

Presentation Summary: Enhancing the Pardon and Parole Process Through Investment in Rehabilitation

The central question we wish to present is: *What would most benefit the entire pardon and parole process?* Ironically, the proposed answer lies not within the pardon and parole system itself, but rather in how we view and fund the Department of Corrections.

Is the Department of Corrections primarily a facility for rehabilitation, or merely a holding institution? Unfortunately, the answer often hinges on financial considerations—and this has a direct and profound impact on the effectiveness of the pardon and parole process.

Removing from the conversation those convicted of sex crimes, crimes against children, and violent offenses, the majority of incarcerated individuals are serving time for offenses rooted in substance abuse or mental health issues. This is especially true for those who were previously given probation but were later revoked or accelerated due to failure to complete required treatment or services.

The Department of Corrections has the potential to serve as a place for meaningful intervention—if the necessary resources are available. Without adequate funding for treatment programs, parole decisions become far more difficult, and early release efforts may fail when the root causes of criminal behavior go unaddressed.

Over time, critical rehabilitative programs have been reduced or removed entirely. It has been reported that substance abuse programs are no longer available to individuals within 12 months of release, substance abuse services have been limited to minimum-security facilities only, and transitional services—essential for successful reintegration into society—are almost nonexistent.

These gaps make it challenging for the Pardon and Parole Board to confidently assess whether someone is a viable candidate for release.

The proposed solution is not a cure-all, but a meaningful step forward: **dedicated** funding for the expansion of substance abuse treatment, mental health services, and transitional support within the Department of Corrections. By addressing the underlying issues that lead individuals to incarceration, we provide the parole system with a stronger foundation upon which to evaluate readiness for release and reduce recidivism.

In short, investing in rehabilitation is the most practical, cost-effective, and humane potential for succeeding in the long run.

Presentation Outline: Enhancing the Pardon and Parole Process Through Investment in Rehabilitation

Central Message - *The effectiveness of the pardon and parole system depends on what happens inside corrections.*

I. Introduction

- Purpose of presentation: To explore how the pardon and parole processes can be meaningfully improved
- *Is the Department of Corrections a place of rehabilitation or simply a holding facility?*
- The Pardon and Parole Process from the eyes of a Prosecutor
- Sentence Modernization Act

II. Misalignment Between Goals and Resources & The Impact of Funding Constraints

- Overview of how the pardon and parole process relies on correctional rehabilitation
- Paradox: The most beneficial reforms are outside the direct control of the Pardon and Parole Board
- Lack of funding prevents meaningful rehabilitation

III. Current Gaps in Services and Consequences Affecting the P&P Process

- Diminished program availability in Corrections
- Transitional services are minimal or non-existent
- Pardon and Parole Board lacks evidence that the individual's core issues have been addressed
- Early release without treatment increases the likelihood of recidivism

IV. Concluding Proposals

- Targeted Investment in substance abuse/mental health treatment
- Investment in transitional/reentry programs
- All aimed at better outcomes for parole decisions, improved public safety, and long-term fiscal responsibility

VI. Optional Q&A