

COMING HOME: MAKING PRISONER RE-ENTRY WORK, SHOW # 1813

STEVE ADUBATO, host:

Preparing a prisoner for life on the outside. What's working and what's not next on CAUCUS: NEW JERSEY.

Announcer: Major funding for this edition of CAUCUS: NEW JERSEY has been provided by The Fund for New Jersey, a private foundation focusing on New Jersey's public policy issues; and by the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice.

Ms. KIM HUNTER (Ex-offender): Well, what kind of juice do you want?

PAULA M. LEVINE reporting:

This is a typical morning for Kim Hunter. She gets up early, makes breakfast for herself and her 15-year-old daughter. Then she goes to work. But it wasn't always like this.

Ms. HUNTER: My addiction took off around 1982. I began to use drugs intravenously. I had maybe a \$1,000-a-day habit. I wound up prostituting and doing anything I could to support my drug habit.

LEVINE: Then two things happened which changed Kim's life. In 1988, she had a baby.

Ms. HUNTER: When I delivered my daughter, a nurse, doctor, social worker came in to tell me that I had AIDS and they needed to test my daughter for the HIV virus. And I signed the papers and, you know, that's pretty much how I got my diagnosis.

LEVINE: Then in 1989, she was arrested and sent to the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility in Clinton, New Jersey.

Ms. HUNTER: I found myself very angry and bitter about being there initially. I spent, I think, the first year there just acting out and getting in trouble.

LEVINE: But then she began to change and during the next seven years, she completed her GED, she dealt with her addiction and she worked on her attitude. And it was there that she also met Veronica Sanders, senior director of Client Services for the Hyacinth AIDS Foundation.

Ms. VERONICA SANDERS (MSW; Senior Director, Client Services): She came out and said, 'I'm HIV positive.' While some women were, I guess, a little afraid to talk about that, she--she wanted it to be put out there so that we could move on to different things. She wasn't afraid of letting other people know her status and also some of the concerns that she had with being locked up at Edna Mahan. And also, what she was was an advocate for the other women who--she was their voice.

Ms. HUNTER: So far, the medication's been working good.

LEVINE: Veronica was able to help with both services and medication. But more than that, she lent a sympathetic ear.

Ms. HUNTER: We talked about my goals. We talked about things that I wanted to accomplish upon my release, things that I could start working on at that point. And as we continued to meet, we started to map out plans for seeking employment.

LEVINE: Kim was paroled on March 11, 1998.

Ms. HUNTER: I walked away with self-respect, a new set of values, morals, beliefs. I walked away with a voice that could actually be of use out in the community.

(Speaking on telephone) Good afternoon, Hyacinth Foundation. How may I help you?

LEVINE: In June of 2000, Kim became a staff member at Hyacinth.

Ms. HUNTER: I actually supervise and coordinate the Incarcerated Discharge Planning Program. We start working with HIV-positive offenders three months prior to their release, and we go in and meet with them to do an initial screening and intake and assessment with them. And we work with them three months up until their release and then we work with them for three months in the community.

What's working for you, you know, and what's not, if anything?

LEVINE: Three years ago, Kim also decided to start a bimonthly support group where ex-offenders can just talk.

Unidentified Woman: I found out I can live. Like, I'm HIV-positive, you know, and that's a big pill to swallow.

Unidentified Man: It seems like people just don't get it. And, you know, no matter what you try to do, they're always going to stereotype you and they're always going to look at you differently. I mean, I go through that struggle on a daily basis, you know, even with my family.

LEVINE: Kim still struggles, too. She's on four different medications and she takes seven pills a day.

Ms. HUNTER: I think one of the biggest challenges for me was to grow up and be responsible. I had never worked, I had never had my own apartment, I had never had a real relationship with my family.

LEVINE: Her 15-year-old daughter lives with her now, and Kim prays Crystal won't make the same mistakes that she made.

Ms. HUNTER: My biggest hope for her future is for her to finish high school and hopefully go on to college.

