

STATEMENT

BY

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BEFORE THE

**United States Senate
Committee on Appropriations
Subcommittee on the District of Columbia**

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Mr. Chairman and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear today in support of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency's FY 2005 budget request. As you know, CSOSA's budget request includes the Pretrial Services Agency (PSA), which, although a component of CSOSA, operates independently with a separate budget. The District of Columbia Public Defender Service also transmits its budget with CSOSA's but is not part of CSOSA.

CSOSA's FY 2005 budget request totals \$187,490,000, an increase of 12 percent over FY 2004. Of this, \$118,343,000 is for the Community Supervision Program (CSP), \$39,314,000 for PSA, and \$29,833,000 for the Public Defender Service.

At any given time, CSP supervises approximately 14,000 offenders on probation, parole, or supervised release. PSA supervises approximately 7,000 defendants pending trial and/or sentencing.

CSP's proposed budget represents a 13 percent increase over FY 2004 funding. Of the \$14 million increase, approximately \$8.9 million is allocated to one new program initiative. The increase funds staffing and operating expenses for the first year of operation for our Reentry and Sanctions Center.

In FY 2002, CSOSA received \$13 million in no-year funds to renovate Karrick Hall, an eight-story building on the grounds of D.C. General Hospital. The facility has housed CSOSA's 21-bed Assessment and Orientation Center, or AOC, since 1996. The AOC provides 30 days of intensive clinical assessment, treatment readiness, and reintegration programming to high-risk defendants and offenders with serious drug abuse problems. The program has been extremely successful. Since its inception, over 80 percent of participants have completed the program, and arrest rates among program graduates were found to be nearly 75 percent lower than among offenders who did not receive this programming. Based on its demonstrated effectiveness, CSOSA decided to make this program the focal point of a Reentry and Sanctions Center that would serve a larger population. At present, the AOC treats approximately 250 individuals per year; the 108-bed Reentry and Sanctions Center will provide approximately 1,200 program slots annually.

This expansion will allow us to make programming based on the AOC model available to women, develop a dedicated unit for individuals with serious mental health issues, and open three additional units for male defendants and offenders. This type of intensive, structured, sanctions-based treatment is clearly effective, and we are very pleased that we will soon be able to expand its use.

We are also pleased that we will not need to interrupt the program during the renovations. We have procured an interim facility in Northwest Washington and are now completing the transfer of operations. The new space also allows us to increase overall capacity to 27 beds during the renovation period.

Developing the Reentry and Sanctions Center demonstrated the value and effectiveness of our community partnerships. We worked closely with the city during the Reservation 13 master planning process to identify the best location for the Center at this site. Once the decision to renovate Karrick Hall was finalized, we worked cooperatively with the city and neighborhood associations on our short-term occupancy of the interim facility. At each stage of the process, we kept our partners and neighbors informed of our intentions. The community has continually supported our presence and recognized our contribution to public safety.

CSOSA's Reentry and Sanctions Center will expand the range of program options available to our supervision officers. Most treatment professionals believe that relapse is part of recovery. A single treatment experience is rarely sufficient to enable long-term substance abusers to overcome their addiction. Most often, the road to recovery is fraught with obstacles and detours. The Reentry and Sanctions Center will provide not only the initial 30-day preparatory program, which increases the likelihood that subsequent treatment will be effective, but also short-term residential sanctions for individuals who relapse.

CSOSA's program model emphasizes accountability. Our flexible system of intermediate sanctions enables us to balance our external controls with the offender's developing sense of internal accountability. We know, however, that external authority alone is not sufficient to increase the offender's sense of responsibility to self, family, and community. For that, he or she needs to establish permanent, personal connections to positive individuals and institutions. These connections are essential to long-term change. Supervision occupies at most a few years of a person's life. During that time, the offender must develop the personal resources that will support a changed lifestyle.

In the District of Columbia, as elsewhere, faith institutions are a permanent source of guidance, fellowship, inspiration, and assistance. These institutions have long histories of helping the less fortunate and encouraging personal change. Therefore, faith institutions are a natural point at which to nurture connection between returning offenders and their communities.

In 2001, CSOSA and the city's clergy forged a partnership to raise awareness of the offenders' needs and develop mechanisms through which faith institutions could help to meet them. We chose mentoring as our first initiative to emphasize the value of personal relationships in this work. From the initial call to action in January 2002, to this year's Reentry Worship events early last month, we have raised awareness and involved over two hundred volunteers in our mentoring program. Rev. Donald Isaac, the Chairman of the CSOSA Faith/Community Partnership Advisory Council, will share the clergy's perspective on this initiative with the subcommittee.

Last year, we expanded the mentoring program to reach inmates at the Rivers Correctional Institution in North Carolina, which is a Bureau of Prisons contract facility

housing over 1,000 D.C. offenders. We will show a short video about the mentoring program and a clip of our video conference mentoring with Rivers at the conclusion of Rev. Isaac's statement.

As the faith initiative matures, we hope to demonstrate the public safety benefits of linking returning offenders with the community's natural support systems. We are in the initial stages of evaluating the program, but we have already seen the difference this intervention can make in individual lives. Mentors have helped their mentees get and keep jobs, maintain abstinence, find housing, and heal family relationships. A mentor cannot and should not replace the community supervision officer, but the mentor can help the offender to establish relationships that last far beyond the supervision term.

Beyond mentoring, the faith initiative makes available to offenders the support services offered by many churches and mosques. These services include job training programs, food and clothing banks, counseling and support groups, and family services. Through referral to faith-based services, CSOSA expands the range of support available to offenders.

This has been a year of great promise for CSOSA. We have continued to refine the tools we use to supervise offenders. This spring, we will implement an expanded automated screening instrument that combines risk scoring and needs assessment to generate a prescriptive supervision plan for each offender. We recently expanded our case management system to include automated treatment tracking. With the additional FY 2004 funding supported by the subcommittee, CSP has begun hiring additional supervision officers to lower high-risk offender caseloads and expand our use of Global Positioning System monitoring on high-risk domestic violence and sex offenders. CSP and PSA also processed almost four thousand treatment placements.

PSA has made significant progress with implementation of a new program funded last year, the mental health supervision unit. This new unit provides comprehensive mental health assessments and links defendants with a range of mental health services provided by the city's Department of Mental Health. We expect that this will greatly improve our ability to supervise defendants who manifest significant programmatic needs.

During FY 2003, PSA also provided strong support to the D.C. Superior Court's implementation of its new East of the River Community Court. The shift from a traditional case processing orientation to a problem-solving system of supervision has been very labor-intensive for PSA, and the Agency continues to explore ways to realign existing staff to lower general supervision caseloads.

Community supervision plays a vital role in keeping our city safe. It is the bridge that offenders must cross to move from bad choices to a better life. It is our job to make it both difficult and undesirable for the offender to reverse direction and travel backwards. Our supervision officers have an equal responsibility to encourage progress and address non-compliance and relapse. Every time I visit one of our field units, I am reminded how difficult their job is. But every time I hear that an offender got a promotion or completed treatment, I am reminded how rewarding it can be. As more partners join us in this work, I believe our forward momentum will carry more and more offenders to the long-term success of living as productive, crime- and drug-free citizens.

We thank the subcommittee for its continued interest in, and support of, our initiatives. I will be pleased to answer any questions you may have at this time.