

March 15, 2018  
Representative Nanette Barragán  
1320 Longworth House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Nanette Barragán,

As citizens residing in District 44, we are writing to you in hopes that you will sponsor Title I of Bill 3356, which aims to reduce the recidivism rate of formerly incarcerated people.<sup>1</sup> We are particularly interested in providing adequate halfway homes for people reentering the free world.

We are Pitzer College students studying mass incarceration through an “Inside-Out” class. The course takes place at California Rehabilitation Center (CRC), so some of us writing this letter are incarcerated. In fact, half of the students in the class are presently incarcerated at CRC. The other half are typical college students at Pitzer.

Regardless of our carceral status, we are all concerned with the lack of support that many receive upon release from prison. A 1992 report concludes that, “securing housing is one of the most immediate challenges individuals leaving prison face upon their release.”<sup>2</sup> It is no coincidence that two thirds of people let go from prison are expected to return within the first three years after their release.<sup>3</sup> Prisons rarely provide formerly incarcerated people with enough resources to survive a day in the outside world.

“As my release date gets closer, the uncertainty of what I will face is daunting,” says one letter writer. “My home, my kids are no longer mine. If I were to get out today I would be homeless.” He goes on to explain that he, like many incarcerated people, would venture into the public with nothing but “\$200 and the state clothes on my back. It’s parallel to being released in a strange country not knowing the language or anyone to even ask for directions to the nearest motel to spend the night.” He has previously been incarcerated and released. “Imagine you are leaving a prison environment where you are clothed, fed and housed, with a 4 cent an hour job that you have some type of pride in. Then, you suddenly have nothing upon release. It’s almost bitter-sweet.” A 2004 Urban Institute study in Baltimore found that among those released from jail, one-third did not report having a place to live on release.<sup>4</sup> For the other two-thirds of those who reported having a place to live, outside support is often scarce. 50 out of a surveyed 66 inmates re-entered the community alone, and only a fraction found their way to a home.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> United States, Congress, *H.R.3356- Prison Reform and Redemption Act*. 2017. 115th Congress Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3356>.

<sup>2</sup> Markman, et al. “Focus Area: Housing.” *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 1992, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/focus-area/housing](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/focus-area/housing).

<sup>3</sup> “Prisoners and Prison Re-Entry.” *United States Department of Justice*, United States of America, [www.bing.com/cr?IG=ABB62F538C0C47748D50E39B2E55296B&CID=226A3D1CD8226F3E1D0136B6D98D6EA2&rd=1&h=hkQ4JUUm2ZYT5vdhYZh9nuOcPhVZ9KB\\_OWRxE64evj18&v=1&r=https%3a%2f%2fwww.justice.gov%2farchive%2ffbc%2fprogmenu\\_reentry.html&p=DevEx.5069.1](http://www.bing.com/cr?IG=ABB62F538C0C47748D50E39B2E55296B&CID=226A3D1CD8226F3E1D0136B6D98D6EA2&rd=1&h=hkQ4JUUm2ZYT5vdhYZh9nuOcPhVZ9KB_OWRxE64evj18&v=1&r=https%3a%2f%2fwww.justice.gov%2farchive%2ffbc%2fprogmenu_reentry.html&p=DevEx.5069.1).

<sup>4</sup> Visher, Christy, et al. “Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prison Reentry.” *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center Research Report*, pp. 92–95., [www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42841/410974-Returning-Home-Understanding-the-Challenges-of-Prisoner-Reentry.PDF](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42841/410974-Returning-Home-Understanding-the-Challenges-of-Prisoner-Reentry.PDF).

<sup>5</sup> Flatow, Nicole. “<https://Thinkprogress.org/the-Prison-Doors-Open-and-Youre-Released-You-Have-No-Money-or-Transportation-Now-What-442f6b067dfb/>.” *Think Progress*, Wordpress VIP, June 21AD, 2015, [thinkprogress.org/the-](https://thinkprogress.org/the-)

The number of people re-entering society from prison is larger than ever: In the United States, more than 10,000 formerly incarcerated people are released from prison each week.<sup>6</sup> Many of them are left out of recovery or are sent to residences that hurt recovery more than help.<sup>7</sup> Halfway houses have the potential to support formerly incarcerated people in their transition into everyday society. Effective halfway houses would reduce recidivism, increase public safety, and restore humanity.

