

**REPORT OF THE
VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION ON**

**Improving Family and
Community Ties of
Incarcerated Persons**

**TO THE GOVERNOR AND
THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF VIRGINIA**



HOUSE DOCUMENT NO. 26

**COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA
RICHMOND
1993**



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION

General Assembly Building

FREDERICK L. RUSSELL
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

November 17, 1992

TO The Honorable L. Douglas Wilder, Governor of Virginia
and Members of the General Assembly

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ATTORNEY GENERAL'S OFFICE
H. LANE KNEEDLER

House Joint Resolution 429, agreed to by the 1991 General Assembly directed the Virginia State Crime Commission to "study improving family and community ties of incarcerated persons" and "to submit its findings and recommendations to the Governor and the 1993 Session of the General Assembly."

In fulfilling this directive, a study was undertaken by the Virginia State Crime Commission. I have the honor of submitting herewith the study report on improving family and community ties of incarcerated persons.

Respectfully submitted,

Robert B. Ball, Sr.
Chairman

RBB sc

MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA STATE CRIME COMMISSION 1992

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Rev George F Ricketts, Sr

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**Crime Commission Study of:
Improving Family and Community Ties of Incarcerated Persons
HJR 429**

Crime Commission Subcommittee Members

Delegate V Thomas Forehand, Jr , Subcommittee Chmn
Delegate Robert B Ball, Sr
Senator Elmo G Cross, Jr
Mr Robert F Horan, Jr
Reverend George F Ricketts, Sr
Delegate Clifton A Woodrum

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I. AUTHORITY FOR STUDY

House Joint Resolution 429 (HJR 429), sponsored by Delegate Gladys B Keating and passed by the 1991 session of the Virginia General Assembly, requested the Crime Commission to study ties between Virginia's incarcerated population and members of their family and community. The resolution identified community volunteer programs, community-business ties, visiting conditions and policies, telephone communication systems and policies, and commissary practices as specific areas of study and requested inquiry into "other topics of concern to families and community volunteers that could reduce recidivism and improve inmate reentry into the community" (See Appendix 'A')

Established by Section 9-125 of the *Code of Virginia*, the Crime Commission's legislative mandate is "to study, report, and make recommendations on all areas of public safety and protection." Section 9-127 of the *Code of Virginia* provides that "the Commission shall have the duty and power to make such studies and gather information in order to accomplish its purpose, as set forth in section 9-125, and to formulate its recommendations to the Governor and the General Assembly." Section 9-134 of the *Code of Virginia* authorizes the Commission to "conduct private and public hearings, and to designate a member of the Commission to preside over such hearings."

In fulfilling this legislative mandate, consistent with the directives of HJR 429, the Crime Commission undertook a study of family and community ties of incarcerated persons.

II. MEMBERS APPOINTED TO SERVE

During the April 16, 1991 meeting of the Crime Commission, its Chairman, Senator Elmon T Gray, appointed Delegate V Thomas Forehand, Jr to serve as Chairman of the Corrections Subcommittee, to which HJR 429 was assigned. At the April 21, 1992 meeting, Crime Commission Chairman Robert B Ball, Sr elected to retain the remaining members of this subcommittee. The following members were appointed to serve on the subcommittee:

Delegate V Thomas Forehand, Jr , Chesapeake, Chairman
Howard P Anderson, Halifax (Retired from Senate after 1991 Session)
Robert B Ball, Sr , Henrico
Elmo G Cross, Jr , Hanover
Robert F Horan, Jr , Fairfax
Rev George F Ricketts, Sr , Richmond
Delegate Clifton A Woodrum, Roanoke

III. STUDY DESIGN

The mandate of HJR 429 was potentially extremely broad, both in scope of issues and degree of research. Because the resolution referenced generally "topics of concern to families and community volunteers," the Commission was confronted with the need to ascertain the nature of these issues and their relative level of importance. HJR 429 also called for participation of "correctional staff, community volunteers, family members of incarcerated persons, and businesses" in the study. Accordingly, the Subcommittee Chairman, Delegate V Thomas Forehand, Jr., established a task force to organize and incorporate this expertise, and report directly to the Crime Commission. Another Crime Commission study occupying the same two-year time-frame, HJR 422 (1991), encompassed issues related to HJR 429 and, therefore, was assigned to the task force as well.

Delegate Forehand appointed Rev. George F. Ricketts, Sr. as chairman of the Task Force on Recidivism and Women's Correctional Issues. The following persons were selected to serve on the task force:

George F. Ricketts, Sr., Chairman
Delegate Robert B. Ball
Delegate Gladys B. Keating
Delegate Marian Van Landingham
Jean W. Auldridge
B. J. Brown Devlin
Ann Hart
Cynthia Holley
Tom Karwaki
Jim Mustin
Scott Richeson
Johanna Schuchert
Janet Welch
Susie White

Meeting throughout the course of these studies, the task force solicited input from concerned parties, conducted site visits to prisons and local jails across the Commonwealth, and received regular updates on continuing research by Crime Commission staff.

In order to determine the status quo with regard to conditions in individual facilities, the level and quality of contact with families and with the community, and the level and quality of vocational and reentry programming, surveys were distributed to all local jails and each state (DOC) correctional facility.