LEVINE: She also has a few plans of her own, including completing her bachelor's degree and then going on for her master's in social work. But it's her work that really keeps her going.

Ms. HUNTER: This job has given me a sense of purpose, so I think that the job helps me to stay connected, it helps me to have some gratitude. And in that gratitude, it helps me to help someone else. I'm constantly saying, you know, if I can do it, so can you. You

know, if I made it, why can't you?

ADUBATO: Welcome to Coming Home: The Challenge of Prisoner Reentry, a special three-part CAUCUS series looking at what's being done to transition prisoners successfully back into society. I'm Steve Adubato.

Joining us to discuss what government, communities and families are doing to help ex-prisoners build healthy and productive lives are Ken Zimmerman, our partner at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice, he's the executive director there; Kim Hunter, you just saw on the taped piece, who is a role model for many, a former prisoner who now coordinates outreach programs for HIV-positive incar--carcerated and paroled men and women; Jeremy Travis, a senior fellow and expert on prisoner reentry issues at the Urban Institute in Washington, DC; and finally, Richard Liebler, founder of the New Community Youth & Adult Automotive Training Center, a facility that helps ex-offenders realize their goals. I want to thank all of you for joining us. This is the final part of a three-part series that--that we are doing on the issue of prisoner reentry.

Kim, let me ask you, did we accurately portray your life today?

Ms. HUNTER: Yes. That's--well, actually, it's a small piece of the bigger picture, you know.

ADUBATO: How did it feel to see it?

Ms. HUNTER: It felt...

ADUBATO: You know you're a role model, right?

Ms. HUNTER: Actually, it felt really good. Sometimes I underestimate where I've come from. And when I look at how hard it's been getting to where I am, I know that the work doesn't stop here. I have to keep on going.

ADUBATO: You know, Ken, in that spirit, let me ask you, you've been our partner in the series. You--you see Kim's story. More importantly, you see what she's doing, you see the work she's doing with our friend Riki Jacobs at the Hyacinth AIDS Foundation. What's the key to success there, re-entering successfully?

Mr. KEN ZIMMERMAN (Executive Director, New Jersey Institute for Social Justice): Well, I just want to say I found it very moving, Kim, and congratulations. I think what's really important about it is that people can transition--transition successfully. But what's critically important to remember is we're spending over \$1 billion a year on prisons and parole, and yet 2/3rds of the folks who are being released from state prison--and over 70,000 are going to be released over the next five years--are not doing so successfully. So while I applaud Kim for what she's doing, it's important to remember we've got a system that's broke and we need to fix it.

ADUBATO: Well, Ken, let's do this. In that spirit, let's put some of the numbers up there. Let's ask the folks in the control room...

(Graphic on screen)

Over 70,000 prisoners to be released from NJ prisons in next 5 years

ADUBATO: Let's take a look at this first number. Over 70,000 prisoners will be released from New Jersey prisons in the next five years--70,000. In fact, the prisoner population has gone up...

(Graphic on screen)

Two-thirds of these individuals will be re-arrested during the next 3 years

ADUBATO: ...four times, it's quadrupled in the last 20 years. Take a look at this, two-thirds of those individuals will--will be re-arrested during the next three years, re-arrested, many of them re-incarcerated. And, finally, the last...

(Graphic on screen)

NJ spends more than \$1 billion annually on prisons and parole

ADUBATO: ...statistic we'll look at, as Ken said, the state of New Jersey spends more than \$1 billion annually on prisons and parole.

Rich Liebler, what's wrong with that?

Mr. RICHARD LIEBLER (New Community Youth & Adult Automotive Training Center): Well, first off, the--the terminology 'prisoner reentry' I have a problem with because the way this system is designed, they mean reentry to society. What it really is is reentry back into prison. When--when an offender comes to me--and what we do is we spend a year with them in transitioning them into the automobile industry--the--the issues that they have to deal with that the system puts on them--they have no driver's license, they're paying all of their income in--in child support, they have no housing. I mean, we've discussed all these issues...

