



NEWSLETTER

Welcome to another edition of Second Chance Quest newsletter. Second Chance Quest is a nonprofit organization founded in 2015 by several prisoners and their family members to bring about much needed awareness to the plights of over two million incarcerated citizens of this country.

It saddens us that this beloved country of ours would house the largest prison population on the planet. So it is clear to us that people of goodwill have to play a proactive role in addressing and righting this grave injustice. The United States cannot continue to claim to be the moral conscience of the world and at the same time throw away over two million of its citizens.

Many, if not most of these men and women do not deserve and warrant being locked up for two, three, and for some, four decades of their life. Some of these men and women are serving lengthy sentences for committing non-violent offences. Not only are the lives of these men and women destroyed, but also the lives of their children and all their love ones. Second Chance Quest is not saying if one commits a crime that that person should not be held accountable. Our problem is the length of time vetted out, and in many cases for victimless crimes.

SCQ is very sympathetic towards the victims of crime; we cannot and will never forget them. However, in doing so, does that mean we have

become a society where forgiveness is only a fleeting thought? On the contrary, we believe everyone deserves a second chance, and with that comes forgiveness.

Hats off to our Senate, Congress, and White House for signing into law bipartisan "Prison Reform". It is decades overdue, this "Prison Reform Bill" will reverse the "Three Strike Law", "Mandatory Minimum", etc.. Now a much needed ray of light has been sent to the countless men and women who were victims of former President, Bill Clinton's, "War On Crime Bill", which led to the "Three Strike Law", "Mandatory Minimum", for crack cocaine offences. Which in turn, has led to the doubling of our prison population, and have made some corporations very wealthy from the misery of millions of American citizens.

If the job of the Criminal Justice System is to reduce and implement sensible means in the elimination of the cycle of crime, it has failed the people of this great country. The answer cannot, and will never be as simplistic as some would have you believe, "Lock them up and throw away the keys!" Those who held that belief failed to consider the backlash in terms of, the spiral decline that such policy would have on communities and the nation as a whole.

It is now crystal clear from a bipartisan standpoint of both Houses (U.S. Senate and U. S. Congress) that the old

ways of doing business (criminal justice) is causing this country more harm than good.

Second Chance Quest would like to take this time to ask you to join us as we stand to better our country as we move forward into the future. We also would like to encourage you to get involved in making your communities and nation a better place to live. We'll end with our motto, in the words of Marcus Garvey: "The ends you serve that are selfish will take you no further than yourself. But the ends you serve that are for all in common will take you into eternity."

Mr. T. Bravo
President SCQ

The Second Chance Quest Support Group



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"Liberate the minds of men and ultimately you will liberate the bodies of men."

Marcus Garvey

"Don't let yesterday take up too much of today."

Will Rogers

Law



"That old law about 'an eye for an eye' leaves everybody blind. The time is always right to do the right thing."

Martin Luther King, Jr.



The Son of Sam Law is a law designed to keep offenders from profiting from their crimes, often by selling their stories to publishers. Such laws often authorize the state to seize money earned from such a deal and use it to compensate the offender's victims.

The first such law was created in New York after the Son of Sam killings. It was enacted after rampant speculation about publishers offering large amounts of money for the serial killers' story. The law was invoked in New York eleven times between 1977 and 1990, including once against Mark Davis Chapman.

In certain cases a Son of Sam law can be extended beyond the offenders themselves; to include friends, neighbors and family members of the lawbreaker who seek to profit by telling publishers and filmmakers of their relation to the offender. In other cases, a person may financially benefit from the sale of a story or any other murderabilia pertaining to the crime if the offender was convicted prior to the date lawmakers passed the Son of Sam law in the states where the crime was committed.

Critics disputed the law on First Amendment grounds. Also, it was argued that it would take away the financial incentive for many offenders to tell their stories, some of which, e.g. the Watergate scandal, were of vital interest to the general public.

In 1987, lawyers for Simon and Schuster sued the New York authorities to enjoin enforcement of the Son of Sam law. Their case involved the book *Wiseguy*, written by Nicholas Pileggi about ex-mobster Henry Hill and used as the basis for the film *Goodfellas*. The cases

reached the Supreme Court in 1991. In an 8-0 ruling, the court ruled the law unconstitutional. *Simon & Schuster v. Crime Victims Board* 502 U.S. 105. The majority opinion was that the law was over inclusive, and would have prevented the publication of such works as *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, *Thoreau's Civil Disobedience*, and even *The Confessions of Saint Augustine*.