Site visits were made to selected state and local facilities to review conditions, observe the operation of programs and interview inmates, visitors (including inmates' family members), correctional line-staff and administrators

The operations of correctional facilities in other states and the District of Columbia were also reviewed, including programmatic schemes, to determine the effectiveness of services and their potential adaptability to jails and prisons in the Commonwealth, should that prove desirable

V. BACKGROUND

Due to studies that consistently recognize the substantial impact that family can play, both in an inmate's behavior during incarceration and chances of success upon release, persons both within and outside corrections have begun to look more closely at issues relating to family contact with inmates. These range from opportunities for visitation during incarceration to means for reintegration of the family unit upon the inmate's release

The issues point up other considerations as well. In some cases the conduct of the incarcerated person may have a deleterious affect on family members and vice versa. There are perhaps certain circumstances in which severance of family ties is the most constructive course of action. This potential appears to claim a minority of cases at best and is therefore overshadowed by the pervasive positive influence that the family support network has been observed to have. Regardless, the urgent need of inmates to rely on some support system as they attempt to maneuver the obstacles of a free society, and the corresponding need of society to protect against recidivism, demands a broader community influence. The family may play an important part in helping the inmate to maintain links to a society outside the prison walls, but there has developed also a perception that the community at large has a role to play as well.

The basis for review of current conditions concerning inmates' links to the community, as set forth in HJR 429, is in system-wide policies directed at incarcerated persons. A common theme in corrections is the over-riding need for security in the institution while providing for the essential needs of inmates. Frequently these goals conflict, and this is true particularly in transactions between those within prison walls and those from without. The potential for a breach of security is heightened in such cases, spawning a natural tension between contacts with the community and other prison operations. Indeed, policies regarding visitation, volunteer participation and other communications within jails and prisons is dictated in large part by security interests. It is against this back ground that the Crime Commission undertook a review of the issues encompassed by HJR 429

V. STUDY ISSUES

The directive of HJR 429 was couched in terms of reviewing family and community ties to the state and local inmate population to "reduce recidivism and improve inmate reentry into the community" While the resolution listed areas of focus, the following specific issues (encompassing these areas) were identified for consideration

- 1 What obstacles exist to effective contact and communication between inmates and their family members, and how can they best be alleviated?
- 2 How should support services for inmates and their families be strengthened to maintain unity and maximize opportunities for success of inmates reentering society?
- 3 How may volunteerism be enhanced to further the goals of improved community ties and related services?

VI. DISCUSSION OF RESEARCH/ANALYSIS

Discussion of research can be broken into two distinct categories inmates' contacts with family members and, secondly, other ties to the community and the resources and assistance that such ties may provide in reacclimating inmates to society upon their release from incarceration While these issues are related in their objectives, they concern different (albeit overlapping) substantive areas of study With regard to the first, the goal is to foster existing relationships Thus, though the same methods and instruments were used to develop research on the respective issues, each is best considered individually

Family Contact:

Maintenance of ongoing ties to the community for incarcerated persons serves multiple goals Such ties enhance morale among inmates and increase order and security at correctional institutions (both through the higher morale itself and the privilege -thus the potential for withholding such privilege- that contact represents) Familial relations offer the first and best basis for these ties This is the natural point from which emotional and material support derives There is the least need, therefore, to engender this support system In most cases it already exists Though it may seem intuitive that people sever ties with family members upon incarceration, our research indicates that, to the contrary, the greatest impediment to maintenance of these ties is the lack of resources and the institutional limitations to meaningful interaction

With regard to inmates in the state system, problems are encountered by the significant distances that often exist between the individual's home and his ultimate place of confinement. Because state institutions (particularly the larger ones) are placed in remote areas, prisoners in Virginia are frequently housed in facilities on opposite ends of the state from their home and family. This exacerbates the seclusion inherent in an inmate's incarcerated status, and raises sometimes insurmountable barriers for family members even when they desperately seek to maintain contact. Physical travel can become a hardship even for those with the finances to maintain regular visitation of family members in prison. For those lacking the wherewithal, it can become literally impossible.

In addition to the expense of lengthy travel, time constraints may make visitation prohibitive. Long waiting periods, for processing of visitors and transferring inmates to visitation rooms, are common in many jails and prisons. Some of these delays are inevitable due to overcrowded conditions. Also as a result of these conditions, visitors may enjoy only a limited visit, cut short because others are waiting. Average time limits for jail visits are fifteen or twenty minutes. But jail inmates may typically receive visits five or six times a week, and are more often than not being incarcerated in close proximity to their families. The Department of Corrections provides for two hour minimum visits for inmates in all state prisons, and individual institutions make limited exceptions allowing for longer visits in special circumstances (such as out-of-state visitors). Because reaching prisons is so much more difficult, and visitation days are generally limited to weekends in state facilities, a minimum time limit is essential to permit any regular, meaningful interaction for inmates and their family members.

Unfortunately, a number of DOC institutions reported that the two hour minimum is not always observed in order that all visitors be permitted access to the visitation room. These reports were confirmed by inmates and family members who complained that visits are shortened without regard to the distance traveled by visitors (again, out-of-state travelers often are excepted). This is an area of great discontent among inmates and family members and tends to discourage some visitors from making regular trips to see loved ones.

Remedies are in short supply. Expansion of visitation areas would frequently involve expensive structural improvements to prison sites and are usually not feasible. Some innovative alternatives could be implemented, however. The Deep Meadow Correctional Center has begun employing a schedule of alternate visiting days by delineating visitors alphabetically (i.e. half may visit one day while the other half visits the next). This solution creates its own set of problems by further limiting flexibility for visitors, but does allow extended visits on the appointed days. The particular institution is to be applauded in any case for attempting to address the condition. Greater use of outside facilities, at least in moderate weather conditions, is another option and one that is currently under-utilized.

In addition to the practical limitations to regular visitation, however, are institutional restrictions that effectively discourage continued interaction of this nature. Correctional staff can be insensitive to the concerns of visitors, and visitors are periodically refused access to visitation rooms because of a failure to meet certain prison requirements (e.g. dress codes). In some institutions (at both the state and local level) visitors are made to feel as if they are intruding upon the normal and proper functions of the jail or prison.

