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**Government of the District of Columbia**



**Department of Corrections**

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Testimony of  
**Devon Brown**  
Director

***“Department of Corrections Budget Oversight  
Hearing FY 2009”***

Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary  
Phil Mendelson, Chair  
Council of the District of Columbia

April 4, 2008

Room 500  
John A. Wilson Building  
1350 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20004  
10 A.M.

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Good Morning, Chairman Mendelson and Members of the Committee on Public Safety and the Judiciary.

I am Devon Brown, Director of the D.C. Department of Corrections (DOC). I appear before you today to present the D.C. Department of Corrections' (DOC) proposed budget for fiscal year 2009 (FY 2009).

Accompanying me are Patricia Britton, Deputy Director and Ronald Peele, Agency Fiscal Officer.

The mission of the Department of Corrections is to provide an orderly, safe, secure, and humane environment for the confinement of pretrial detainees and sentenced inmates, while affording those in custody meaningful rehabilitative opportunities that will assist them to constructively re-integrate into the community.

The Department of Corrections operates through the following five (5) programs as we work toward accomplishing our mission.

- **Inmates Services**-provides services necessary to ensure humane, hygienic, and constitutionally-mandated care of inmates, such as healthcare, recreation, and clothing.
- **Inmate Custody**-detains pretrial defendants and sentenced misdemeanants safely and securely, and in accordance with constitutional requirements.
- **Institutional Support**-provides direct support to the Inmate Services and Inmate Custody programs by providing life safety, environmental

and facility support services, and documentation on every inmate's security risk and legal status.

- **Agency Management-** provides for administrative support and the required tools to achieve an agency's operational and programmatic results. This program is standard for all agencies using performance-based budgeting.
- **Agency Financial Operations-**provides comprehensive financial services to and on behalf of District agencies so that the financial integrity of the District of Columbia is maintained.

The District of Columbia Department of Corrections is one of the largest detention systems in the nation. Our offender population consists of pretrial detainees, sentenced misdemeanants, and felons, as well as those awaiting parole violation hearings. The average daily inmate population under the custody of the Department was 3,274 during fiscal year 2007.

With unwavering support from Mayor Fenty, the Department of Corrections remains steadfast in its quest to establish a municipal detention system that is second to none. In so doing, we seek to expand inmate educational and recreational programs, coordinate community resources, and improve release processing for inmates. Maintaining an orderly, safe, and secure environment for staff, visitors, and inmates is our primary objective. The Department commends Mayor Fenty, you, Chairman Mendelson, and the entire Council for the support that has been provided in our efforts to ensure public safety.

The Department of Corrections takes seriously its responsibility for ensuring sound, fiscal management practices. The Mayor's FY 2009 proposed budget will allow DOC to continue to provide outstanding public services with greater efficiency and accountability throughout District government.

The Department of Corrections' FY 2009 proposed gross operating budget is \$155,043,463 (\$155 million). This represents an increase of \$1.6 million or one percent over the FY 2008 budget. The budget supports 921 FTEs, which is 24 or 2.5 percent less than the FTEs authorized in FY 2008.

The proposed FY 2009 budget is comprised of \$ 121.3 million in local funds which is an increase of \$4.1 million or 3.6 percent over the approved FY 2008 budget. The proposed local budget supports 895 FTEs which is 24 or 2.6 percent less than the FY 2008 authorized FTEs. The \$4.1 million increase in the local budget is comprised of a \$2.5 million adjustment for additional gross pay and \$1.5 million for increases in the contractual escalators, which includes the following:

- \$145,638 for inmate food
- \$840,000 for inmate health care
- \$190,642 for halfway houses
- \$209,044 for inmate commissary
- \$90,000 for Radio Frequency Identification (RFID)
- \$75,000 for the Surveillance Center

The proposed FY 2009 gross operating budget is comprised of \$33.6 million in Special Purpose Revenue (SPR) funds, which is a decrease of \$2.4 million or 6.7 percent compared to the FY 2008 approved budget. The proposed FY 2009 SPR budget supports 26 FTEs, which represents no change from FY 2008. The

\$2.4 million decrease is the net result of the elimination of a \$3.3 million one-time expenditure for RFID and the Correctional Surveillance Center in FY 2008, the addition of \$937,509 for the CCA Housing contractual escalator as well as an additional \$50,000 for the inmate welfare fund program.

Our proposed budget is distributed among the following program areas:

- Inmate Custody – \$80.6 million or 52.01%,
- Inmate Services – \$46.0 million or 29.71%,
- Agency Management – \$18.2 million or 11.80%,
- Institutional Support – \$9.3 million or 6.06%, and
- Agency Financial Operations - \$664 thousand or .43% of the overall budget.

The District’s FY 2009 proposed budget provides \$1.8 million for Department of Corrections policy initiatives. These initiatives include:

- \$ .5 million for HIV/AIDS Testing:

The Department is among the first jails in the nation to implement automatic HIV/AIDS testing of inmates. This initiative has been nationally praised as progressive and effective by public health professionals, inmate advocates, and health care professionals. In order to continue to provide this service, the DOC requested \$500,000 to provide HIV/AIDS testing of inmates. This service was previously funded by the Department of Health.

- \$1.2 million for Paperless Records Processing System:

This initiative will allow the DOC to implement a paperless inmate records processing system through a turnkey contract. Such a system is required because the manual nature of the current process contributes to high error rates. The ability to accurately record and maintain inmate status documents affects correctional operations and the order, safety, and security of the institution. The public safety implications cannot be overstated. Immediate, as well as, long term requirements of records keeping must be addressed because public safety depends upon the accuracy of these records.

In summary, the proposed policy initiatives serve to strengthen key areas embarked upon by the Department. As we proceed toward the next fiscal year, the Department will continue to place emphasis on programs and services that encourage inmates to become more constructively oriented while in custody and to prepare them for a successful return to society. The most noteworthy of these programs/services include:

- Health programs such as Residential Substance Abuse Treatment Program;
- Expanded inmate programs including increased GED enrollment;
- Extend reentry-services, including healthcare, job counseling, and housing referrals;
- Vigorous pursuit of federal reimbursement for felons in DOC custody; and
- Increasing and strengthening community partnerships, such as the Citizens Advisory Committee.

In closing, the Department of Corrections continues to intensely work to reshape and align agency goals with the District's determination to provide the highest level of public safety. I embrace the support of the Fenty Administration, the City Council and community stakeholders in fulfilling this most exceeding important goal.

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

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