Halfway houses, also called “community corrections centers” or “residential reentry centers”<sup>8</sup> often provide rehabilitation programs, as well as educational and skills based programs for different groups. Although halfway houses offer promising potential, their success has varied.<sup>9</sup> There is not enough data to compile conclusive evidence on what constitutes the most effective halfway home. In conclusions on multiple research reports regarding halfway houses across the country from 2002-2009, experts emphasized a need for more research.<sup>10</sup>

Bill 3356 provides answers. In article 1, it is stated that a goal of the bill is to “conduct ongoing research and data analysis” to figure out “which recidivism reduction programs are the most effective for addressing the different risks and specific criminogenic needs of prisoners, and the volume and intensity of programming that most effectively reduces the risk of recidivism for prisoners with different risks of recidivating.”<sup>11</sup> We hope the research will largely focus on halfway houses.

---

prison-doors-open-and-youre-released-you-have-no-money-or-transportation-now-what-442f6b067dfb/. Statistic cites as from the vera insitute.

<sup>6</sup> “Prisoners and Prison Re-Entry.” *United States Department of Justice*, United States of America, [www.bing.com/cr?IG=ABB62F538C0C47748D50E39B2E55296B&CID=226A3D1CD8226F3E1D0136B6D98D6EA2&rd=1&h=hkQ4JUm2ZYT5vdhYZh9nuOcPhVZ9KB\\_OWRxE64evj18&v=1&r=https%3a%2f%2fwww.justice.gov%2farchive%2ffbc%2fprogmenu\\_reentry.html&p=DevEx,5069.1](http://www.bing.com/cr?IG=ABB62F538C0C47748D50E39B2E55296B&CID=226A3D1CD8226F3E1D0136B6D98D6EA2&rd=1&h=hkQ4JUm2ZYT5vdhYZh9nuOcPhVZ9KB_OWRxE64evj18&v=1&r=https%3a%2f%2fwww.justice.gov%2farchive%2ffbc%2fprogmenu_reentry.html&p=DevEx,5069.1).

<sup>7</sup> Dolnick, Sam. “In New Jersey Halfway Houses, Escapees Stream Out as a Penal Business Thrives.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 June 2012, [www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/nyregion/in-new-jersey-halfway-houses-escapees-stream-out-as-a-penal-business-thrives.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/nyregion/in-new-jersey-halfway-houses-escapees-stream-out-as-a-penal-business-thrives.html).

<sup>8</sup> “FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FEDERAL HALFWAY HOUSES & HOME CONFINEMENT.” *Families Against Mandatory Minimums*, [famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/FAQ-Halfway-House-4.24.pdf](http://famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/FAQ-Halfway-House-4.24.pdf).

<sup>9</sup> <https://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/lowenkamp-and-latessa-2002-2007>

And

“The study by the Pennsylvania Corrections Department found that 67 percent of inmates sent to halfway houses were rearrested or sent back to prison within three years, compared with 60 percent of inmates who were released to the streets.” Dolnick, Sam. “Pennsylvania Study Finds Halfway Houses Don’t Reduce Recidivism.” *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 24 Mar. 2013, [www.nytimes.com/2013/03/25/nyregion/pennsylvania-study-finds-halfway-houses-dont-reduce-recidivism.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/25/nyregion/pennsylvania-study-finds-halfway-houses-dont-reduce-recidivism.html).

<sup>10</sup> Pennsylvania report summary: Anthum, et al. “Latessa, Lowenkamp, & Bechtel, 2009.” *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 2009, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/latessa-lowenkamp-bechtel-2009](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/latessa-lowenkamp-bechtel-2009).

Report summary on Ohio’s halfway house programs: Anthum, et al. “Lowenkamp and Latessa 2002-2007.” *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 2002, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/lowenkamp-and-latessa-2002-2007](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/lowenkamp-and-latessa-2002-2007).

And Others stated that more analysis was necessary “to further examine the effectiveness of halfway houses in preventing recidivism and improving other outcomes, such as substance use and employment.”

Anthum, et al. “Latessa, Lowenkamp, & Bechtel, 2009.” *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 2009, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/latessa-lowenkamp-bechtel-2009](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/latessa-lowenkamp-bechtel-2009).

<sup>11</sup> United States, Congress, *H.R.3356- Prison Reform and Redemption Act*. 2017. 115th Congress Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3356>.