The Supreme Court ruling actually stated that Son of Sam laws could conceivably be constitutional, but only if written carefully with regard to First Amendment concerns. Though this original New York law was struck down, various states (including New York) have laws to prevent felons from capitalizing on their crimes written with an eye towards adhering to the First Amendment ruling laid out by the Supreme Court.

New York, after numerous revisions, adopted a law in 2001 again known as the "Son of Sam" law (N.Y. Executive Law. *623-a {McKinney 2005}. This law requires that victims of crimes be notified whenever a person convicted of a crime received \$10,000 (US) or more from virtually any source. N. Y. Corrections Law * 500-c {McKinney 2006}. The law then attaches a springing statute of limitations, giving victims an extended period of time to sue the perpetrator of the crime for the crimes of which they were a victim. This law also authorizes a state agency, the Crime Victims' Board, to act on the victims' behalf in some limited circumstances. Thus far, the current New York law has survived constitutional scrutiny.

The state of California's Son of Sam law was struck down in 2002 after being

used against Barry Keenan, one of the men who kidnapped Frank Sinatra, Jr. in 1963.

In Texas in 1998 a civil jury awarded \$1.001 billion to the siblings of Holly Maddux, invoking the Son of Sam law. The Maddux family was not expecting to receive money, the lawsuit was based on the rumor that Holly Maddux's murderer IRA Einhorn was expected to sign a book deal with a European publisher. The siblings refused to allow Einhorn to make money over the tragedy, and their lawyer argued in court "we seek to seize any earnings of IRA Einhorn or his wife. If he can spend it, we want it." (www.crimelibrary.com).

In high profile cases and cases that are closely tied to national security, namely convictions for terrorism and espionage, a Son of Sam law is often worked into any plea bargain. This had been the case in the convictions of John Walker Lindh and Harold James Nicholson. As a result of their plea bargains, any profits made from book deals or movie rights would be redirected to the government. Neither the convicts nor their families would be able to profit. However, as of 2008, neither Lindy nor Nicholson have had their crime cases publicized in such a manner. With the advent of the Internet and online sales, many Son of Sam laws are now targeting the sale of murderabilia. The constitutionality of many of these new laws is mostly untested at this point.

Voices From Behind The Wall

A Real Man

A man is not only defined by his gender, but also by his courage and vigor. His ability to support and protect his family is also a means by which to define a man. A man is responsible for every aspect of his life, and must bear responsibility for his shortfalls. A man takes full responsibility for the choices he made in life, deem it wrong or right.

A man must know himself mentally, emotionally, and physically or he will always take into account the negative judgment of others towards him, which in turn leads to low self-esteem. A man takes the time to learn before he preaches. He will measure the depth of a thing before diving in, and always, practice what he preaches. A man satisfies the needs of his family before his own needs and indulgences. A man respects himself and others, in turn, he is respected.

By: H. B. Baskerville

Boundaries, The Importance of Setting Them and Respecting Them

A lot of individuals do not understand the importance of establishing boundaries and respecting those of others. One of the main causes for the problems that we have in our lives is that we have forgotten how important a value this is to our everyday way of life. If we take the time to observe what is going on around us, we can see just how many people have no understanding of this concept.

The definition that I like to use concerning this topic is: "Where my reality ends and yours begins". This is the sim-

plest way that I can bring this topic to you in hopes that you will grasp the full meaning, as well as the importance of respecting and implementing boundaries in your life. Furthermore, I would like to tell you not to get boundaries confused with goals that you may set in your life. A goal is something that you set because you wish to achieve something in your life in a short period of time, or over a long period of time. A "measuring stick" so to speak.

A boundary is something that you will or will not do to reach your objective. For instance, let's say that you are going to make a thousand dollars in a month. The decision you now have to make is what are you prepared to do in order to reach your objective? Are all options on the table or are you willing to do whatever it takes short of committing a crime?

