINA: Right.

20 MR. POTTEIGER: And so we hold employment groups
21 for individuals as soon as they are released from the
22 Department of Corrections. But one of the things is we
23 wanted to expand that. And we wanted to expand that for
24 giving opportunities through job fairs, you know, to try to
25 get jobs first.

1 And we understand during this tough economic
2 situation, there's a lot of people looking for jobs. And
3 even with offenders, that even puts them further behind on
4 the list.

5 REP. SABATINA: Right.

6 MR. POTTEIGER: So we have partnered again with
7 area community colleges, Labor & Industry, in reference to
8 utilization of these job fairs and try to promote.

9 REP. SABATINA: Okay.

10 MR. POTTEIGER: And then also educate the
11 employers, educate the employers on the Federal tax credits
12 if they hire an ex-offender that could work for them. So
13 those are the things that we're working on.

14 And in Philadelphia, we're partnering with the
15 Philadelphia Coalition Re-Entry. We're working with the
16 Mayor's Office there in reference to, you know, job
17 creations in Philadelphia.

18 REP. SABATINA: Thank you.

19 MR. POTTEIGER: You're welcome.

20 REP. SABATINA: And also following up on
21 Representative Boback, I'm aware -- I can't remember the
22 facility. But I'm aware of a facility on State Road in
23 Philadelphia where the inmates actually manufacture
24 furniture. They're carpenters. And they actually put
25 together desks and furniture. I don't know if that's

1 something that the State can expand upon.

2 MR. WETZEL: We do that now. The difference is
3 what we do is all internal. Our clients are internal.

4 REP. SABATINA: Okay.

5 MR. WETZEL: With that being said, we're eligible
6 to sell to the General Assembly. So we'll send a catalog
7 to everyone from our Correctional Industries Program. And,
8 you know, feel free to support our labor force. But we
9 can't partner with the private sector without legislation.

10 REP. SABATINA: Thank you.

11 MR. POTTEIGER: Representative, I forget to
12 answer your one question.

13 REP. SABATINA: Okay.

14 MR. POTTEIGER: For those that are eligible to
15 work that are under supervision, 58 percent are employed.
16 So that's a number that we continue to look at to see how
17 we can increase that number.

18 REP. SABATINA: Thank you, gentlemen. Please
19 keep up the good work.

20 MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you.

21 MR. WETZEL: We will. Thank you.

22 REP. SABATINA: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

24 Representative Tom Killion.

25 REP. KILLION: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

1 I'm over here. Good morning, Mr. Secretary.
2 Good morning, Mr. Chairman.

3 MR. POTTEIGER: Good morning.

4 MR. WETZEL: Good morning.

5 REP. KILLION: In your written testimony, you
6 indicate that you've created performance standards for
7 contracts for those providing residential community
8 services. My question is, has the Department established
9 standards to measure that performance? And if you have,
10 has this been communicated to the providers? And if not,
11 when will it be communicated?

12 MR. WETZEL: Yes. It's a baseline recidivism
13 rate of their offenders. And so they knew -- prior to
14 bidding, we put out the bid what they were going to be
15 measured on. So if there's some confusion for some
16 vendors, tell them to give me a call.

17 REP. KILLION: Yes. I'm hearing that they are
18 confused as to what is required and what the standards are.
19 So I'll go back and I'll encourage them to contact the
20 Department.

21 MR. WETZEL: The standard is pretty simple.
22 Reduce the future criminality of the offenders going
23 through their program by delivering evidence-based
24 programming in their system and assessing individuals when
25 they come in so their programming is matching their needs.

1 REP. KILLION: That seems pretty straightforward.

2 Okay. Thank you.

3 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

4 REP. KILLION: One other question dealing with
5 behavioral health issues.

6 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

7 REP. KILLION: It's my understanding that the
8 Department is considering using existing Network of Care
9 with modifications to assist re-entry. Is the Department
10 committed to funding that in this upcoming fiscal year?

11 MR. WETZEL: I'm not sure. You said existing
12 Network of Care.

13 REP. KILLION: Yes. That's currently done
14 through DPW is my understanding.

15 MR. WETZEL: I'm going to have to get back to you
16 on that.

17 REP. KILLION: Okay.

18 MR. WETZEL: I'm not familiar with that term.

19 REP. KILLION: Okay. Thank you.

20 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

21 REP. KILLION: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

22 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.
23 Representative O'Brien.