Bill 3356 promises to increase research in finding most effective supports for those released from prison. The support is necessary, especially because with limited resources, many who are at the highest risk of re-offending are not admitted into halfway houses. For example, none of us writing the letter qualify for such a program upon release. We are part of the select few incarcerated at CRC who are admitted into Pitzer College classes. Those admitted into college classes are deemed by staff to be most well-behaved and most dedicated to self-improvement. Yet we still do not qualify because we are deemed to be too ‘high-risk.’ Many of this letter’s authors are approaching release dates. One writer notes that “I don’t qualify for any of the halfway-homes, and if I can find a program that will house me when I parole, it likely won’t help me with my addictions.” The admittance process into halfway houses is contradictory: Lowenkamp and Latessa’s results from a Ohio halfway house study showed that the groups that are higher risk to recidivate actually had the best results from halfway house treatment.<sup>12</sup> Other analyses came to the same conclusions.<sup>13</sup>

Additionally, it’s clear that what is safest for formerly incarcerated people is also safest for the general public. The writers would prefer for ex-convicts who are deemed to be more dangerous to have a halfway house to monitor them upon release. “I would imagine that CDCR (who is responsible for the inmate) would not only protect society with having such a place for the inmate, but it would have a better chance of monitoring the inmate during the duration of his/her parole or probation,” adds another writer who is incarcerated.

Reducing the number of incarcerated people saves taxpayers (including some of us writers) large sums of money. It’s clear that improving programs for people who are entering free society from prison will help reduce recidivism. In 2012, the average annual cost for each incarcerated person was \$167,731 in New York City.<sup>14</sup> The Vera institute of Justice examined the 5% decline in prison populations, and found a direct link to the decline and saving taxpayers money. Since 2010, 13 states that reduced the prison population saved taxpayers a total of 1.6 billion dollars.<sup>15</sup>

We see treatment of physical and mental health as necessary components in recovery residences. Again, we greatly support Title 1 of Bill 3356. We hope that there is special focus on admitting more people into rehabilitation-focused halfway houses. The writers (incarcerated and not) see that reducing recidivism will save money, and more importantly, create a safer environment for the general public, including those recently released from prison. For writers who are incarcerated, this bill helps them imagine a future in which they have the support to get back on their feet once in the outside world. We all see reducing recidivism as necessary in fostering increased humanity and justice into American society.

Thank you,

---

<sup>12</sup> Anthum, et al. “Lowenkamp and Latessa 2002-2007.” *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 2002, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/lowenkamp-and-latessa-2002-2007](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/lowenkamp-and-latessa-2002-2007).

<sup>13</sup> Latessa, E J, et al. “Follow-up Evaluation of Ohio’s Community Based Correctional Facility and Halfway House Programs— Outcome Study .” *Wwww.uc.edu*, [www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project\\_reports/2010%20HWH%20Executive%20Summary.pdf](http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project_reports/2010%20HWH%20Executive%20Summary.pdf).

<sup>14</sup> Admin. “NYC’S JAIL POPULATION: WHO’S THERE AND WHY?” *New York City by the Numbers*, Independent Budget Office NYC, 22 Aug. 2013, [ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park2/2013/08/nycs-jail-population-whos-there-and-why/](http://ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park2/2013/08/nycs-jail-population-whos-there-and-why/).

<sup>15</sup> Mai, Chris, and Rob Subramanian. “The Price of Prisons: Prison Population and Spending 2010-2015.” *Vera*, Vera Institute of Justice, May 2017, [www.vera.org/publications/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends#prisonPopulationAndSpending20102015](http://www.vera.org/publications/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends#prisonPopulationAndSpending20102015).

Marquise Brooks, Pedro Florez, Malakai Embry, Amber Burkhardt and Blake Clement,

California Rehabilitation Center (CRC)

5th Street & Western,

Norco, CA 92860

&

Pitzer College

1050 N Mills Avenue

Claremont, CA 91711

Box #109

## Sources Cited:

Admin. "NYC'S JAIL POPULATION: WHO'S THERE AND WHY?" *New York City by the Numbers*, Independent Budget Office NYC, 22 Aug. 2013, [ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park2/2013/08/nycs-jail-population-whos-there-and-why/](http://ibo.nyc.ny.us/cgi-park2/2013/08/nycs-jail-population-whos-there-and-why/).

Anthum, et al. "Latessa, Lowenkamp, & Bechtel, 2009." *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 2009, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/latessa-lowenkamp-bechtel-2009](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/latessa-lowenkamp-bechtel-2009).