This is where a lot of us go wrong. We settle for the quick fix. We do not play the tape all the way through so to speak. Thus leading not only to bad decisions being made, but to our freedom being lost.

By: Abdur Raheem

Guilty by Association

Here I am categorized as a villain, when deep down inside I'm no different from you, I have feelings, likes and dislikes just as you do. Okay, I made a mistake by stealing but does that mean I don't get a second chance? Shouldn't I be afforded a chance at growth and development in the hope of righting the wrongs I've committed? Looking for answers, I can't fault society for their reluctance in affording me a second chance. When dudes don't

learn their lesson and go right back out there on the same path! Then when we meet again (by their returning to prison) look at me like, "what's wrong?" Are you serious! I'm beginning to think why even waste my time trying to advise them to change their lifestyle when it seems no one is listening. But it's hard to fold and give up on people when you're trying to save lives.

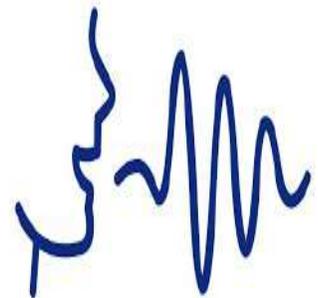
I share my thoughts with you fellas cause who else better to hear it from than your own? How are we to correct the problem if no one is willing to talk about it? Here we are (in the system) with no circuitry but plenty of input. Here is what I think about most nights; how should I spend my life in prison? Should the pain I feel dictate my actions? Is it fit to lash out? Nothing is more irritating than to be a part of a breed (generation) with no thought of changing. Does affiliation and preference make you better than me? So why keep fooling yourself with this facade of being important? It's disturbing to see grown men struggling for nothing. I don't care if you're young, old, rebellious, or gang bangin', we have to stand together! It's time to wake up and take charge, get familiar with one another and set goals. Structure plans which provide legitimate opportunity, not pro's and con's. What's wrong with:

- * Investing in your future, thinking ahead.
- * Creating programs suitable to us.
- * Putting a stop to unnecessary drama.
- * Doing away with the gossip. You want to talk? Talk



"The value of knowledge is to use it. It is not humanly possible that a person can retain all knowledge of the world, but if a person knows how to search for all the knowledge of the world, he will find it when he wants it."

Marcus Garvey





"Infuse your life with action. Don't wait for it to happen. Make it happen. Make your own future. Make your own hope. Make your own love. And whatever your beliefs, honor your creator, not by passively waiting for grace to come down from upon high, but by doing what you can to make grace happen... yourself, right now, right down here on Earth."

Bradley Whitford



Voices From Behind The Wall (Cont.)

about the real!

* Regulate your clique! Religious as well. If you want to be about something, then teach the truth! If you are who you say you are then be leaders! Real recognize real!

"Men are never so likely to settle a question rightly as when they discuss it freely."

Thomas Macaulay.

Live up to your potential, check the drama!

By: Abdus Salaam

Nine Principles

The other day I read a book that spoke loud to my heart and spirit. I said to myself, let's write about what I took from this book, instead of what I intended to write about - which was, "Why we prisoners do not like to write".

The book in question spoke about self-motivation and qualities that produce manhood, from male-hood. It contains nine qualities, some of which we subconsciously look for in others. Consequently, when we don't find any of these qualities in people we meet we tend to cut them off. Mind you, this is a subject we rarely venture into in our conversations with our homies. A friend of mine, Big brother Ish (SCQ mentor) would touch on this subject from time-to-time, which he would profoundly label, "age appropriate thinking and behavior."

havior."

The book in question is titled, "The Motivation Manifesto" by: Brendon Burchard. The nine principles is as follows:

- 1) Meet life full presence and power: One is best equip to achieve this when one incorporates a daily purpose and strive to accomplish something worthwhile while serving your prison sentence.
- 2) Reclaim your agenda: This speaks to who one is, and the importance of defining or re-defining yourself as you see fit.
- 3) Defeat your demons: We all live with different issues in life, where problems have weighed us down, in here and out there. However, a man must fight off those prison-blues and negativity in order to strive to be a better person.
- 4) Advance without abandonment: Full speed ahead to reach ones objectives, while having good characteristics.
- 5) Practice joy and gratitude: After putting the first five principles into practice, one will experience the inner joy of reclaiming one's manhood in the highest degree. While those around you will have a newly found respect for you.
- 6) Do not break integrity: This speaks volumes about one keeping one's word. In truth, all we have as men in life is our word, which must carry the highest level of honesty.
- 7) Amplify love: Everyone

wants love and to be loved, especially those of us who find themselves behind the walls of these dungeons. 8) Inspire Greatness: Every sport, card game, talking game, etc., we all want to be recognized for greatness and to inspire others to be great as well.