24 REP. O'BRIEN: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 Good morning, gentlemen.

1 MR. WETZEL: Good morning.

2 MR. POTTEIGER: Good morning.

3 REP. O'BRIEN: We've had a wide-ranging
4 conversation this morning. So if I get bogged down,
5 forgive me and I'll try to get back to some sort of order.

6 MR. WETZEL: I enjoy that. Knock yourself out.

7 REP. O'BRIEN: So can you tell me the percentage
8 of violent versus non-violent inmates?

9 MR. WETZEL: It's 60 percent violent, 40 percent
10 non-violent.

11 REP. O'BRIEN: 60/40?

12 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

13 REP. O'BRIEN: Now, is there a cost differential?

14 MR. WETZEL: No. It depends on how they behave
15 in there. So there's not a significant cost differential.
16 The cost differential comes in play when they are in a
17 segregation unit. That's when there's a significant cost
18 differential.

19 REP. O'BRIEN: We have minimum security and
20 intermediate security and maximum security. Is there a
21 cost differential between those institutions?

22 MR. WETZEL: No.

23 REP. O'BRIEN: No?

24 MR. WETZEL: No. At this point in our evolution
25 as a Department, what we call like a Level 2 or

1 lower-security facility, if you'd go to another state, they
2 would call that just a regular facility.

3 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay.

4 MR. WETZEL: And a lot of our lower-level
5 facilities have different missions. For instance, Laurel
6 Highlands is a Level 2 facility. It has a nursing home.
7 So you would think since it's lower-level inmates, it would
8 be cheaper. The nursing home drives the cost up.

9 REP. O'BRIEN: Sure.

10 MR. WETZEL: Retreat is another one that's lower
11 level. But now we're making that one of our new mental
12 health facilities, which will drive the cost up. So it's
13 not as clean as you would like it probably.

14 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay. Now, you were talking about
15 Laurel Highlands and Retreat. Is there a criteria for
16 sending folks to one of these institutions? For instance,
17 is there an institution that would be geared more towards a
18 violent offender versus, say, a white-collar offender?

19 MR. WETZEL: Not necessarily. We have like Level
20 2, so like dorm housing units at pretty much all of our
21 facilities. It's very similar to the Federal system. The
22 Federal system has a camp on every prison ground.

23 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay.

24 MR. WETZEL: You could get sent to, let's say,
25 Leavenworth but be in a camp. We have a similar structure.

1 Not really. We don't have any kind of all low-security
2 facilities other than the boot camp, which is legislatively
3 how you get there. And Chester is primarily a treatment
4 facility that would have less lifers. That's the closest
5 to that.

6 REP. O'BRIEN: Now, is there a difference in
7 recidivism for violent versus non-violent? How many
8 violent folks versus non-violent folks are going to make
9 their way back to you?

10 MR. WETZEL: There's not a significant difference
11 between the two groups.

12 REP. O'BRIEN: I see. Talk to me about some of
13 the special courts, Drug Court, Veterans Court. Talk to me
14 about the impact on those on the prison population.

15 MR. WETZEL: Significant.

16 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay.

17 MR. WETZEL: We have a map of where mentally ill
18 offenders come from that I can share with you. It's a GIS
19 map.

20 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay.

21 MR. WETZEL: And the counties that have Mental
22 Health Courts send us lower mentally ill offenders.

23 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay.

24 MR. WETZEL: I'll say it with this caveat: Good
25 Mental Health Courts, good Drug Courts, good Veterans

1 Courts. The Veterans Courts, in particular, is a great
2 opportunity for the Commonwealth because the VA is so
3 committed. So you're talking about Federal money, Federal
4 resources, as it relates to housing, as it relates to
5 treatment.

6 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay.

7 MR. WETZEL: And we see more and more of those
8 growing. I think specialty courts are a key part of the
9 puzzle if we're going to respond to behavioral health
10 issues in a behavioral health manner.

11 REP. O'BRIEN: Earlier you were talking about
12 some of the effects of legislation.

13 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

14 REP. O'BRIEN: And as I recall, back in the '90s,
15 there became a whole tough-on-crime series of legislation
16 stemming from the parole of Mudman Simon who went off to
17 New Jersey, you know, and committed multiple murders, so
18 prison population started to increase from that point on,
19 spiking, I suppose, in the Rendell Administration because
20 of a moratorium that he put on paroles because of a
21 horrific murder of a police officer.