There are two readily apparent explanations for this. Either the institution in question places no priority on visitation and therefore is complacent with regard to the visitation process and procedures, or staff are simply inadequately trained and appropriate procedures not developed. Our research suggests that the latter is more often true than the former. Since the inception of this study, the Department of Corrections has put forth efforts to improve certain conditions by standardizing dress codes and offering greater opportunity to air complaints. Nevertheless, it is clear that more effective communication (and action thereon) is necessary for establishment of an environment conducive to interaction between prison staff and members of the outside community (whether they be family members, volunteers, or others).

Based upon institutions' survey responses, staff and task force members' site visits, and input from inmates and their family members, the quality of interaction between inmates and visitors is also a significant area of concern. This is particularly true with regard to child visitors. At the local level, opportunities for interaction are inherently limited. Contact visits are available in relatively few circumstances. At state institutions these obstacles to contact visits don't exist. Despite this, there are no significant provisions in most institutions for visitors with children. Consequently, visiting time both between the inmate and his or her children, and between the inmate and other family members, is compromised.

Again, consistent with survey responses, it is clear that there is broad support among prison administrators for alternative family visitation activities. So called "family days" exist in most state institutions, providing for expanded interaction during specified visiting days. Picnics during visitation days have in the past been permitted at many institutions but are now limited to a very few. Yet events such as these represent precisely the type of contact that has been demonstrated to contribute so vitally to the family support system, and opportunities to increase such events in both number and type abound.

A final additional issue in the visitation process deserves note. It is common practice in corrections to sharply curtail the types of articles that visitors may carry into visiting rooms. Certain appropriate exceptions in Virginia's prisons are made for infant's needs (i.e. spare diapers, bottles), but very little else. Correctional admini-

strators justify these strict limitations based on concerns about contraband and security. Inmates and their families would like to see exceptions extended. We find that in most cases these limitations are reasonable in light of the great potential for a breach of security. One area where this is not true, however, is with legal documents associated with family matters. Family members frequently may need to discuss contracts, wills or other legal instruments, and to have these at hand for point of reference. Attempts to do so over the phone or by mail can be unnecessarily cumbersome. Many local jails already make provisions for this need, and because such papers may be easily screened, the need (and benefits) appear to far outweigh any risk that may ensue from making this single exception to existing regulations at the state level as well.

Besides visitation, the two other primary means of contact between inmates and their families is through correspondence and telephone calls. Restrictions on simple correspondence are few whether in jails or prisons. Though sending gifts to inmates can occasionally present a problem, we encountered no evidence of any unreasonable systematic limitations on communications by mail. On the contrary, with regard to this mode of communication, jails and prisons in Virginia today are lenient in the measures they employ to restrict correspondence.

Electronic forms of communication, however, suffer far greater limitations. While telephones are widely available in both jails and prisons there are substantial restrictions on their use. In Virginia's prisons, these derive primarily from the MCI prison telecommunications system, introduced under contract two years ago. To conform to the demands of the Department of Corrections, a system was specifically designed to cater to the inmate population. Though the system has been in operation for two years already, numerous complaints emanate from this area from inmates and others alike.

Some of the complaints relate to limitations on the ability to use the system. Currently prisoners may only use the phone system by making collect calls to persons on a specified list (exceptions are made for emergency situations). Due to software limitations in the system employed by MCI the list for each inmate was limited to ten names. Names on the list can be changed only infrequently, raising demands for longer lists. In response, the potential has now been expanded to fifteen names and representatives of the carrier insist that they will continue to seek expanded capacity through modification of the system.

Another technical limitation imposed not by necessity but at the request of the Department of Corrections is a fifteen minute time limit on the length of calls. The Department justifies this by citing a need to protect the recipients of calls against excessive phone charges. Calls may be terminated by the recipient under the present system simply by hanging up. The sole contention is that inmates may exert undue pressure on the recipient to continue the call indefinitely. This is not supported by

the evidence. On the contrary, complaints by family members are not that calls are overly lengthy but that they are automatically terminated. Indeed, there is no prohibition against successive calls (at increased expense) so long as other inmates are not waiting for use of phones. This medium of communication, highly valued by all parties, ought to be made as accessible as possible.

The system has also suffered defects well recognized by the phone carrier who asserts that efforts are being made to resolve such defects. Early termination of calls (prior to reaching the time limit), improper billing for calls, and inadequate noise barriers in certain phone locations are examples of defects that should not be tolerated. In reviewing these concerns, we found that problems have not always been addressed in prompt fashion. In our meetings with representatives of MCI, they exhibited a willingness to receive and answer complaints. In circumstances such as this, however, where the Commonwealth grants a monopoly to a commercial enterprise to provide service to a (literally) captive audience, responsiveness to legitimate complaints should be made a top priority. Contractual obligations should be met without undue delay and, indeed, greater scrutiny to alleged shortcomings should be applied than might otherwise be the case.

The cost of this monopolistic venture to recipients of collect calls can be measured in a more tangible and direct fashion. They are deprived of the flexibility to choose a less expensive carrier. In exchange, the Commonwealth reaps a profit from these calls (per contract). While the benefit of this system is indisputable, funneling such funds to services associated with this segment of Virginia's population would serve to alleviate any perception of inequities and allow for the provision of badly needed services.

In regard to all of these issues concerning the level and quality of family contacts with inmates, investigations do not reveal a need for dramatic structural change in the operations of our jails and prisons. Rather, our review of conditions points to a necessity for greater sensitivity to these issues and a higher priority in certain cases. A consequence of one's incarceration is an inevitable severance of ties to the community (to some degree). The limited contact with society is both an objective and a necessity of imprisoning someone. This reality can act to cloud the importance of maintaining certain levels and types of interaction with society even for the inmate, as is demonstrated in some instances by the relegation by correctional officials of such inmate interaction on their list of priorities.