ADUBATO: Right. Part two of the series looked at all--many of the legal and other obstacles, but what appears to work? Now you described what's not working. I mean, those statistics are staggering and embarrassing. However, you and your colleagues over at New Community in this particular automotive training initiative--what appears to be working that helps prisoners successfully re-enter society? What works?

Mr. LIEBLER: When I talk to an ex-offender, the most important thing is a job at the end. This entire system has to be changed where it's done from the employers, backwards. I'm an employer. I need to design a system that the graduate comes and works for me. You can't have people within the system try to design jobs that don't exist.

So the automobile industry, we're short 60,000 technicians. I pay my technicians in my day job which--I'm a car dealer--\$100,000. And we have graduates now that are making \$50,000. And what we do is we--we're starting a program where they work in the dealership while they're in training. So, number one, we address the income issue and

they can see the end result of where the--where the training program is. And you have to educate the employers and get them to buy in. And you would be u--you would be amazed at how good these employees can be, for a lot of reasons.

ADUBATO: Jeremy, before we put up our resource guide material, let me ask you this. You hear Rich's description of a program. Is that a good model?

Mr. JEREMY TRAVIS (Policy Expert): There--there are many aspects of it that are very encouraging and very successful. I want to pick up on a couple things that are--come from Kim's story. One is the role of the former prisoners themselves in providing a support network. You know, it's a sad fact we have lots of people now who have been in prison before, and we tend to think that they have no role or, even under our regulations, try to keep them apart from people coming out of prison, the idea of parole, that you can't socialize or fraternize with people who have felony records. Those are the people who have been there, walked that street, know firsthand the value. And I think that's part of the--of the apprenticeship program as well.

ADUBATO: So I want to be clear here. Ken, Kim has more credibility...

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Right.

ADUBATO: ...and potentially can be more effective than someone else...

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Right.

ADUBATO: ...as a counselor...

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Right.

ADUBATO: ...as someone who is organizing those support groups, fair to say?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Right, fair to say, absolutely.

Ms. HUNTER: Actually...

ADUBATO: Kim, do you take that burden on?

Ms. HUNTER: ...I'm out in the community every day. I know everyone, I see people in their element, I see them when they're in, I see them when--when they're out, I see them when they come back. So I understand the recidivism rates and I understand what the issues are in terms of why people go back to prison. And one of the things happening now is that people have no place to go when they're coming out. So it's very easy for them to say, 'I'll just go back because it's too hard out here.' There's nothing in place...

ADUBATO: Go back to prison.

Ms. HUNTER: Go back to prison.

ADUBATO: Because?

Mr. TRAVIS: Because it's easier.

Ms. HUNTER: Because the--the resources are unavailable or they don't have knowledge about how to get the resources to stay out...

ADUBATO: OK.

Ms. HUNTER: ...housing, financial support, family support and support in the community from people that understand. And who better understands it that someone who has been to prison, like you said? And that's why our program works. It works...

ADUBATO: So one of the things that, quote, "work"--Excuse me for interrupting--one of the things that works is successfully using ex-prisoners as role models and as mentors and as coaches, correct?

Mr. TRAVIS: A support system.

Ms. HUNTER: Exactly.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: When--you need a support system. I think everybody agrees there are many folks who have a responsibility. Somebody coming out as a responsibility to take seriously their obligations. The problem, though, is when there are artificial barriers that prevent folks who are serious about wanting to do the right thing from being able to do so. You have a system that's stacked against them and, unfortunately, in many cases, there aren't enough programs like Rich's. But Rich can talk about the types of barriers that even the people who are participating in a very successful program face that limit its ultimate potential.

ADUBATO: Let's do this because one of the things...

Ms. HUNTER: I...

ADUBATO: I promise I'll get you back in, Kim. One of the things that's real clear is that none of this--none of these efforts in terms of trying to help prisoners successfully re-enter society, which, frankly, isn't just important for them and their families, it's important for all of us--the only way we're ever going to do that is to get public support for a lot of the recommendations that were put out in the--the roundtable initiative, the prison reentry roundtable, a series of discussions that took place over how long, Ken?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Over a full year.

