

**The Joint Subcommittee to Study the
Commonwealth's Program for Prisoner Reentry to Society**
Pursuant to SJR 327 (2007)
<http://dls.state.va.us/reentry.htm>

The fourth meeting of the 2007 interim of the Joint Subcommittee Studying the Commonwealth's Program for Prisoner Reentry to Society was held Tuesday, October 30, 2007 at the General Assembly Building in Richmond. Following opening remarks by Chairwoman Sen. Puller, the joint subcommittee received presentations and discussed potential legislative proposals for the 2008 General Assembly session.

**Department of Criminal Justice Services Report to the Joint Subcommittee:
Virginia Prisoner Reentry Evaluation Programs Interim Report**

Mr. Jim McDonough, Director of the Department of Criminal Justice Services Research Center presented information on the Department's Evaluation of Virginia Prisoner Reentry Programs. Mr. McDonough reported that, to date, the Division has conducted a literature review on various prisoner reentry programs in other states, reviewed statewide initiatives in Virginia, and reviewed reentry initiatives conducted through the Department of Correctional Education, Department of Corrections, Department of Juvenile Justice, Department of Social Services, and Department of Criminal Justice Services. The Department has also completed a review of the Offender Reentry and Transition Services Program. Moving forward, Mr. McDonough reported, the division will conduct a more detailed evaluation of state programs, focusing on various measures of success, including educational attainment, employment success, family stability, payment of taxes, and other measures.

Department of Correctional Education Report: Vocational Programs Outcome Study

Ms. Gwynne Cunningham of the Department of Correctional Education offered highlights the Department Of Correctional Education Vocational Programs Outcome Study, conducted by Virginia Tech. The study found that prisoners who complete vocational educational programs show significantly lower rates of recidivism that those who do not. Program completers were found to have recidivism rates of 24.95% while the matched control group had recidivism rates of 31.40%. Program completers also achieved higher post release incomes (24% higher than non-completers), and paid a significant amount in taxes (\$1,489,176).

Restoration of Voting Rights

Mr. Bernard Henderson, Senior Deputy Secretary of the Commonwealth, Office of the Governor provided the members of the joint subcommittee with information on

restoration of voting rights in the Commonwealth, describing the different processes for violent and non-violent offenders. Mr. Henderson also indicated that a review of these processes was underway, to identify additional areas in which the process could be improved.

Offender Identity Documents

Ms. Scott Richeson, Correctional Programs Director of Virginia Department of Corrections and Ms. Patricia Pringle of the Department of Motor Vehicles offered an overview of the identification document procurement process. Ms. Richeson, Ms. Pringle and the members of the joint subcommittee then discussed several challenges which have limited the Department of Correction's ability to procure identity documents for prisoners, including the difficulty experienced by the Department in obtaining birth certificates for prisoners and difficulties in obtaining social security cards. The joint subcommittee resolved to send a letter to the Director of the Department of Corrections, the Director of the Department of Motor Vehicles, the Virginia Sheriff's Association, and the Virginia Association of Regional Jails, requesting that they work together to resolve issues limiting the Department of Corrections' ability to obtain identity documents for prisoners.

Following a discussion of specific challenges affecting the Department of Correction's ability to obtain identity documents for prisoners in Virginia, Ms. Brenda Edwards of the Division of Legislative Services presented information on other state's approaches to procuring identity documents for prisoners.

Discussion of Legislative Proposals

Prior to concluding the meeting, the members of the joint subcommittee discussed a number of potential options for legislative proposals. The members identified a number of proposals to pursue, requesting budget information on some proposals. The joint subcommittee then resolved to hold a fifth meeting to finalize proposals for the 2008 general assembly.