

Good morning, Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary.

I am Devon Brown, Director of the District of Columbia Department of Corrections. I appreciate this opportunity to present testimony on the Department of Corrections Fiscal Year 2006 Performance. Joining me at the table is Deputy Director, Patricia Britton.

Chairman Mendelson, I first wish to commend you and the entire Committee for the support you have given the Department of Corrections over the past year. Public safety is one of government's most vital functions, and I look forward to our continued collaboration in making the District of Columbia safe for all our citizens.

As the District of Columbia continues to broaden its status as a model city, the Department of Corrections is working relentlessly toward developing a municipal detention system that is worthy of this recognition. As you well know, the Department of Corrections is the largest local detention system in the region. Our mission is to ensure public safety by providing an orderly,

safe and secure environment for the care and confinement of these individuals committed to our custody. The Department is intent upon offering programs and services that will provide incarcerated individuals opportunities to become more constructively oriented while in custody, and to facilitate their successful adjustment in the community.

As you are aware, the Department operates the Central Detention Facility or better known as the DC Jail, which is the District's primary adult correctional institution. The DC Jail has a rated capacity of 2,498. It is the primary point of entry for everyone committed to incarceration by the Superior Court of the District of Columbia and the U.S. District Court. The detention population is comprised of pretrial detainees, sentenced misdemeanants, un-sentenced felons, as well as those who have been convicted and sentenced awaiting transfer to another facility or jurisdiction. The Department processed more than 17,000 new bookings during fiscal year 2006. It is significant to note that today's inmate count at the CDF is 1929, substantially below the facility's rated capacity. Through the combined efforts of our criminal justice partners, we have consistently been able to keep the inmate population appreciably below its maximum capacity throughout the year.

The Department also houses inmates at the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF), which is a private detention facility under exclusive contract to the DC Department of Corrections operated by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). Our Department also has contracts with four private halfway houses that detain sentenced misdemeanants and individuals placed by the Courts in lieu of incarceration. In fiscal year 2006, the average daily inmate population for the Department of Corrections was 3,521.

The Department's total budget for fiscal year 2006, including supplementals, was \$137.4 million and 909 full time employees. The operating budget for fiscal year 2007 is \$137.6 million and 923 full time employees.

Approximately 78 percent of the workforce is correctional officer staff.

The Department of Corrections experienced numerous challenges in fiscal year 2006. These challenges were oftentimes sudden, simultaneous, and severe. Some resulted from unanticipated difficulties while others were related to our efforts to progressively forge ahead. Each encounter has however, contributed to our fundamental objective of providing an orderly, safe and secure environment for the community, staff and detainees that is second to none. The Department continues to meet its responsibilities with

deep conviction and steadfast determination; and while we have suffered mishaps along the way, I am pleased to report that the Department of Corrections has successfully completed a number of significant initiatives that are consistent with the city's highest expectations of public safety and the protection of its residents.

Our most noteworthy accomplishments encompass security and safety enhancements, inmate healthcare, inmate education, reentry programs, professional development, federal reimbursement, agency partnerships, and community outreach.

Security and Safety Enhancements

Undoubtedly, everyone is familiar with the baneful events of June 3. While I will not belabor the details of the security breach that occurred at the DC Jail at that time, I cannot understate the widespread concerns associated with this incident. As I have previously stated, one breach in a correctional system is one too many. The Department values its community membership and strives to be a productive and constructive neighbor. Even before the escape, the Department expanded its security improvements at the Jail, a process continuously underway since the closure of the Lorton prison

complex. I am pleased to share with you the following security and safety measures that have been completed in FY '06.