ADUBATO: OK. Now those recommendations are going to be in the following report. I'm going to ask you to reach out for our resource guide. You're going to see a telephone number on your screen.

(Graphic on screen)

(973) 233-9886

ADUBATO: You're going to see a full-screen graphic. This--this

series is called Coming Home: The Challenge of Pri--excuse me, The Challenge of Prisoner Reentry. We're doing it in cooperation with our partners at the New Jersey Institute for Social Justice. I promise you that if you call the number on your screen, we will send you the reports, the--the recommendations. First of all, the description of how serious the problem is and then some of the recommendations as to what appears to be working, what we're not doing enough of and what you as a citizen can do to help forward this effort.

By the way, can we talk about some of the recommendations very specifically in--in the report? Number one, begin reentry preparation at entry into a prison. What does that mean?

Mr. TRAVIS: Thi--this is--this is so simple and we don't do it, which is to say that we start with the recognition that everybody who's sent to prison, except those who die there, come home. But we have these barriers, these artificial barriers between what happens inside prison, what happens outside. And part of what--what was highlighted in Kim's story and the work of Hyacinth is to reach inside the prison so that the community organizations are starting before people come out so that the transition is as seamless as it can be. Whether it's health care or housing or family support or a job, we tend to wait until people come out to worry about those things.

ADUBATO: Too late.

Mr. TRAVIS: Too late and--and that's the time of greatest risk. Right when somebody's coming out is the time of greatest risk for being re-arrested, for relapse into drug addiction, for friction with the family, for hanging out with the wrong people again. So we need to make believe the prison wall doesn't exist and start this transition planning before then.

Mr. LIEBLER: We--we are actually doing that right now. What I do is I go to the prisons and I bring graduates from my program and students. And what's interesting is that when they start talking in--'cause they use today's slang, I don't even understand what they're saying but I see a lot of happy faces. So we recruit before they get out of prison so that the transition, if they're going to a halfway house, is to a halfway house and then to us while they're still in the halfway house.

ADUBATO: Give them something to look forward to. Go ahead, Kim.

Ms. HUNTER: You know, Steve, technically, discharge planning is the biggest piece...

ADUBATO: Discharge planning?

Ms. HUNTER: Discharge planning and this gentleman was talking about going into the prison, reaching in before they come out. And we're finding that working with people coming out of prison prior to within maybe a six-month time frame actually helps to set up. We believe that the moment the person walked in that door, they're in discharge planning status. So we actually start to do a needs assessment to find out what the needs were going in and to address those needs coming out.

ADUBATO: But here's part of the problem. Is it not a fact, Ken, that approximately 17 percent--according to the research that was done, according to the work that you and your colleagues did, approximately 17 percent of those who are in prison are getting the educational and vocational training that they need to successfully--or have a shot at successfully re-entering society? Wh--what kind of number is that?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Well, there's no question that there's more resources that need to be provided for in-prison programming, educational, vocational and the like. But what strikes me, in terms of listening to both Rich and Kim, is that the real significance is the public sector. We're spending \$1 billion on prisons and parole. Shouldn't we be using that--those funds as effectively as possible, recognizing that 97 percent of everybody who comes in is coming back out, to ensure that when they come back out, if they are responsible, that they're going to giv--be given a credible shot at a job and a meaningful participation?

ADUBATO: So instead of spending that money on what--we should be spending it on what?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Well, I mean, there's no question that public safety is first and foremost, and that is something that needs to be kept inside. But as an example, over 40 percent of everybody who's going back in is going back in for a technical parole violation. Now if that's the case, shouldn't we have a better system to differentiate between those who are being returned to prison for a reason that really doesn't justify it from those who...

ADUBATO: Excuse me.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: ...may be doing something serious?