Other Community Ties:

Despite a strong desire on the part of most families to offer support to members suffering incarceration, there are limits to how far they can go in meeting the needs of these persons. Services enabling prisoners to adjust to society upon reentering it, whether they be counseling, training, job assistance, or related needs, are frequently

beyond the capabilities of family members. Of course, for some inmates, support of family is unavailable altogether. Other community resources are necessary to bridge this gap. Our research focused on a review of these needs and the use of volunteers to help fulfill them.

Some of the deficiencies were referenced in the preceding review of family contacts. Transportation needs for visitation of inmates is a prime example. A not-for-profit agency in Richmond (Prison Visitation Project) already provides transportation for area families to a number of prisons in Virginia. Effective exploitation of community resources in this way can help to further the role of family in the life of an incarcerated person while also providing a network for constructive interaction with other segments of the community. The purpose of such interaction is to lessen the alienation of the inmate and better enable him or her to conform to society's demands upon a release from confinement. The probable alternative is a return to behavior patterns that initially resulted in a jail/prison sentence.

Research suggests two points of focus. Use of resources (including volunteers) in the community to further the goals of community ties with inmate populations was one area of investigation. The second was the manner in which these resources are directed at the inmate population. Just as family members themselves confront a maze of complications in their efforts to continue normal relations with inmates, others in the community must overcome the barriers that separate inmates from the rest of society. They have often found that the institutional barriers can be as formidable as the physical ones. Unfortunately, many caring people, though motivated to aid those behind bars, will succumb to the discouragement generated by efforts that appear consistently to be rebuffed.

Human resources are clearly available. Identifying, organizing and harnessing volunteers is a fundamental need that currently falls far short of its potential. While not-for-profit organizations in a number of communities in Virginia provide, both to inmates and their families, transportation, job and housing assistance, training, counseling, referrals and other information, need for these services substantially exceeds the availability.

Current efforts to utilize volunteer pools and expand the provision of services are hindered by insufficient financial resources. Administrative, overhead and related costs are relatively small compared to the level of productivity of these organizations. But funding is essential to ensure adequate availability.

In addition to the evident need for increased funding is a proactive approach by both community groups and corrections (on both the state and local level) to develop stronger institutional links for communication of needs and delivery of services. Recognition of the need for educational and counseling services for inmates has been expressed across state and local government. Already programs in

jails and prisons (for enhanced educational and vocational skills, substance abuse counseling, and pre-release preparation) are opened to inmates. These are not adequate to reach all who need them. But what is missing for all inmates, regardless of the number of programs in which they participate, is any coordinated system to convert the fruits of rehabilitative efforts into tangible opportunities for the released inmate.

This lingering lack of institutional contact between the correctional facility and its surrounding community represents the major obstacle to developing ties between the inmate and that community. It is this schism that contributes to the too frequent suspicion and animosity between visitors and correctional staff, and to a fundamental aspect of reentry programming that is almost universally lacking for our inmate population.

A joint effort by corrections and the community to reintroduce inmates as members of the community is essential to the process of maximizing these inmates' chances for success in society. An integral part of this process is the need to optimize opportunities for communications, not just between inmates and their families, but also between correctional staff and the community outside the institution they operate. Based upon the cumulative research involved over the course of this study, modest policy initiatives can affect significant changes in the level and quality of family and community participation in inmates' lives, ultimately improving the odds of reduced recidivism by these persons. The following specific findings reflect the conclusions discussed in this section, which in turn serve as the basis for the recommendations listed at the report's end.

FINDINGS

- 1 Large numbers of persons with family members incarcerated in Virginia state correctional facilities are unable to visit them because they lack the means for transportation.
- 2 Waiting times for visitors are often lengthy in state and local correctional institutions, and visits in many cases are cut short, as a result of extended processing times and crowded visiting facilities.
- 3 Correctional staff members in some institutions are inadequately trained to deal with the public, and with visitors in particular.
- 4 Relatively few accommodations are made for child visitors at most correctional institutions in Virginia.

- 5 Restrictions against bringing items into visiting rooms at Department of Corrections institutions are unnecessarily harsh as they pertain to legal documents (relating to family legal affairs), to the detriment of fundamental family relations
- 6 Telephone restrictions unreasonably deter communications between inmates and family members - legitimate complaints about deficiencies in phone service are not accorded adequate priority
- 7 Potential volunteers for services to state and local inmates remain untapped because financial resources to recruit, organize and train them are insufficient
- 8 Volunteer attempts at providing services to inmates in Virginia's jails and prisons suffer due to the lack of an effective, coordinated and sustained system of communication between community organizations and many correctional institutions Such a mechanism is the building block for increased efficiency in using volunteers and providing essential transitional services to inmates as they leave corrections and reenter society

RECOMMENDATIONS

Much in the way of community contacts with prisoners and support services for them and their families must come from the community itself and cannot be legislated Many efforts can be facilitated, however, and obstacles can be removed The following recommendations are intended to encourage family and community involvement with the state and local inmate population, thereby maximizing the opportunities for effective reentry of inmates to society and a corresponding reduction in recidivism Accordingly, we recommend the following

- 1 That the General Assembly consider in its budget deliberations the potential need for funding for family related programming for inmates and relatives identified in this report In particular, consistent with other budget priorities the General Assembly should consider
 - a) Establishing a program providing matching grant funds for not-for-profit organizations supplying transportation for prison visitation and related support services to family members of inmates in Virginia's Correctional system The purpose of the program would be to ensure the opportunity for visitation throughout the Commonwealth, to the degree that these services can feasibly be made available Criteria for receiving grants should include (but not be limited to)

Level of need for services in the respective region,
Evidence of ability to fulfill the need,
Evidence of community support and ability to raise funding for services

b) Providing grant funding to not-for-profit organizations for the provision of new (currently non-existent) pre-release and post-release services for inmates in state or local correctional facilities. Such services may include counseling, vocational/educational training, job assistance, housing assistance, life-skills training, and other related services designed to facilitate inmates' transition to the community