- ✓ **Installed an upgraded siren system with expanded sound range in the vicinity of the DC Jail.**
- ✓ **Implemented weekly testing of siren apparatus (noon on Saturdays). Notification of siren test results is made to appropriate Department of Corrections and Emergency Management Agency Officials.**
- ✓ **Improved protocols for emergency notifications including enhanced coordination with the Emergency Management Agency to activate the Reverse 911 notification for emergencies at the Correctional Complex. This results in immediate and mass notification to Ward 6 residents.**
- ✓ **Purchased state-of-the-art metal detectors (Secure Scan 2000 concealed weapon detector) which use advanced technology to pinpoint the location, size and number of concealed weapons attempting to enter the jail.**
- ✓ **Installed additional pan, tilt, zoom (PTZ) security cameras (2) on the exterior perimeter walls located at the visitor's entrance to maintain constant surveillance of the areas.**
- ✓ **Installed a state-of-the-art, electronic Vehicle Under Carriage Surveillance System in the Jail's sally port area to detect inmates who may be hiding under vehicles that are departing the facility.**
- ✓ **Installed security alarm and strobe light on the exit doors to the administrative suite with alert signals in the Command Center to notify staff**

when unauthorized individuals attempt to enter or exit that area during non-duty hours.

- ✓ Assigned an armed foot patrol officer on the facility perimeter to provide additional security support to the roving perimeter patrol officer.**
- ✓ Installed strobe lights (4) on the rooftop of the Jail to alert surrounding community of an emergency at the correctional complex.**
- ✓ Implemented security foot patrols (7 days x 16 hours) to enhance perimeter security originally covered by only motorized patrol.**
- ✓ Established an Emergency Response Team comprised of an elite group of highly trained officers. The team has conducted over 2100 cell and common area searches within the past ninety days with significant results.**
- ✓ Purchased (4) state-of-the-art Body Orifice Security Scanner (B.O.S.S.) chairs to detect metallic objects secreted in the body cavities of inmates.**
- ✓ Purchased 100 additional radios (800 MHz) to enhance security, communication/and responsiveness.**
- ✓ Installed a National Warning System (NAWAS) telephone in the Command Center. This device enables the Agency to make instant and direct communications with area police and fire departments; DC Emergency Management Office, FEMA, FBI, Metro Transit Police, and the Office of Homeland Security. Random roll call telephone security checks are made daily on all three shifts.**
- ✓ Developed, enhanced, and revised our departmental policies and procedures: Perimeter Motorized Patrol; Inmates Movement Control; Citizens Advisory**

Committee; Inmate Institutional Work Programs, and Accountability of Inmates.

- ✓ **Purchased armored vests (ballistic and stab resistance) for all correctional officers.**

Inmate Health Care Services

The Department of Corrections has taken an innovative approach to inmate healthcare which is consistent with Mayor Fenty's vision for a healthy city. The Department initiated an Automatic HIV testing program wherein all inmates are automatically tested for HIV as they enter and exit the Jail. This includes counseling, education, as well as treatment of the disease. The program has earned the praise and support of the DC Council, prisoner advocacy groups and has become a model for other states and correctional systems. The Reverend Jesse Jackson, who recently launched a nation-wide campaign urging testing for HIV, recently visited the DC Jail to observe the Department's HIV testing program and extolled our pioneering approach. The Honorable Eleanor Holmes Norton has also demonstrated her support of our efforts, and recognized the contributions inmates serving as peer educators have made in increasing HIV awareness.

The Department changed its inmate medical program to one that provides a community-oriented model of healthcare. Under this model, one entity is responsible for managing the District's inmates through a comprehensive healthcare continuum. The service program is comprehensive, including primary, specialty, emergency and hospital care. Unity Healthcare, the District's largest federally-qualified health center has provided this service since October 2006. The Unity Healthcare team is situated on site at the Jail and CTF to identify and develop treatment planning for diagnosed diseases and at community based health centers. Unity Healthcare ensures that each inmate upon release has a full health care plan and medical appointment at a community health center. The Department of Corrections is confident that this new model will improve healthcare for inmates while simultaneously improving District-wide public health outcomes by aligning the goals of public safety and public health.

We are proud to announce that **The John Jay College of Criminal Justice**, the leading institution of higher learning for the study of criminal justice has received a grant from the **Robert Wood Johnson Foundation** to conduct research evaluation of our Healthcare Model.