ADUBATO: Technical--one of the recommendations--I'm sorry for interrupting--`Use opportunities to cut costs and reallocate resources. Reduce returns to prison for, quote, "technical parole violations.'" What--what--give us an example. Make that expression real.

Mr. LIEBLER: You don't show up for your parole meeting with your parole officer.

ADUBATO: You go back. What's wrong with that?

Ms. HUNTER: There's a lot wrong with that. I mean, sometimes there are legitimate reasons, and people need to be more sensitive to the challenges that individuals have to face on a day-to-day basis just trying to be responsible. You're dealing with people that haven't had that much experience with being responsible in the community and living life on life's terms. So you can't take every little thing that happens to heart in terms of is it valid or is it not valid? Is there a legitimate reason? `We don't want to send you back to prison. Let's talk about it.' I mean, let's find out what exactly happened instead of walking into a parole office and getting handcuffs slapped on your wrists because you're a day late.

ADUBATO: You're going back now.

Ms. HUNTER: You're going back.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: And from a fiscal perspective, if we're spending \$28,000 a year on incarcerating somebody, somebody who misses a parole meeting because they had to work late or for some other legitimate reason, it doesn't seem to be an effective way to use our money to start re-incarcerating them.

Ms. HUNTER: Exactly.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Now there may be a legitimate reason to re-incarcerate the person...

Ms. HUNTER: Right.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: ...if the reason why they missed the meeting isn't justified, but this is the type of example that illustrates why the a billion dollars we're spending a year isn't being used effectively.

ADUBATO: Jump back in, Jeremy.

Mr. TRAVIS: Yeah, it's particularly true for drug addiction, the number of people going back to prison for failing drug tests. So we would like people who are coming out of prison to be drug-free, to work on their addictions. But to say that you go back to prison, even on the third failed drug test, for a short period of time when we spend the \$20,000-plus a year to be incarcerated--when the better way to deal with the addiction is to do, you know, treatment, to do some sort of graduated...

Ms. HUNTER: Exactly.

Mr. TRAVIS: ...sanctions, to sort of s--you know, ramp up some sort of supervision to, you know--because everybody we--we put back in is coming back out. So we...

Ms. HUNTER: Right.

Mr. TRAVIS: ...we fail to recognize this reality of reentry.

Ms. HUNTER: And understanding...

ADUBATO: Is that cheaper?

Ms. HUNTER: ...the cycle of addiction.

ADUBATO: Jeremy, is it cheaper?

Mr. TRAVIS: It's cheaper, it's more effective and it reduces crime. If you deal with the addiction, you're reducing crime.

ADUBATO: Why do I not hear--why do I not hear any political figures--as we do this program, we're in the middle of a presidential campaign. Next year there will be a gubernatorial campaign along with the state Legislature running. I mean, I know the president mentioned

something about this very briefly...

Mr. TRAVIS: In his State of the Union address.

ADUBATO: ...in his State of the Union address, but where is the real political dialogue, the discourse on this? Am I missing something, Kim? Are you hearing it?

Ms. HUNTER: I think people hear what they want to hear. I mean, the reality...

ADUBATO: But are political leaders saying--talking about this aggressively?

Ms. HUNTER: I don't think so.

ADUBATO: Putting these recommendations on the table?

Mr. LIEBLER: You can't get elected...

ADUBATO: Debating them?

Ms. HUNTER: I don't think so.

Mr. LIEBLER: You cannot get elected if you do anything that appears to be soft on crime because whoever's running against you is going to crucify you.

Ms. HUNTER: But it's against the...

ADUBATO: But how is this soft on crime?

Ms. HUNTER: ...social norm. It--it's against what society believes to be...

Mr. LIEBLER: They want to lock them up.

Ms. HUNTER: ...politically correct.

ADUBATO: Are they--do they remember the Willie Horton of...

Mr. LIEBLER: Right, right.