9) Slow Time: Henry Miller states, "The aim of life is to live, and to live means to be aware, joyously, drunkenly, serenely, and divinely aware."

In all our lives behind bars, we all try to express ourselves to show and give the best we posses. The nine principles are merely suggestions. Yet the questions we ask ourselves is; what kind of dude, brother, homie, OG, etc., am I? Our lives are not over upon entering prison. Furthermore, laws are changing for the better. Continue to put your best foot forward!

By: Danny (D. A.)



Second Chance Quest Support Group Student's Perspective

My time in SCQ-Support Group; upon entering the support group I must admit to being somewhat ambivalent and skeptical about what to expect from those who would

be attending. Skeptical because most of the programs I have been involved with over the years have been meeting grounds and hangout spots. There's usually only a handful

of individuals that are there actually looking to get something out of what's being taught. As for me and my intentions, I consciously made a choice over 20

Second Chance Quest Support Group Student's Perspective

years ago that I was too valuable and worthy not to expect the best from myself. My family and love ones deserve it. Ever since that day, I've made it a point of duty that whatever program I signed up for I'd make use of the opportunity to learn and grow. My signing up to attend Second Chance Quest Support Group was no exception.

From day one, the mentors set the tone, creating an environment of brotherhood and stability. The one constant thing I could count on throughout the duration of the 12 week course was a strong feeling of support. Bonds were formed between mentors and mentees, as well as bonds between mentee and mentee. The patience shown by everyone towards each other regardless of one's difference of opinions and lifestyles fostered an environment conducive for change.

I realized decades ago that in order for me to change my behavior I first had to make a commitment to a new way of thinking, for control of thoughts leads to the control of actions. To stay on the road of positive change takes discipline, daily self-evaluation and self-correction when the occasional misstep occurs, and they will occur. I find it important not only to check myself daily, but to also do my best to associate with positive people. Such people will have a goal oriented mindset and usually be less likely to tolerate people or situations that will keep them from achieving their goals. By surrounding myself with people like this, I

know that they will push me to be the best man I can be, and also call me out when I'm falling short of my capabilities. I found many brothers who fit this category in Second Chance Quest Support Group. The spirit of camaraderie is felt inside the group as well as when we run into each other on the "yard". All in all, I'm thankful for the opportunity of attending S.C.Q. Support Group and for the chance to meet and get to know the brothers. On my own, I may not have sought them out. My eyes have been opened to the views and perspectives of those who think differently than I. This has given me a broader understanding of those around me. In turn, my tolerance and patience has enhanced. I highly recommend S.C.Q. Support Group to every individual in the prison system.

By: Ras Abijah "Jah"

I will be released from prison in the near future. I have been preparing myself for what I might have to encounter once I get out. Since attending Second Chance Quest Support Group, I've learned about organizations and methods that will help me transition back into society. I've paid close attention to the mentors who shared their experiences and their concerns. I fully grasped the reality of life's lessons they taught. I fully realize, I have to have strong willpower and discipline in order to stay out of prison. I have to avoid the temptations of trying to make easy money when times get rough. One of the key principles I most practice is patience, because it is going to be hard at first

when I get released. Responsibilities to my daughter and to my family are going to be pulling at me. I'm going to have to accept the fact, that all I can give my family when I get home is my time and love until I get on my feet. Then I can get the necessities to live comfortable, such as a job, a car, an apartment, and a savings account. I must tolerate and maneuver through all the obstacles that I'm going to encounter. With that being said, "Stability" is my immediate goal. The first thing is for me to find a place to live that is free of stress, as stress can easily lead to instability. I have to stay committed to being the best person I can be, and never give up on myself especially when things get hard. These lessons, principles, and so much more I've picked up from Second Chance Quest Support Group.

