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State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

19-08

August 7, 2019

ESTABLISHING THE JUVENILE & CRIMINAL JUSTICE WORKING GROUP

WHEREAS, during my first term, we formed a working group to determine more effective strategies to reinvest in ways that benefited public safety and reformed the broken parts of our criminal justice system;

WHEREAS, we created the Justice Reinvestment Executive Oversight Council to continue that momentum. The focus of that work was to examine issues surrounding the criminal justice system and how to divert and assess crime. The General Assembly passed meaningful legislation as a response, and it is because of that work that we can take this next step;

WHEREAS, our work is not done. The most recent statistics show that approximately 2,700 sentenced offenders were released from prison in the State of Rhode Island and 47% of these individuals returned to the Adult Correctional Institutions as sentenced inmates within three years of discharge, 32% within the first twelve months after discharge;

WHEREAS, now we need to focus on the barriers that exist for people reentering society after serving a sentence or completing community supervision. Their success impacts all of us. All phases of the criminal justice system must work collaboratively to give these people a chance to succeed;

WHEREAS, we all benefit when individuals leaving prison have a place to live, a chance at higher education, and a steady job. This reduces recidivism, drives down future

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costs of corrections, reduces the crime rate, improves public safety, and helps our economy grow;

WHEREAS, our previous work did not include the juvenile justice system, but we know the children of Rhode Island are our most important investment. Our State's success depends on their success and making sure they grow up in a place that is safe, fair, and nurturing. The way we administer our juvenile justice system and rehabilitate our youth has a direct impact on the adult criminal justice system. In 2019, the largest population of inmates committed to the Adult Correctional Institutions are 20-29 years old;

WHEREAS, the purpose of the juvenile justice system is to rehabilitate wayward or delinquent children, so they are given a chance to contribute to society. The juvenile justice system also must ensure that public safety needs are met;

WHEREAS, the number of juvenile offenses referred to the Family Court has declined by 41% since 2010. Diversion and community-based programs are key tools that have assisted in that decline. In 2018, 43% of all cases referred to the Family Court were able to be diverted;

WHEREAS, the Training School is the secure correctional facility for detained and sentenced youth in our state. Between 2009 and 2018, the Training School has experienced a 68% decline in population. We should study the growing body of research to determine whether underutilized facilities can be repurposed for the changing landscape of juvenile corrections and determine what is the most effective way of rehabilitating our youth; and

WHEREAS, our work also needs to examine the ways juveniles are entering the justice system. Youth of color are disproportionately represented throughout the juvenile justice system and the work should consider this disproportionate representation.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GINA M. RAIMONDO, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby order as follows:

1. The Juvenile & Criminal Justice Working Group ("Working Group") is hereby established.
2. The members of the Working Group shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The membership shall include, but not be limited to, stakeholders from the Judiciary, the Senate and House of Representatives, law enforcement, the Attorney General, the Public Defender, the Department of Corrections, the Department of Children, Youth & Families, Health & Human Services, Education, Department of Labor & Training, representatives

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from the business, labor, faith, and housing organizations as well as community providers.

3. The Honorable Chief Judge Michael B. Forte, the Honorable Justice Maureen B. Keough, and Michael Grey, shall serve as co-chairs of the Working Group. The co-chairs shall have the authority to convene meetings as necessary.
4. The Working Group will divide into two sub-committees, one focusing on juvenile justice and the other on adult criminal justice. Chief Judge Forte will chair the juvenile justice subcommittee and Justice Keough will chair the adult criminal justice subcommittee, with Michael Grey serving on both. The Chairs shall also have the authority to create further subcommittees as needed.
5. The Working Group shall engage and solicit input broadly including from victim's advocates, formerly or currently incarcerated individuals, and youth that are justice involved.
6. The Working Group shall begin its work immediately and shall issue a report to the Governor by the end of the year. The report shall include, but not be limited to:
 - i. For the juvenile sub-committee: a review of the juvenile justice system, focusing on factors that lead to entry including but not limited to race, age, and location.
 - a. A plan based on the declining numbers at the Training School and best practices based on research surrounding juvenile corrections. This should include in-community programming that will enable the strongest possible chance of positive development for our youth as well as foster the community or family environment that will lead to the best possible outcomes. This should also include factors for successful transition and reentry for youth.
 - ii. For the adult sub-committee: a review of the reentry related issues that individuals face upon discharge from incarceration or completion of community supervision. In particular, each of the agencies that are part of the Working Group will participate in this planning and specify how they can contribute to this important topic.
 - a. This review should include, but not be limited to topics surrounding reintegration into society such as: housing opportunities, employment, including licensing, educational opportunities, and parole considerations and other barriers that exist to reentry.

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- iii. For both sub-committees: any suggested policy, administrative, and/or legislative changes to improve our criminal justice system, from both the adult and the juvenile perspectives.
- iv. Both sub-committees should focus on what role behavioral health plays in justice involved populations and how trauma and mental illness impact them. Both sub-committees should address how we can help individuals with mental illness and substance use disorder successfully re-enter society.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

So Ordered:



Gina M. Raimondo
Governor