ADUBATO: ...the 1988 presidential campaign when Michael Dukakis, as governor of--of Massachusetts--there was a parole program, by the way, 30 other--37 other states had it, most of those actually were run by Republicans, as I remember. Republicans said, 'Hey, this liberal Democrat up in Massachusetts let out this Willie Horton. He went out and committed a horrible crime after that.' So what does that do, freeze all the politicians 16 years later?

Mr. LIEBLER: Absolutely.

Ms. HUNTER: We're talking about minor drug offenses. We're talking people that get arrested for...

Mr. TRAVIS: I--I think there's actually a new reality right now

which is the fiscal reality. And the fiscal reality is--is taking a big bite on this issue.

ADUBATO: Make it clear to folks watching...

Mr. TRAVIS: OK.

ADUBATO: ...who say, 'You know what? These are a bunch of liberals sitting around on PBS talking about being soft on criminals, and I don't buy it.'

Mr. LIEBLER: But can I give you a...

ADUBATO: Make the case.

Mr. TRAVIS: So--so--so we've quadrupled the expenditure on--on prisons and, meanwhile, we're cutting. What are we cutting? We're cutting schools, we're cutting health care, we're cutting other things that people care about. We're not getting the safety yield out of this investment that we'd like to, so half of the states in the country, and New Jersey is now one of them, are taking a look at mandatory minimums, a way that we send a lot of people to prison for very low-level offenses, particularly drug offenses, and saying can we get a--a better yield on the taxpayer dollar by investing that money differently? So I think the fiscal crisis is actually changing the politics of this...

ADUBATO: So I want to be clear. You believe...

Mr. TRAVIS: ...issue.

ADUBATO: As we talk about what's working, what's not working, the idea of these mandatory minimums that take the discretion away from a judge for certain crimes...

Mr. TRAVIS: Right.

ADUBATO: You're going away for X number of years, right, because the law says--the Legislature and the governor said it. That appears not to be working, correct?

Ms. HUNTER: Correct.

Mr. TRAVIS: That's correct.

ADUBATO: OK, so what would work?

Mr. LIEBLER: Let me give you a crazy mon--monetary idea. If a guy's going in five with a 10--you know, his minimum time is five years, so we're spending \$28,000 to \$40,000 to incarcerate each person a year in the state of New Jersey. What if you let that person out at four years instead of five years, you put them in a program, if you gave my program or any of the other good programs \$28,000 to \$30,000 per person, the--the amount of opportunity that we could give that individual and answer every single issue that that individual needs to have answered would be crazy. It's an absolute no-brainer.

ADUBATO: Tremendous investment, Ken?

Mr. LIEBLER: But that's a business owner--a--a business person just looks at this in a more realistic way.

ADUBATO: Return on investment.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: But--but part of what Rich is saying is significant, that I think the perception is this is a third-rail politics and we can't touch it. The reality is, there's a conversation that's beginning that is starting to address it. New Jersey's actually doing a couple of things that are significant. There's a drug court program which is fairly widely known and widely respected. There's--parole runs an intensive supervision parole...

ADUBATO: What does that mean?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: The drug pro--program is something where the prosecutors get together with the judges, get together with the defense attorneys, the treat--treatment community as whole and start looking at an individual in terms of all of their needs at the time of sentencing and throughout.

Ms. HUNTER: There's actually alternative sent--sentencing...

Mr. LIEBLER: Right.

Ms. HUNTER: ...for individuals that really wouldn't do well in the prison setting.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: And part of the significance of that program is, remember, this is prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys, treatment providers all recognizing that simply recycling somebody through prison isn't benefitting public safety, isn't benefitting the prosecutors. There's not enough of them. They need to be expanded, but it's a significant step that the courts, prosecutors, defense attorneys, the community as a whole are beginning to engage in these programs and saying, 'These types of things work.'

ADUBATO: But, Ken, that's not soft on crime.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: In no way shape of form is this...

ADUBATO: That's not coddling criminals.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: ...soft on crime. Not only is it not coddling criminals; this is being effective in terms of investing our dollars in improving communities, improving individual outcomes and improving public safety.