2 That an advisory board be established by the Virginia Board of Corrections to coordinate effective volunteer efforts within the Department of Corrections. The board should meet at least quarterly, acting to identify resources and to develop strategies for enhancing effective use of volunteers in Virginia's prisons. The board's membership shall be composed of a minimum of 12 members, to include a sitting judge from the Commonwealth, a member of the Board of Corrections, persons drawn from the business/professional community, the religious community, not-for-profit organizations providing corrections' oriented services to inmates and their families, at least one family member of an inmate or an ex-offender, and the Director of the Department of Corrections and the Director of the Department of Correctional Education shall serve as ex officio members

3 That (DOC) departmental policy with regard to Community Advisory Boards (CABs) be amended to allow for membership of three family members (of inmates) on each CAB. Further, that in addition to the present reporting requirements, the board shall report twice yearly to the warden its recommendations for institutional change, to which the warden shall provide written response by the next scheduled meeting date of the board. This would substantially improve the effectiveness of CABs by providing badly needed input of family members and the institutional administration

4 That state and local correctional policy provide for visitation and other family related programs which encourage greater and higher quality interaction between inmates and family members

a) That visitation rooms and processing areas in both state and local correctional facilities be permanently staffed by persons who receive special training and preparation for interacting with inmates and family members

b) That all available resources (including outside areas) be fully utilized to

maximize visitation opportunities

- c) That DOC institutions develop designated areas within visiting facilities (not already possessing them) that allow for appropriate parent/child interaction
 - d) That state and local correctional facilities implement programs for enhanced parent/child interaction
 - e) That family members of inmates be permitted to retain (during their visit) documents involving business, financial, legal or other affairs with which the inmate is concerned, in the case of contact visits. And that, where visits are non-contact, family members be permitted to convey such materials to the inmate (through corrections officials) so as to allow consultation between them during the course of their visit
 - f) That DOC policy be amended to extend the (automatic cut-of) limit for phone conversations to 30 minutes in all DOC institutions
- 5 That the Virginia State Crime Commission undertake a study to determine the level of need, and availability (both within correctional institutions and the community) of, transitional services for released inmates, and complete its work in time to submit findings to the Governor and the 1994 Session of the General Assembly

As stated in the first recommendation, immediate funding for these services should be made available. Though the need for additional services has been firmly established, the extent of that need has yet to be determined. A comprehensive investigation into existing resources should be made to determine how great the deficit

APPENDIX A

**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 429
(1991)**

1991 SESSION
ENGROSSED

HP9165500

1 HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION NO. 429

2 House Amendments in [] - January 31, 1991

3 *Requesting the Virginia State Crime Commission to study improving family and*
4 *community ties to reduce recidivism*

5
6 Patrons—Keating, Rollison, Hamilton, Hanger, Smith, Brickley, Johnson, Thomas, Van
7 Yahres, Marshall, Harris, R E, Trumbo, Crouch, Almand, Fill, Diamonstein, Van
8 Landingham, DeBoer, Stosch, Moss, Callahan, Dillard, Hall, Woodrum, Jones, J C, Byrne,
9 Cooper, Cunningham, J W, Plum, Marks, Jackson, Croshaw, Christian, Andrews and
10 Parrish, Senators Miller, E F, Holland, C A, Schewel, Houck, Miller, Y B, Benedetti,
11 Saslaw, Truban, Calhoun, DuVal, Gray, Scott, Stallings, Cross, Earley, Lambert, Gartlan,
12 Waddell, Michie and Colgan

13
14 Referred to the Committee on Rules

15
16 WHEREAS, the level of recidivism for inmates of Virginia's state and local correctional
17 systems is over 50 percent, leading to substantial prison and jail overcrowding and
18 increased local and state expenditures, and

19 WHEREAS, studies indicate that inmates who are able to maintain their family ties
20 during their incarceration are six times less likely to commit future offenses, and

21 WHEREAS, enhancement of visitor and community volunteer services to increase the
22 frequency and quality of contacts helps to discourage violent prisoner activity and
23 encourage positive adjustment, and

24 WHEREAS, the location of the correctional facilities in the Commonwealth makes
25 visitation difficult, subjects families to great economic strain through the loss of income and
26 increased transportation and communication costs, and

27 WHEREAS, family ties are strained by incarceration and the children of incarcerated
28 parents often function two grades below their normal grade level, and

29 WHEREAS, incarceration frequently results in families with greater social services
30 needs, increasing the costs of such services to the Commonwealth, and

31 WHEREAS, the importance of family and community bonds in rehabilitation and
32 treatment efforts is recognized by correctional authorities throughout the nation, but
33 community volunteers and families are not yet fully integrated into the rehabilitation
34 efforts in Virginia, and

35 WHEREAS, job opportunities and vocational training can be increased by better
36 community, business and correctional facility relations, and

37 WHEREAS, the Virginia State Crime Commission recently reported that facilities and
38 personnel to accommodate visitors at correctional facilities are inadequate, and

39 WHEREAS, the Governor's Commission on Prison and Jail Overcrowding identified
40 recidivism as a major factor in overcrowding, but did not have the resources to address
41 the issue of the role of improved family and community ties in reducing recidivism, and

42 WHEREAS, efforts focused on improving family and community ties with inmates would
43 potentially reduce the rate of recidivism, now, therefore, be it

44 RESOLVED by the House of Delegates, the Senate concurring, That the Virginia State
45 Crime Commission be requested to study Virginia's state and local correctional systems'
46 community volunteer programs, community-business ties, visiting conditions and policies,
47 telephone communication systems and policies, commissary practices and other topics of
48 concern to families and community volunteers that could reduce recidivism and improve
49 inmate reentry into the community

50 The Commission may employ whatever methods of inquiry it deems necessary, including
51 public hearings across the Commonwealth. The Secretary of Public Safety shall designate
52 one staff person to assist the Commission. All state agencies and institutions shall, if
53 requested, assist the Commission in completing this study.