By: M. Taylor

"First and foremost this Second Chance Quest program has allowed me the opportunity to be a part of something positive. It has changed me and my way of thinking, it made me see things in a different light..."

By: Trent, (aka Dogg)

"I'd like to thank Ray Ray (a mentor) for doing all those acting (skits) it brought to light the things we did on the street, and hammered home the point that we have to change..."

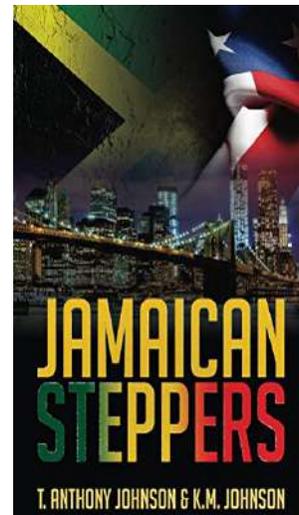
By: Twig

"I am giving commitment to change a chance and to understand the change I am making. Change, I am going to change and remove the part of me that was doing wrong..." **By: Mr. T**



"Optimism is the faith that leads to achievement. Nothing can be done without hope and confidence."

Helen Keller



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NEWS

Criminal Justice Reform



Prison Reform



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When my family lived in Mississippi, we hosted several inmates in our home as part of a Prison Fellowship program designed to prepare prisoners to transition back to their communities. During these two week home stays, the prisoners focused on giving back - working with Habitat for Humanity and speaking in schools, for example. I was surprised by how many of the soon-to-be released inmates were eager to talk to high school students, encouraging the young people not to make the same mistakes that had landed them in prison.

Indeed, formerly incarcerated persons who have learned hard lessons are potentially some of the most effective mentors for youths. We could do more to benefit from their life experiences.

The U.S. Congress recently passed a criminal justice reform bill that would reduce sentences for many nonviolent offenders and cut recidivism rates by reducing the barriers prisoners face in rejoining their communities in productive ways. But the Senate's "First Step Act" applies only to the small sliver of prisoners (about 180,000) incarcerated in the U.S. federal system. Far greater numbers - are incarcerated in state prisons and local jails.

In the United States, criminal justice reform is one of the few political issues with strong bipartisan support. Virginia lawmakers have the opportunity to act creatively to make changes that not only save money but contribute to the well-being of communities across the commonwealth. Virginia is already on a good path. It has the lowest recidivism

rate in the nation - 22.4 percent. According to Virginia Parole Board Chair Adrienne Bennett, "When it comes to recidivism for paroled felons, the number drops to 5 percent in Virginia. And when just looking at discretionary paroles, it's only 1 percent."

One low-hanging fruit for future criminal justice reform is to parole more elderly inmates. There are currently 125,000 elderly prisoners incarcerated in the United States - at a cost of \$16 billion per year. Without dramatic changes in sentencing and parole policies, that number could grow to 400,000 by 2030 - at a cost of more than \$50 billion per year. According to the Center for Justice at California University, the cost of incarcerating someone age 50 or older is two to five times the cost of incarcerating someone 49 or younger.

A report by the American Civil Liberties Union - At America's Expense: The Mass Incarceration of the Elderly - says that "Today, we have over fourteen times as many prisoners over age 55 as we did in 1981." This dramatic increase is due in large part to tough-on-crime laws that began in the 1980s.

The report notes that "we are imprisoning people for far too long, and we are spending too much keeping them there - even when there is limited public safety benefit." Indeed, an abundance of evidence demonstrates that recidivism drop dramatically with age. "The time is ripe," the report concludes, "for states to revise parole practices to release aging individuals that are no longer a substantial threat to public safety and to reform our sentencing laws so

that fewer prisoners grow old behind bars. States on average will save \$66,294 per aging prisoner released per year, even if those prisoners rely on public assistance for support upon release."

Certainly, Virginia and other states can use these funds in more creative and cost-effective ways. Acting to reduce crime by providing access to programs and resources that build healthy and sustainable communities is one approach.

Another is investing in job skills and counseling programs that prepare inmates to make productive contributions upon release, then providing support networks to help them reintegrate into society. Both factors have proven to lower recidivism rates. Of course, there are risks in paroling prisoners. But we do well not to overlook the many contributions that formerly incarcerated men and women can make to society.