22 Now, in your testimony, you said that population
23 has only increased by 64 in this Administration.

24 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

25 REP. O'BRIEN: Has that moratorium been released?

1 Has the decrease in prison population been a factor because
2 of that?

3 MR. WETZEL: Just to clarify, the highest growth
4 Administration was Casey. The '80s is really when
5 get-tough-on-crime, the drug war, all that stuff, really
6 kicked it in high gear. I mean, we're splitting hairs
7 here. It's a 100 person difference. We're still talking
8 about adding a prison every year and a half.

9 A lot of the success we have been able to have
10 and mitigate population growth is really the Department of
11 Corrections staff really doing a good job with processing
12 and getting inmates ready and eligible for parole.

13 At my first hearing we talked a lot about waiting
14 lists. We talked a lot about cases not seen. We've made
15 significant improvements in our partnership with the Board
16 in being more strategic and making sure people who are
17 doing a better job of getting people who have done
18 everything we've asked them to do and likely to get paroled
19 to parole.

20 The moratorium that you referred to, in essence,
21 cost us about 2,000 extra inmates. To say if we're over
22 that hump, I don't know. I would guess that there's a
23 series of factors, internal improvements, a small effect
24 from the provision of justice reinvestment that said you
25 can't bring certain inmates to DOC, a small effect for the

1 provision that allows us to deport non-violent illegal
2 immigrants on the front end as opposed to after they serve
3 their time here.

4 REP. O'BRIEN: Okay.

5 MR. WETZEL: And then there's likely some effects
6 from Triple R-I that we're seeing now. Because Triple R-I
7 is now four or five or six years old -- five years old. So
8 we're likely seeing some of that. So it's a series of
9 factors. But I think we're slowly kind of turning the
10 corner from that.

11 REP. O'BRIEN: Obviously, I have an interest and
12 a concern of the large population and the cost of it with
13 the incarceration of non-violent offenders.

14 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

15 REP. O'BRIEN: Now, my moment of editorial
16 comment, it seems to me that we should incarcerate someone
17 because we're afraid of them, not because we're mad at
18 them.

19 Gentlemen, thank you for the wisdom and
20 compassion that you show in your very, very difficult
21 professions. And thank you for joining us today.

22 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

23 MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

24 MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

1 For the members' information, I moved back PEMA
2 15 minutes, until 11:15. This hearing will be over at
3 11:10. You can submit your questions to the Chairmen and
4 we'll get it to the Secretary and the Chairman.

5 With PEMA coming in, and apparently a very large
6 snowstorm coming this evening, I do not want to put PEMA
7 off any longer. So we'll go as fast as we can. We've let
8 the members really have a good conversation with our guests
9 today.

10 Next we'll hear from Representative Glen Grell.

11 REP. GRELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman. And
12 message received.

13 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Good.

14 REP. GRELL: I was going to ask you one question.
15 Do you know what the amount of your GGO increase dealing
16 with your increased pension obligation is?

17 MR. WETZEL: I believe it's 27. The increase?

18 REP. GRELL: Yes. How much of that is
19 attributable to your increase in your pension obligation?
20 If you don't have it handy --

21 MR. WETZEL: I'm pretty sure it's 27 million.
22 And that assumes that there will be some pension reform.

23 REP. GRELL: Okay. Right. At the lower rate?

24 MR. WETZEL: If there's no pension reform, I
25 think the number is about 51 million.

1 REP. GRELL: Okay. The other question actually
2 came to me from a member of the public during the hearing
3 who wanted to ask about inmate compensation, inmate pay.
4 Why do we pay inmates? Do we pay inmates who work a
5 certain amount and inmates who don't work something? Does
6 any of that money go toward victim compensation?

7 Just give us a little bit of a primer on how
8 that works.

9 MR. WETZEL: It's paid by kind of the level of
10 skill. The top rate is 42 cents an hour. Correctional
11 industries gets that. Some of that -- there's a portion of
12 everything that goes to victim restitution and those kinds
13 of things.

14 REP. GRELL: Okay.

15 MR. WETZEL: I will give you the matrix.

16 REP. GRELL: Okay.

17 MR. WETZEL: And I'll give you a one-pager that
18 explains how all that works.

19 REP. GRELL: Okay. Is there a rate that inmates
20 are paid if they don't perform any work in the prison?

21 MR. WETZEL: If they are in programming, there's
22 an idle pay.

23 REP. GRELL: Okay.

24 MR. WETZEL: If they're in programming, if they
25 are unable to work, disabled, those kinds of things.

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REP. GRELL: Okay. Thank you very much.