The Department of Justice, pursuant to the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment for State Prisoners Act (RSAT), awarded the Department a grant in the amount \$288,000. DOC will collaborate with Addiction Prevention Recovery Administration (APRA) to implement “Progress Toward Improvement” by April, a Modified Therapeutic Community of 60 beds (40 males and 20 females) to provide substance abuse services for up to 500 inmates annually. The DOC’s health services contractor, Unity Health Care, will provide day-to-day services and administration of the program including dually-supervised case management with APRA. UNITY will make application for certification of the program with technical assistance provided by APRA.

The DOC in partnership with the Women’s Wing Organization (WWO) has completed a grant proposal to the U.S. Department of Health for \$1.6 million (\$400,000 each year) to enhance community healthcare services for HIV-positive female inmates and their minor children. The anticipated date for submitting the proposed application is March 30. The DOC also plans to request that the **John Jay College of Criminal Justice** conduct the research component of this grant, if awarded. By means of this demonstration grant, the District of Columbia Department of Corrections will serve as a national

model in its approach to the identification and treatment of HIV/AIDS within correctional environments.

I am particularly proud of our accomplishments in concert with our partner, Unity Healthcare, in executing a monumental and complex transition of our inmate medical program on time and without major complications. As part of this transition, DOC assumed full responsibility for all health related information technology support including software, hardware and communications infrastructure. This change will result in a vast improvement in the effectiveness of planning, monitoring and service delivery in the agency's administration of inmate health services.

Inmate Education

As you are well aware, I am an outspoken advocate of inmate education and strongly adhere to Victor Hugo's observation that **“one who opens a school door, closes a prison.”** With these sentiments in mind, the Department initiated a comprehensive project to enrich the educational opportunities afforded the inmate population. Among the innovative initiatives we have launched is the channeling of inmate viewing from “junk TV” entertainment to educational and health enhancing videos by rewiring the sets in the

housing units to control what inmates are capable of watching. As part of this initiative, we are also providing inmates with playing cards that appear ordinary on the surface, but are encased with pertinent educationally stimulating material. We have also began the organized teaching of chess through a formal instructional program. This program includes chess tournaments involving local universities. Efforts are currently underway to implement the nationally renowned “Moral Recognition Therapy” program at the jail.

Reentry Program

The Department expanded its reentry program in fiscal year 2006.

A full-time Re-Entry Coordinator was hired and is assigned to the Central Detention Facility to have direct oversight of our Re-Entry Program. A Re-Entry Dorm was opened to accommodate 72 sentenced misdemeanors within 120 days of release from the DC Jail. Currently, a representative from the Department of Human Services is on site to assist the inmates in applying for critical services such as food stamps and medical assistance. As a component of our Re-Entry Program, a needs assessment is conducted to determine what services an inmate may require such as employment, housing and clothing upon his or her release from custody. Presently, each inmate returning to the community receives a release package that includes a

temporary ID card, tokens and/or fare card, pertinent resource information and condoms. The Department is also partnering with other District and federal agencies including the U. S. Veteran Affairs Administration, Department of Employment Services, and the Public Defenders Service. The Reintegrating Alternatives Personal Program (RAPP) offers inmates an opportunity to become a part of our D. C. Fatherhood Initiative, which is a collaborative effort between DOC and the Department of Human Services. Through this program, fathers are able to address critical issues affecting their ability to provide emotional and financial support to their children. These services including education, pre-employment training, job placement, transportation, housing, health and wellness, substance abuse prevention and treatment, as well as peer support, allow these incarcerated fathers to enhance their personal development and self-sufficiency. RAPP will be facilitating parenting and life skills sessions for 12-weeks (three hours per week) beginning March 12. In addition, we are in partnership with the Office of the Attorney General to ensure fairness in the collection of child support and visitation rights of released parents through the agency's Fatherhood Program.

Professional Development

As you know, the average age of our correctional officers is 50. This means that we will experience a much higher turnover in the immediate future as the staff move toward retirement. Effective recruitment will therefore be imperative. The Department of Corrections has launched an active campaign to recruit correctional officers. Thirty four men and women (34) have successfully completed a comprehensive six-week Basic Corrections Training Program in recent months. This program has prepared them to work at the DC Jail and other Department worksites.