Anthum, et al. "Lowenkamp and Latessa 2002-2007." *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 2002, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/lowenkamp-and-latessa-2002-2007](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/evaluation/lowenkamp-and-latessa-2002-2007).

Dolnick, Sam. "In New Jersey Halfway Houses, Escapees Stream Out as a Penal Business Thrives." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 June 2012, [www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/nyregion/in-new-jersey-halfway-houses-escapees-stream-out-as-a-penal-business-thrives.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2012/06/17/nyregion/in-new-jersey-halfway-houses-escapees-stream-out-as-a-penal-business-thrives.html).

Dolnick, Sam. "Pennsylvania Study Finds Halfway Houses Don't Reduce Recidivism." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 24 Mar. 2013, [www.nytimes.com/2013/03/25/nyregion/pennsylvania-study-finds-halfway-houses-dont-reduce-recidivism.html](http://www.nytimes.com/2013/03/25/nyregion/pennsylvania-study-finds-halfway-houses-dont-reduce-recidivism.html).

Flatow, Nicole. "https://Thinkprogress.org/the-Prison-Doors-Open-and-Youre-Released-You-Have-No-Money-or-Transportation-Now-What-442f6b067dfb/ ." *Think Progress*, Wordpress VIP, June 21AD, 2015, [thinkprogress.org/the-prison-doors-open-and-youre-released-you-have-no-money-or-transportation-now-what-442f6b067dfb/](http://thinkprogress.org/the-prison-doors-open-and-youre-released-you-have-no-money-or-transportation-now-what-442f6b067dfb/).

"FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT FEDERAL HALFWAY HOUSES & HOME CONFINEMENT ." *Families Against Mandatory Minimums*, [famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/FAQ-Halfway-House-4.24.pdf](http://famm.org/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/FAQ-Halfway-House-4.24.pdf).

Latessa, E J, et al. "Follow-up Evaluation of Ohio's Community Based Correctional Facility and Halfway House Programs— Outcome Study ." *Www.uc.edu*, [www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project\\_reports/2010%20HWH%20Executive%20Summary.pdf](http://www.uc.edu/content/dam/uc/ccjr/docs/reports/project_reports/2010%20HWH%20Executive%20Summary.pdf).

Mai, Chris, and Rob Subramanian. "The Price of Prisons: Prison Population and Spending 2010-2015." *Vera* , Vera Institute of Justice, May 2017, [www.vera.org/publications/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends#prisonPopulationAndSpending20102015](http://www.vera.org/publications/price-of-prisons-2015-state-spending-trends#prisonPopulationAndSpending20102015).

Markman, et al. "Focus Area: Housing." *What Works in Reentry Clearinghouse*, CSG Justice Center, 1992, [whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/focus-area/housing](http://whatworks.csgjusticecenter.org/focus-area/housing).

United States, Congress, *H.R.3356- Prison Reform and Redemption Act*. 2017. 115th Congress Congress, <https://www.congress.gov/bill/115th-congress/house-bill/3356>.

“Prisoners and Prison Re-Entry.” *United States Department of Justice*, United States of America,  
[www.bing.com/cr?IG=ABB62F538C0C47748D50E39B2E55296B&CID=226A3D1CD8226F3E1D0136B6D98D6EA2&rd=1&h=hkQ4JUm2ZYT5vdhYZh9nuOcPhVZ9KB\\_OWRxE64evj18&v=1&r=https%3a%2f%2fwww.justice.gov%2farchive%2ffbc%2fprogmenu\\_reentry.html&p=DevEx,5069.1](http://www.bing.com/cr?IG=ABB62F538C0C47748D50E39B2E55296B&CID=226A3D1CD8226F3E1D0136B6D98D6EA2&rd=1&h=hkQ4JUm2ZYT5vdhYZh9nuOcPhVZ9KB_OWRxE64evj18&v=1&r=https%3a%2f%2fwww.justice.gov%2farchive%2ffbc%2fprogmenu_reentry.html&p=DevEx,5069.1).

Visher, Christy, et al. “Returning Home: Understanding the Challenges of Prison Reentry.” *Urban Institute Justice Policy Center Research Report*, pp. 92–95.,  
[www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42841/410974-Returning-Home-Understanding-the-Challenges-of-Prisoner-Reentry.PDF](http://www.urban.org/sites/default/files/publication/42841/410974-Returning-Home-Understanding-the-Challenges-of-Prisoner-Reentry.PDF).