MR. WETZEL: You've got it.

REP. GRELL: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

Rep. Santarsiero.

REP. SANTARSIERO: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Mr. Secretary, Chairman, welcome.

MR. WETZEL: Thank you.

MR. POTTEIGER: Thank you.

REP. SANTARSIERO: I would like at some point, if it were at all possible, it would be great if you could come and speak to a joint session of the House and Senate and be as forthright as you are here today.

MR. WETZEL: I don't know any other way, man.

REP. SANTARSIERO: It would probably help us a great deal.

MR. WETZEL: Sure.

REP. SANTARSIERO: My question stems to the one that Representative O'Brien brought up before. And I asked you last year about the special courts and, in particular, Drug Courts.

MR. WETZEL: Yes.

REP. SANTARSIERO: And last year I asked you if you could get me information on the recidivism rates after those courts were in operation. And you were good enough

1 to provide me with some statistics on that.

2 MR. WETZEL: Right.

3 REP. SANTARSIERO: And what you found, I believe,
4 was a 2001 study from Temple University that showed that
5 there was about a 6 percent reduction in recidivism.

6 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

7 REP. SANTARSIERO: And I think an Urban Institute
8 study nationwide that showed about a 10 percent reduction
9 in recidivism. Where are we today statewide with Drug
10 Courts in the 67 counties of Pennsylvania?

11 And is this an issue that this Administration can
12 kind of get behind and try to push?

13 MR. WETZEL: The first question, I'll get you
14 that information. I don't know it offhand.

15 REP. SANTARSIERO: Thank you.

16 MR. WETZEL: Secondly, absolutely. You may not
17 be aware, but Governor Corbett, in his first stint as
18 Attorney General, actually Chaired PCCD when the first
19 funding for any Drug Court was introduced to Pennsylvania.
20 So we're 100 percent on board with that.

21 REP. SANTARSIERO: Okay.

22 MR. WETZEL: And listen, just generally, we think
23 that counties do a much better job on the front end. You
24 talked about grant and aid earlier. And the folks at
25 County Probation and Parole, they just do a great job of

1 keeping folks even out of our system. And it's kind of
2 invisible to us up here because we don't, you know,
3 directly pay for it.

4 REP. SANTARSIERO: Right.

5 MR. WETZEL: But any time you talk about those
6 specialty courts, keep in mind that the folks from County
7 Probation and Parole are kind of soldiers on the ground
8 doing those programs.

9 REP. SANTARSIERO: Sure.

10 MR. WETZEL: But I'll get you the information on
11 all the specialty courts in Pennsylvania by county.

12 REP. SANTARSIERO: Thank you.

13 MR. POTTEIGER: Representative, just to expand on
14 that, coming from the county system for 20 years, I
15 implemented Drug Courts both in Northumberland and Dauphin
16 County and saw the importance of treatment courts ten years
17 ago and the value in them.

18 The Board in 2007 started re-entry programs,
19 which is kind of like on the same key components in
20 reference to Drug Courts.

21 REP. SANTARSIERO: Okay.

22 MR. POTTEIGER: But the re-entry program is
23 different in Drug Court because individuals who are coming
24 out of the Department of Corrections have different
25 barriers than people in the Drug Court because they have

1 additional housing, training, job training, drug and
2 alcohol issues.

3 REP. SANTARSIERO: Sure.

4 MR. POTTEIGER: Our studies have shown -- we have
5 them in York. And we expanded them in Lackawanna and
6 Berks. And the recidivism rate for those are between 18
7 and 23 percent.

8 REP. SANTARSIERO: Okay.

9 MR. POTTEIGER: So under this Administration, we
10 now have expanded those re-entry programs. Based upon my
11 experience with them and also the Board's experience in the
12 re-entry programs last year, we instituted one in
13 Harrisburg in Dauphin County. We're starting one in
14 Allegheny County next month and Philadelphia by the end of
15 April.

16 REP. SANTARSIERO: Okay.

17 MR. POTTEIGER: So we understand the importance
18 of re-entry programs. People coming through the state
19 system have different re-entry needs than those coming from
20 the county systems.