Tyrone Werts, who served 36 years of a life sentence, is just one example of a formerly incarcerated person having a big impact on his community. Now in his 70s, Werts works with The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program in Philadelphia to bring together incarcerated (inside) and non-incarcerated (outside) people "for transformative learning experiences that invite participants to take leadership in addressing crime, justice, and other issues of social concern." At 593 per 100,000 people, the United States incarcerates a higher percentage of its population than every country in the world except El

NEWS

Criminal Justice Reform (Cont.)

Salvador. By comparison, Germany and Japan incarcerate 75 and 41 per 100,000, respectively. We can do better! Incarcerating so many people is not good for budgets or for building communities that can grow by engaging with those who have learned from their mis-

takes.

By: J. Daryl Byler, Executive Director of the Center for Justice and Peace building at Eastern Mennonite University.
Email: Daryl.byler@emu.edu.



Second Chance Month

April 23-27 is our Social Media Takeover

SCQ will be honoring **Second Chance Month** the entire month via our social media pages on **Instagram and Facebook @2ndCQ**. We will be hosting the following:

- Live discussions with political figures regarding laws that cripple true second chances;
- Roundtable discussions with community leaders, organizers and organizations about resources available to *Second Chancers*;
- 2-Way Facebook Live, Instagram Live discussions with influencers well versed on the topic; and Live call-ins from men and women who are currently incarcerated throughout the country.

Tell your Family and Friends to not miss this event!
Instagram and Facebook @2ndCQ

Members and Volunteers

Dear Members/Volunteers,

Thank you for your unwavering support and contribution to Second Chance Quest. We have some good news for you; SCQ has partnered up with Prison Fellowship and over 200 other nonprofit organizations in recognition of April as "Second Chance Month".

The President and the U.S. Senate have signed into law a resolution designating April as Second Chance Month, in the spirit of bringing attention to the prison justice system and the struggles ex-offenders face upon transitioning back into society.

Second Chance Quest

will be hosting a number of events during the last week of April 2019. We will be hosting an on-line shout-out live from all the major prisons in Virginia. This live feed will be heard across the entire nation and the world. Contact us immediately (via, email) to sign up and be given a time slot.

Note: You'll be required to add Second Chance Quest's phone number to your approved call list. No collect calls will be accepted.

Also, Second Chance Quest will be holding a raffle to generate the much needed

funds to keep our doors open. Do encourage your family and love ones to purchase our raffle tickets, which can be purchased on-line. First prize will be a "Laptop Computer", Second prize winner will be "Dinner for Two", at a respectable restaurant.

Thank you, we are looking forward to hearing from you!

Second Chance Quest
PO Box 855
Maplewood, N.J. 07040

Phone: (304) 878 - 3727, or
(304) TRUE - SCQ

Get involved.



It's Never Too Late To Make A Difference!



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MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

SPONSORS

Good news! You now have the opportunity to become an official member of Second Chance Quest. This April is our First Annual Membership Drive.

SCQ'S - "PRISON" MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

For an annual fee of \$10.00, you can become a member. Here are some of the benefits of becoming a member of SCQ:

- Four (4) issues of Second Chance Quest Newsletters per year
- Email Access to Second Chance Quest Head Office
- Receive Periodic Updates to all Second Chance Quest Activities and Annual Facebook Take-Over
- Afforded access in having your short stories and/or articles published in SCQ's Newsletter - deemed appropriate

Members will be afforded Second Chance Quest's organizational support on valid grievances - if deemed members' grievance warrants SCQ's backing.

You, as a member, have the full weight of this not-for-profit organization on your side and in your corner - for life!

SECOND CHANCE QUEST - "REGULAR" MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

For an annual fee of \$50.00. As a new member, you will receive the following:

- A complimentary SCQ T-Shirt
- Official member-only access via our website
- Four (4) issues of SCQ's Newsletters per year
- Priority and Discount rates to all SCQ Events/Functions

We encourage you to join us as we work diligently to bring about positive changes to our criminal justice system through the mentoring of both those who are incarcerated and the children of the incarcerated. Join us by becoming a life-long member as we rise to the challenges of reducing mass incarceration. We are tackling this challenge on both fronts, (at home and in the prisons).