ADUBATO: Do--do we need--do we actually need...

Ms. HUNTER: And I also think early intervention...

ADUBATO: What does that mean?

Ms. HUNTER: It's early intervention, meaning that these people are

being reprimanded for less-serious offenses. So, therefore, if you're catching them before they go out and commit a crime that's a lot more serious, you'll actually be catching them at a point in their lives where they can actually turn things around with the proper supervision.

ADUBATO: Let's do this real quickly. I want to remind folks in the few minutes that we have left, call the number on your screen for our free-of-charge Coming Home: The Challenge of Prisoner Reentry Resource Guide. I promise you we will send you these wonderful reports. I mean, so much work went into this over a long period of time. Experts from across the country came together to figure out how serious the problem of prisoner reentry is and what needs to be done. And if you want to find out not only how serious the problem is but also, more importantly, the recommendations to improve, not fix across the board--There's no magic bullet, no solution automatically--but what you can do to help.

Finally, what else appears to be working? And some of the other recommendations: Support neighborhood and family groups, create neighborhood-based in--interventions. Almost all individuals incarcerated in the state of New Jersey--95 percent to 97 percent, as you said before, will eventually return. What does it mean to support neighborhoods and families? What does it really mean?

Mr. TRAVIS: Here's a--an example from s--from a program in New York City which starts with the idea that to help an individual coming out of prison, it's not enough to help that individual, but in some ways, the more important thing is to help the family that's going to support that individual.

ADUBATO: Help them do what?

Mr. TRAVIS: Help them deal with the stress around the reentry. There's a lot of stress. Relationships change while somebody's in prison. You know, the woman may have become sort of more self-reliant while her man's been away, kids have to deal with Mom or Dad coming back, so helping the family deal with this very difficult transition so that they can be there to support the individual. That's been proven--research has shown...

ADUBATO: Right.

Mr. TRAVIS: ...that that is as effective sometimes as--as providing direct services. So the family becomes a very important unit of support that we don't think of when we think about prisoner reentry, and it can be a valuable intervention.

Ms. HUNTER: I also think...

ADUBATO: What else works, Kim?

Ms. HUNTER: ...in that sense, the community is also helped. If the individual is helped, then the community is much safer.

ADUBATO: Religious organizations a part of this?

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Without question.

Mr. TRAVIS: Absolutely.

Ms. HUNTER: Definitely.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: I think the faith-based organizations are a key, both in terms of their engagement with the individual, providing mentoring opportunities, but beyond that, as community representatives. I mean, we have to remember that a disproportionate number of the people returning are returning to a very limited number of communities.

Mr. TRAVIS: In New Jersey.

Mr. LIEBLER: But to go back on you for a second and your industry, your media has...

ADUBATO: The media?

Mr. LIEBLER: The media has created a perception out there that every individual who has done drugs, made a mistake when they were...

ADUBATO: Yep.

Mr. LIEBLER: ...18-year-olds and gone to prison is a dirt bag. And I want to tell you something. When you work with these people for 10 years, you realize that there's a very high percentage of these individuals you come to respect for the challenges that they've--they've faced and overcome. And if the--if the media gets off them a little bit and starts doing more stories like right here, you can change the perception.

ADUBATO: So we in the media, particularly on the commercial side, we'll feature the story where the--the prisoner--the ex-prisoner does some terrible thing out on parole, whatever it is, and we'll say, 'See, you can't do any of those things.' And that doesn't help, does it?

Mr. LIEBLER: Absolutely.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: Not only does it not help but I think...

ADUBATO: Twenty seconds.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: ...there really is consensus. The reentry roundtable was chaired by the former Republican Attorney General John Farmer and the Democratic...

Mr. LIEBLER: That's right.

Mr. ZIMMERMAN: ...Stanley Van Ness, and there was consensus that this is an issue that we can't ignore anymore.

ADUBATO: I promise you we'll continue the conversation. I cannot thank you enough. Great job.