21 REP. SANTARSIERO: Sure.

22 MR. POTTEIGER: And it's really tying that family
23 structure back in and getting those individuals coming back
24 from the state to really look at that. And that's what
25 we're looking to try to do, expand our re-entry programs

1 throughout the Commonwealth also.

2 REP. SANTARSIERO: Thank you very much.

3 MR. POTTEIGER: You're welcome.

4 Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

5 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you.

6 Last question will be by Representative Gary Day.

7 REP. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

8 Thank you both for being here. In light of the
9 time and the remarks by the Chairman about our time, I'm
10 going to really condense this question. You've already
11 answered a lot of questions about prison population and
12 re-entry into the community.

13 Representative Killion asked you and talked about
14 Network of Care. And that was what I wanted to ask you
15 about. I just wanted to say, you know, the cost of housing
16 our prison population, you've talked about over and over in
17 many of your answers today, and you're making great strides
18 in transitioning eligible prisoners.

19 There's a whole group of people -- and I wanted
20 to take a few seconds to say, you know, Deputy Secretary
21 Moore is doing a great job with a lot of the programs that
22 she does to try to transition prisoners back into society.

23 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

24 REP. DAY: There's a whole group of people . I
25 thought it was about 500. I heard you say 2,000 to another

1 question. I don't know which number it is. But it's about
2 \$36,000 a year to house an inmate; is that about right? Is
3 that the average?

4 MR. WETZEL: I heard I've got to redo the math.

5 REP. DAY: Is it higher?

6 MR. WETZEL: I think it's somewhere in that
7 ballpark.

8 REP. DAY: Ballpark?

9 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

10 REP. DAY: So with 500 people that are in prisons
11 eligible to be released, these transition programs are
12 what's holding back. You've touched on it. You got close
13 to it in a lot of your answers about that.

14 MR. WETZEL: Yes.

15 REP. DAY: The Network of Care that
16 Representative Killion referred to is administered by DPW.
17 So it's an existing program that you could use to help with
18 this and help with prisoner re-entry. I think from my
19 investigation that your Department is looking at utilizing
20 this Network of Care that DPW has. It's an existing
21 network and program and I'll get right to my question.

22 MR. WETZEL: Okay.

23 REP. DAY: Because it's existing, it should be
24 relatively inexpensive. It should be very wise and smart
25 to move those hundreds of people back into the community.

1 Have you committed to this type of smart program?
2 You've already said about Network of Care, you wanted to
3 look into it and get back us.

4 MR. WETZEL: Right.

5 REP. DAY: But I understand that people in your
6 Department are looking at this. And I would urge you to
7 look at a smart program like this. Let me know if you
8 wouldn't mind maybe an e-mail response to the Chairmen if
9 you are looking at it. If not, why are you not looking at
10 it? If you are and going to implement it, will we see it
11 this year? Will we see it in the next fiscal year? And if
12 not, when would you hope to implement using the Network of
13 Care existing program to help with re-entry of the
14 population?

15 MR. WETZEL: I'll follow up on that relatively
16 quickly.

17 REP. DAY: Okay.

18 MR. WETZEL: And we meet with DPW every month.
19 So we talk about a lot of stuff. I'm just not sure I
20 recall that in particular. But I'll get that information
21 back to you quickly.

22 REP. DAY: Okay. Thank you very much.

23 MR. WETZEL: You're welcome.

24 REP. DAY: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

25 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Thank you very much.

1 First of all, I want to apologize to
2 Representative Dean and Representative Bradford. They were
3 the only two that were unable to ask their questions. But
4 they're going to submit the questions and we'll get them to
5 you. I promise.

6 MR. WETZEL: Sure.

7 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: I want to thank the
8 Secretary and the Chairman for their testimony and their
9 very forthright answers to some really tough questions.
10 I'm looking forward to working with both of you between now
11 and June 30th on putting together a budget for the
12 Commonwealth.

13 MR. WETZEL: Or sooner.

14 MR. POTTEIGER: Yes. Or sooner.

15 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: Or sooner. We'll see
16 you probably the 4th of July weekend.

17 MR. WETZEL: All right.

18 MAJORITY CHAIRMAN ADOLPH: We'll let this crowd
19 leave and we'll reconvene in about five minutes.

20 Thank you.

21 (The hearing concluded at 11:15 a.m.)
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I hereby certify that the proceedings and
evidence are contained fully and accurately in the notes
taken by me on the within proceedings and that this is a
correct transcript of the same.

Jean M. Davis
Notary Public