Federal Reimbursement

The Department of Corrections continues to experience improvements in federal collections for the care and detention of federal inmates in our custody. The Department collected \$25 million in fiscal year 2006 for sentenced felons in our care. With collections totaling \$90 million since fiscal year 2003, and another \$26 million projected in fiscal year 2007, the Department is making a substantial contribution to the fiscal health of the District. Changes in existing policy are necessary to achieve full cost recovery as District taxpayers are presently subsidizing the cost of housing federal inmates.

Agencies Partnerships

The Department strives to strengthen existing partnerships and establish new ones. Our collaboration with sister agencies such as the Department of Employment Services has resulted in the agency's hiring eleven (11) employees from their Project Empowerment Program. In addition, as was previously mentioned, we are partnering with the U. S. Veterans Administration and the Department of Human Services for various programs and services.

In November 2006, the Department of Corrections, in concert with the Office of the Attorney General, initiated the enforcement of Child Support Orders against members in the class action *Bynum v. DC* case. A database review showed that 1,201 of the potential class members had child support judgments against them for arrears. Writs have been issued against their share of the class fund, resulting in the satisfaction of outstanding child support debts. We will review the child support database on any potential future settlements to determine if inmates eligible for settlements from the District have judgments against them for arrears. If this is the case, their child support debt will be paid before any settlement is paid.

The Department is also pleased to partner annually with other District agencies in contributing to the One Fund Drive. The Department exceeded its \$40,000 campaign goal established for this year by almost 50 % with staff donations of \$59,000.

Grants

The Department aggressively seeks grant funding to address critical needs.

Department of Justice (DOJ) Violent Offender Incarceration Truth

In Sentencing Grant Awards:

We received a grant award in the amount of \$635,008 to implement an Electronic Monitoring Program in Community Services via Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) tracking devices for forty sentenced misdemeanants. This grant also funded an additional 32 halfway house beds for sentenced misdemeanants to further reduce our low risk population.

We received a grant award in the amount of \$306,381 to implement several security enhancements for the CDF: Key Watch System; two Canine Patrol Dogs; four Boss II Chairs; exterior perimeter cameras and overtime expenditures for the Emergency Response Team.

We received a grant award in the amount of \$525,950 to purchase armored vest for correctional staff that are dual certified (ballistic and stab resistance).

We received a grant award in the amount of \$31, 000 to purchase two Secure Scan Concealed Weapons Detection Units for the visitor's and staff entrance at the jail.

We received a grant award in the amount of \$47,000 to purchase specialty security equipment for the agency's Emergency Response Team.

As previously mentioned, the DOC in partnership with the Women's Wing Organization (WVO) has completed a grant proposal in the amount of \$1.6 million and plans to submit application by March 30.

District of Columbia Department of Employment Services:

We received a grant award in the amount of \$100,000 to implement a Life Skills Training program (sub-contracted to Design Mark Building Services, Inc.) for seventy eight inmates between the ages of 18-35 years old, who are District residents and re-entering the community via placement in halfway

houses. The Life Skills curriculum was four weeks in duration, eight hours per day. Inmates were paid \$7.50 an hour while participating in the program.

Community Outreach

The Department of Corrections recognizes the tremendous importance of creating and maintaining positive relationships with the residents we serve. In fiscal year 2006, the Department established the Citizens' Advisory Committee (CAC) that is composed of private citizen volunteers representing a cross section of the community including religious, academic, business, Ward Six residents and advocacy groups who serve as the Department's link to the community. Through the Committee, community awareness, interest and involvement in Department of Corrections' programs are encouraged and staff is advised as to pertinent community needs, concerns and developments. The Department and the CAC meet quarterly.

Chairman Mendelson and members of the Committee, the leadership and staff of the Department of Corrections are committed to the positive growth and organizational advancement of our operations. We believe that any

objective review will readily reveal that we have made monumental and unprecedented progress toward this end during the past 12 months. We respectfully ask for your collaboration and support as we are determined to set the standard of proficiency within our profession and the District government.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify before you today. I would be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.