54 The Commission shall confer and collaborate with legislative study committees which

1 have been charged to study related issues, and shall provide for the participation of
2 correctional staff, community volunteers, family members of incarcerated persons, and
3 businesses

4 The Virginia State Crime Commission shall seek grants and assistance from appropriate
5 federal agencies and nonprofit institutions to assist in funding this study

6 The Commission shall complete its work in time to submit its findings and
7 recommendations to the Governor and the 1993 Session of the General Assembly as
8 provided in the procedures of the Division of Legislative Automated Systems for the
9 processing of legislative documents

10 [Implementation of this resolution is subject to subsequent approval and certification by
11 the Joint Rules Committee- The Committee may withhold expenditures or delay the period
12 for the conduct of the study-]

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Official Use By Clerks			
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The House of Delegates			
without amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>	without amendment	<input type="checkbox"/>
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Date	_____	Date	_____
Clerk of the House of Delegates		Clerk of the Senate	

APPENDIX B

PRISON/JAIL SURVEYS

The Virginia State Crime Commission, pursuant to joint resolutions of the Virginia General Assembly, is conducting a study relating to the unique concerns of incarcerated women, and issues of community ties which affect all inmates. This questionnaire will substantially aid the Commission in its work. While space has been provided for your answers, please feel free to add additional sheets of paper as needed.

Name of Institution _____

Contact Person and Phone Number _____

1 What is the standard waiting processing time for visitors prior to being admitted to the visiting room, and seeing the inmate?

Less than 30 minutes _____
30 to 60 minutes _____
60 to 90 minutes _____
Over 90 minutes _____

2 What reasons account for this waiting period (check all that apply)?

Number of visitors _____ Configuration of jail _____
Number of staff _____ Other _____
Security concerns _____

3 What measures could be taken to reduce this waiting period?

4 How frequently may an individual visit a particular inmate?

Once per week _____
Twice weekly _____
More than twice weekly _____
Other _____

5 How many persons may an inmate keep on his visiting list?

Five _____
Five to Ten _____
Over ten _____
Other _____

6 What are the rules governing termination of visits?

7 Do you encounter visitor complaints regarding lack of knowledge or understanding about visitation rules and, if so, how frequently?

Yes _____ No _____

Percentage of visitors lodging complaints _____

8 How are questions/comments by family members of inmates dealt with (to whom are they referred), and is this system effective in responding to family members' concerns?

9 Are visitors permitted to transfer any articles to inmates during their visit and, if so, what?

Yes _____ No _____

Articles permitted _____

10 Does your facility make any special visiting arrangements for inmates with children?

Yes _____ No _____

Please describe _____

11 What do you consider to be your greatest problem with the visitation process (please offer an explanation where necessary)?

Contraband _____ Security _____ Other (explain) _____

12 Do you have policies or programs which are specifically designed to encourage family communication or contact for inmates (Please describe such policies)?

Yes _____ No _____

13 Do you have inmate programs (vocational/educational/counseling) in which volunteers from the surrounding community, or among the inmate population itself, participate (provide a description)?

Yes _____ No _____

Program Description _____

14 Do you consider these programs to be effective and, if so, why?

Yes _____ No _____

Reason _____

15 Do you elicit participation from community organizations for volunteer efforts in your facility, or otherwise maintain interaction with community groups (please explain)?

Yes _____ No _____

16 Is there a community college geographically proximate to your institution and, if so, does it offer courses to inmates?

Yes _____ No _____

Types and Number of Courses _____

17 What types of educational and/or counseling programs are available to inmates within your institution?

18 What is the level of participation in these programs?

All programs are 100% filled _____
Some programs are 100% filled _____
Programs average 75% capacity _____
Programs average under 75% _____
Inmates seek greater capacity _____

19 What is the capacity of each program?

Programs can serve 100% of prison population _____
Programs can serve over 75% of the population _____
Programs can serve 50% to 75% of the population _____
Programs can serve 25% to 50% of the population _____
Programs can serve under 25% of the population _____

20 Do you offer parenting classes to inmates?

Yes _____ No _____

21 What types of work programs does your facility offer to inmates?

22 What is the disparity between available jobs and the number of inmates?

Jobs are available for over 75% of inmates who seek them _____
Jobs are available for 50% to 75% of inmates _____
Jobs are available for 25% to 50% of inmates _____
Jobs are available for under 25% of inmates _____

23 Does your facility house women inmates?

Yes _____ No _____

(if you checked no there is no need to answer the last series of questions)

24 Does your facility house all women inmates for other jurisdictions?

Yes _____ No _____

What jurisdiction(s) _____

25 Are women subject to a different classification scheme than men and, if so, how does it differ?

Yes _____ No _____

Nature of differences _____

26 Are you able to provide the same educational/counseling programs for women as you provide for men in your facility?

Yes _____ No _____

27 If not, what measures could be taken to remedy this deficiency and what resources would be required?

28 What is the standard gynecological, obstetrical and perinatal care provided women in your facility?

29 Who provides this care?

Medical Doctor _____

OB-GYN Nurse _____

Other (explain) _____

30 Are there other health care policies in your facility directed solely towards women (explain)?

Yes _____ No _____

31 Are there any other policies in your facility directed solely towards women (explain)?

Yes _____ No _____

32 Please note any other unaddressed problems associated with women inmates in your facility, as well as any suggestions to remedy these concerns

The Virginia State Crime Commission, pursuant to a Resolution of the General Assembly, is reviewing means of enhancing family and community ties with Virginia's state inmates. Your responses to the following questionnaire will substantially aid the Commission in its work. While space has been provided for your answers, please feel free to add additional sheets of paper as needed.

