



Lamont-Bysiewicz Transition Policy Committee Reporting Template

Committee Name: Human Services, **Subcommittee:** Criminal Justice Reform, Re-entry

Co-Chairs: Beth Hines and Peter DeBiasi

Please address the following questions using this template in a memo not exceed 2 pages. You are welcome to submit appendices or other attachments in addition to the memo.

1. How do you propose the Lamont Administration should prioritize the policy goals in this area, and on what timeframe?

- Provide sufficient support to people who are formally incarcerated to ensure they are welcomed into society and able to successfully reintegrate – please refer to the Preliminary Recommendations for Improving Housing Outcomes for Justice-System Involved Individuals and the Greater Hartford Reentry Center Plan: A Welcome Center for People Returning from Jail and Prison for how to achieve this.

2. Which goals are achievable in the first 100 days of the Administration?

- Criminal Justice specific:
 - Reinstating voting rights to people on parole.
 - To establish a committee to review and revise community correction regulations pertinent to limits on paroles' use and/or access to things such as:
 - Public Spaces
 - Transportation
- Human Services in general:
 - Protect the non-profit property tax exemption.
 - Support a process to ensure contract consistency across state agencies to achieve uniformity wherever possible – please refer to the Governor's Cabinet Report on Health and Human Services for how to achieve this.

3. Which goals will require legislation to move forward? Which items can be advanced through the actions of the Administration alone? What is the fiscal impact of these legislative or executive actions?

- The reinstatement of voting rights to individuals on parole would likely require legislation to move forward. No fiscal impact.
- Establishing a state contract review team and reviewing and revising community corrections regulations can likely be advanced through Administrative action. No fiscal impact.
- Protecting the non-profit property tax exemption will continue the status quo with no fiscal impact on the state. However, without this exemption the fiscal impact on nonprofits will be

significantly negative and potentially devastating to their ability to continue to deliver programs and services to people in need.

4. Are there specific challenges you can identify with regard to achieving the Lamont Administration's goals, and how would you suggest to address those?

- **Recommendations:** To address the challenge of meeting the cost of supporting reentry:
 - Establish a Public-Private Task Force comprised of state agencies and private funders to identify existing resources, availability of services and gaps, and collaborative funding strategies to address and support reentry efforts; and
 - Enact Justice Reinvestment Legislation that would direct a portion of savings from the state's criminal justice reforms to increase support for and sustain reentry efforts. In 2004, Connecticut became the first state in the country to enact justice reinvestment legislation that included requiring the state to develop a comprehensive reentry strategy to promote successful transitions to the community. (<https://csgjusticecenter.org/jr/ct/>) In 2005, Connecticut reinvested \$13 million into reentry programs and initiatives. This approach has proven effective.

5. How will implementation of policy in this area create jobs and spur economic growth?

- Investing in programs and services that support reentry will create jobs throughout the nonprofit social services sector, while helping to ensure that formerly incarcerated individuals get jobs and retain them.
- Another important dynamic to address is the "benefits cliff", particularly as it relates to raising the minimum wage. It is not enough to just increase the minimum wage. We need to consider a "step down" process for people currently receiving HUSKY and/or SNAP benefits. We need to remove the incentive for people not to work and/or not to take better paying jobs because their benefits would be cut off if their wages increase.

6. Are there opportunities for cost savings for CT state government in the context of implementing this policy?

- Justice Re-investment
- Conversion of state services to private non-profit providers

7. What examples of success from other states, countries, or the private sector in this policy area should the Administration study?

- Both Maine and Vermont allow people on parole the right to vote.

8. Are there any other issues/considerations you would like to highlight with regard to this policy area?

- Racial disparity and inequity are some of the primary issues facing returning citizens as they seek to successfully transition from prison. Meaningful reforms to the criminal justice system cannot be accomplished without acknowledgement of racial bias and disparities. Individuals are incarcerated not solely because of their crime, but because of racially disparate policies, beliefs, and practices, rendering "collateral consequences more troubling.