Name of Institution _____

Contact Person and Phone Number _____

Visitation Practices

1 What is the standard waiting/processing time for visitors prior to being admitted to the visiting room, and seeing the inmate?

- Less than 30 minutes _____
- 30 to 60 minutes _____
- 60 to 90 minutes _____
- Over 90 minutes _____

2 What reasons account for this waiting period (check all that apply)?

- Number of visitors _____ Configuration of prison _____
- Number of staff _____ Other _____
- Security concerns _____

3 What measures could be taken to reduce this waiting period?

4 What are the rules governing termination of visits?
(Kindly provide a copy of your IOP on this issue)

5 Do you eliminate visitation during quarterly shakedowns?

Yes _____ No _____

6 What procedure is used to notify visitors of cancellation of normal visiting days (for whatever reason)?

- Inform prisoners _____
- Inform visitors during advance visits _____
- Inform visitors on day of cancellation _____
- Other _____
- Notice is provided how far in advance of cancellation _____

7 Do you encounter visitor complaints regarding lack of knowledge or understanding about canceled visiting days or other visiting rules and, if so, how frequently (please provide approximate numbers)?

Yes _____ No _____
Percentage of visitors lodging complaints _____

8 How are questions/comments by family members of prisoners dealt with (to whom are they referred), and is this system effective in responding to family members' concerns?

9 Are visitors permitted to bring any articles with them into the visiting room and, if so, what?

Yes _____ No _____

Articles permitted _____

10 Does the warden/assistant warden make periodic reviews of the intake and visiting rooms on visiting days?

Yes _____ No _____

How frequently _____

11 Does your facility maintain a designated play area for children of visitors?

Yes _____ No _____

12 What type of interaction is permitted between inmates and visitors (check all that apply)?

Remain seated _____ Move about in limited area _____
Face-to-face _____ Move about visiting area without restriction _____
Side-by-side _____ Other _____

13 What do you consider to be your greatest problem with the visitation process (please offer explanation where necessary)?

Contraband _____ Security _____ Other (explain) _____

14 How would you suggest this problem be alleviated, and what resources would be necessary to do so?

15 Does your facility offer visitor picnics, "family days," or other special visitation practices and, if so, are these effective ways for enhancing quality family contact (why)?

Yes _____ No _____

16 Do you believe conjugal visits could be effective in your facility (please provide reasons for your response)?

Yes _____ No _____

Reason _____

17 What is your perception of transportation needs for visiting family members and how well are they being fulfilled?

Community Contacts

18 Do you have inmate programs (vocational/educational/counseling) in which volunteers from the surrounding community or among the inmate population itself participate (provide a description)?

Yes _____ No _____

Program Description _____

19 Do you consider these programs to be effective and, if so, why?

Yes _____ No _____

Reason _____

20 Do you elicit participation from community organizations for volunteer efforts in your facility, or otherwise maintain interaction with community groups (Please provide an explanation)?

Yes _____ No _____

21 Is there a community college geographically proximate to your institution and, if so, does it offer courses to inmates?

Yes _____ No _____

Types and Number of Courses _____

22 Do you have policies or programs which are specifically designed to encourage family communication or contact for inmates (Please describe such policies)?

Yes _____ No _____

Nature of Policies _____

23 What types of educational and/or counseling programs are available to inmates within your institution?

24 What is the level of participation in these programs?

All programs are 100% filled _____

Some programs are 100% filled _____

Programs average 75% capacity _____

Programs average under 75% _____

Inmates seek greater capacity _____

25 What is the capacity of each program?

Programs can serve 100% of prison population _____

Programs can serve over 75% of the population _____

Programs can serve 50% to 75% of the population _____

Programs can serve 25% to 50% of the population _____

Programs can serve under 25% of the population _____

26 What types of work programs does your facility offer to inmates?

27 What is the disparity between available jobs and the number of inmates?

Jobs are available for over 75% of inmates who seek them _____

Jobs are available for 50% to 75% of inmates _____

Jobs are available for 25% to 50% of inmates _____

Jobs are available for under 25% of inmates _____

APPENDIX C

SURVEY RESULTS TABULATED

Prison Survey Responses

Of 42 surveys disseminated by the Virginia State Crime Commission to state correctional institutions in the Commonwealth, 37 were completed and returned. The information provided below represents a compilation of these responses. Because not all responses were quantifiable or meaningful, some survey questions may not be reflected here. When percentages fail to equal 100 this is due to multiple answers by each respondent or, alternatively, a failure by some respondents to answer the particular question.

TABLE 1

Standard waiting/processing time for visitors of prison inmates
between reaching the institution and contact with the inmate

<u>Waiting Time</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Less than 30 minutes	90.0%
30 to 60 minutes	7.5%
60 to 90 minutes	2.5%
Over 90 minutes	0%

TABLE 2

Causes for waiting period
(respondents answered in more than one category)

<u>Causes</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Number of visitors	70.0%
Limited staff	57.0%
Security concerns	57.0%
Prison configuration	45.0%

TABLE 3

Incidence of visitor cancellations due to shakedowns

<u>Cancellation of Visiting</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Do cancel	10.0%
Do not cancel	87.0%

TABLE 4

Incidence of visitor complaints due to cancellation of scheduled visiting days

<u>Visitor Complaints</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Received	57.5%
None	37.5%

TABLE 5

Number of institutions permitting articles to be brought into visiting rooms

<u>Introduction of Articles</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Permitted	77.5%
Not permitted	17.5%

TABLE 6

Number of institutions possessing designated areas for child visitors

<u>Areas for Children</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Not maintained	77.5%
Maintained	20.0%

TABLE 7

Number of institutions offering periodic family activity days

<u>Family Activity Days</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Provided for	87.5%
Not provided for	10.0%

TABLE 8

Number of institutions utilizing community/inmate volunteers to operate programs

<u>Using Volunteers</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Are	97.5%
Are not	0%

TABLE 9

Number of respondents realizing effectiveness of volunteer programs in their institutions

<u>Effectiveness of Programs</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Are effective	92.5%
Are not effective	2.5%

TABLE 10

Number of institutions actively eliciting volunteer participation from community organizations

<u>Participation from Community Groups</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Do elicit	95.0%
Do not elicit	2.5%

TABLE 11

Number of institutions in which area colleges offer courses to inmates

<u>Access of Inmates to College Courses</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Available	72%
Not available	20%

TABLE 12

Number of institutions possessing programs designed to encourage family contact

<u>Programs to enhance family contact</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Do possess	60 0%
Do not possess	32 5%

TABLE 13

Level of participation in educational/counseling programs reported by institutions

<u>Level of Participation</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Programs 100% filled	57 5%
Some programs 100% filled	27 5%
Programs average 75% capacity	5 0%
Programs average under 75%	0 %
Inmates seek greater capacity	2 5%

TABLE 14

Capacity of educational/counseling programs reported by institutions

<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
100%	20 0%
75% - 100%	15 0%
50% - 75%	17 5%
25% - 50%	22 5 %
Under 25%	17 5%

TABLE 15

Level of disparity between available jobs and inmates who seek them

<u>Job Availability</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Available for over 75% of inmates	62 5%
Available for 50% - 75% of inmates	20 0%
Available for 25% - 50% of inmates	7 5%
Available for less than 25% of inmates	2 5%

Jail Survey Responses

The Virginia State Crime Commission disseminated 123 surveys to sheriffs and administrators of regional jails in Virginia, and received 94 surveys back. The information provided below represents a compilation of these responses. Because not all responses were quantifiable or meaningful, some survey questions may not be reflected here. When percentages fail to equal 100 this is due to multiple answers by each respondent or, alternatively, a failure by some respondents to answer the particular question. Percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number.

TABLE 1

Standard waiting/processing time for visitors of prison inmates upon reaching the institution but prior to contact with the inmate

<u>Waiting Time</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Less than 30 minutes	70%
30 to 60 minutes	27%
60 to 90 minutes	3%
Over 90 minutes	0%

TABLE 2

Causes for waiting period
(respondents answered in more than one category)

<u>Causes</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Number of visitors	82%
Limited staff	55%
Security concerns	32%
Jail configuration	58%

TABLE 3

Number of visitors permitted on an inmate's visiting list

<u>Number Permitted</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Five	11%
Five to Ten	5%
Over Ten	15%
Other	64%

TABLE 4

Incidence of visitor complaints due to cancellation of scheduled visiting days

<u>Visitor Complaints</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Received	45%
Not received	54%

TABLE 5

Number of institutions permitting articles to be brought into visiting rooms

<u>Introduction of Articles</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Permitted	41%
Not permitted	59%

TABLE 6

Number of institutions possessing special provisions for child visitors

<u>Special Provisions</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Made	45%
Not made	55%

TABLE 7

Number of institutions maintaining programs to encourage family contact

<u>Programs for Family Contact</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Maintained	30%
Not maintained	69%

TABLE 8

Number of institutions utilizing community/inmate volunteers to operate programs

<u>Using Volunteers</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Are	92%
Are not	8%

TABLE 9

Number of respondents realizing effectiveness of volunteer programs in their institutions

<u>Effectiveness of Programs</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Are	86%
Are not	7%

TABLE 10

Number of institutions actively eliciting volunteer participation from community organizations

<u>Participation from Community Groups</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Do elicit	69%
Do not elicit	30%

TABLE 11

Number of institutions in which area colleges offer courses to inmates

<u>Access of Inmates to College Course</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Available	39%
Not available	54%

TABLE 12

Level of participation in educational/counseling programs reported by institutions

<u>Level of Participation</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Programs 100% filled	22%
Some programs 100% filled	14%
Programs average 75% capacity	9%
Programs average under 75%	45%
Inmates seek greater capacity	1%

TABLE 13

Capacity of educational/counseling programs reported by institutions

<u>Capacity</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
100%	31%
75% - 100%	7%
50% - 75%	14%
25% - 50%	12%
Under 25%	23%

TABLE 14

Institutions offering parenting classes to inmates

<u>Parenting Classes</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Offered	11%
Not offered	89%

TABLE 15

Number of available jobs vs number of inmates seeking jobs

<u>Job Availability</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Over 75% of jail population	80%
Between 50% and 75% of population	0%
Between 25% and 50% of population	0%
Under 25% of population	0%

TABLE 16

Institutions housing women inmates

<u>Housing Women Inmates</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Yes	69%
No	30%

TABLE 17

Institutions housing all women inmates for other jurisdictions

<u>House for Other Jurisdictions</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Yes	32%
No	45%

The following tables reflect information provided exclusively by jails that house female inmates

TABLE 18

Institutions utilizing a different classification scheme for male and female inmates

<u>Classification Scheme</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Different	16%
Same	55%

TABLE 19

Availability of programs for female inmates

<u>Provide Same Programs as for Men</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Yes	65%
No	9%

TABLE 20

Provision of standard gynecological services for female inmates

<u>Care Provider</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Doctor	59%
OB-GYN Nurse	15%

TABLE 21

Provision of other health services exclusively for female inmates

<u>Services Exclusively for Females</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Do provide	8%
Do not provide	65%

TABLE 22

Other policies directed exclusively towards the female inmate population

<u>Policies Directed Exclusively at Females</u>	<u>Percentage Reporting</u>
Do have	5%
Do not have	65%