

**STATEMENT**

**BY**

**Paul A. Quander, Jr.,  
Director,  
Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency  
for the District of Columbia**

**BEFORE THE**

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

**April 20, 2005**

Chairman Brownback and Members of the Subcommittee:

Thank you for the opportunity to appear before you today in support of the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency's (CSOSA's) FY 2006 budget request. As you know, CSOSA provides community supervision to approximately 15,000 offenders sentenced under the D.C. Code. The Pretrial Services Agency, which is an independent entity within CSOSA, supervises an additional 7,000 defendants. Since its establishment in 1997, CSOSA has rebuilt community supervision in the District of Columbia. We are proud to say that we now have one of the most responsive, innovative, and comprehensive systems of community supervision in the country. While we are still implementing some key aspects of our program model, we believe that we have put in place a system of accountability, sanctions, and support services that will enable us to better achieve our public safety mission.

CSOSA requests \$203,388,000 in direct budget authority for FY 2006. Of this amount, \$131,360,000 is for the Community Supervision Program, which supervises sentenced offenders; \$42,195,000 is for the Pretrial Services Agency; and \$29,833,000 is for the D.C. Public Defender Service, which transmits its budget with CSOSA's. The total budget request represents a 14 percent increase over CSOSA's FY 2005 enacted budget.

Our FY 2006 budget contains one major request to fully implement an ongoing initiative. The Community Supervision Program requests \$14,630,000 and 77 positions to operate the Reentry and Sanctions Center, or RSC, at Karrick Hall. This facility housed our Assessment and

Orientation Center Program until 2004, when the program was temporarily relocated to allow the much-needed renovation work to begin.

In FY 2002, CSOSA received a \$13 million appropriation to renovate and expand the Assessment and Orientation Center program. At that time, Congress authorized the 95 positions necessary to operate the expansion units. Eighteen of these positions were funded in FY 2004 to allow us to begin hiring the key staff that must be in place during the pre-operations planning and training process. The renovations are scheduled for completion early in FY 2006. In order for us to open the new units on schedule, we need to begin hiring the remaining 77 positions several months before the expected opening.

We greatly appreciate the Subcommittee's past support of the Reentry and Sanctions Center. As we move toward implementation, I would like to take a moment to discuss the program, its place in our overall strategy, and the potential benefits it can realize.

The Reentry and Sanctions Center is based on our successful Assessment and Orientation Center, or AOC, which has been operating since 1996. The AOC targets offenders and defendants with long histories of substance abuse and crime. Although nearly 70 percent of CSOSA's population has a history of substance abuse, it is this core group of long-term users that are the most resistant to change, the most intractable—and the most likely to recidivate. The AOC program targets these individuals with 30 days of intensive programming. For offenders, this is a critical period during reentry from prison to the community. Many of these offenders leave prison without secure housing, family connections, or community ties. They have been away a long time, and they have no idea where to go or how to do things differently. At the AOC, we provide comprehensive intellectual, psychological, and physical assessments so that we understand each individual's particular issues. If there's a health issue, we ensure that the offender gets treatment. If there's a psychological issue, we ensure that he has access to appropriate therapy. We provide programming and support to help the offender clarify his thinking about what he needs to do. We explain the rules and processes of supervision so that the offender understands what is expected of him. In short, the AOC is a 30-day transition from prison to community designed specifically for the high-risk substance abusing offender. These individuals are often not appropriate for Halfway House placement, so the AOC provides an essential alternative to direct release from prison to the street. The AOC also provides services to defendants who are court-ordered to participate in the program.

The Reentry and Sanctions Center will expand the AOC's capacity from its current 27 beds to approximately 100 beds, enabling us to offer these services to about 1,200 individuals per year. These beds will be divided into four men's units, one women's unit, and one unit for offenders with mental health diagnoses. We are particularly eager to make the AOC program available to the underserved female population.

The expanded capacity will enable us to realize the great potential of this program as a residential sanction for supervised offenders and defendants who are relapsing into substance abuse. Residential sanctions are an essential aspect of effective community supervision, particularly if they can be imposed quickly. The longer the interval between violation and sanction, the less force the sanction carries—and the more time the offender has to escalate to even more dangerous behavior. Removing the offender from the external factors that contributed to the violation allows us to assess and stabilize him or her, evaluate the case plan, and make adjustments before the behavior gets to the point that supervision cannot contain it. Having this type of environment is particularly important for special needs offenders, such as those with dual mental health and substance abuse issues, who are currently somewhat difficult to place in our Halfway Back residential sanctions.

An initial study of the AOC's effectiveness indicated a 74.5 percent drop in drug use after one year among program graduates. Criminologist Dr. Faye Taxman, who has studied effective supervision practices extensively, has written, "Pretreatment activities are critical to improving the client's commitment to behavior change, motivation, and adjustment to the treatment process."<sup>1</sup> In other words, the type of programming offered at the AOC, and expanded to the Reentry and Sanctions Center, improves treatment outcomes—which in turn improves supervision outcomes.

CSOSA's strategic plan identifies four critical success factors that are essential to our success: risk and needs assessment, close supervision, treatment and support services, and partnerships. The Reentry and Sanctions Center initiative touches all of those factors. It will be our most powerful tool to date in a system of assessment-driven, community-based supervision that is already a national model.

---

<sup>1</sup> Faye Taxman, Ph.D. "Unraveling 'What Works' for Offender in Substance Abuse Treatment," National Drug Court Institute Review, Vol. II, No. 2, 1999.

Although the Reentry and Sanctions Center is the main feature of our budget request, I would also like to highlight several of this past year's most important accomplishments:

- We have developed an automated, research-based risk and needs assessment tool that will assist our Community Supervision Officers in developing prescriptive supervision plans.
- We have fully implemented electronic submission of Presentence Investigation Reports, raising our on-time completion rate from 51 percent in 2002 to 97 percent last year.
- We continue to increase offender drug testing. The average monthly frequency has risen from 1.9 times per month in 1999 to 3.7 times per month last year.
- We opened a Day Reporting Center program to provide an all-day supervision option for high-risk offenders. This program involves unemployed offenders in academic and vocational education, as well as life skills classes, to increase their compliance with supervision.
- We implemented several key enhancements in our automated case management system, including automated rearrest notification, automated violation reporting, and an expanded management reporting capability.
- We expanded our Global Positioning System electronic monitoring program, begun as a pilot in FY 2004, to an average caseload of approximately 50 offenders.
- We continue to implement our model of supervising offenders in their communities. This past year, we signed a lease on a new field unit on Rhode Island Avenue, and we are developing a Far Northeast Field Unit on Benning Road. These units will close a critical gap in ensuring that our Community Supervision Officers are deployed throughout the neighborhoods in which most offenders reside. At the Benning Road site, the Pretrial Services Agency will also locate supervision officers in the field for the first time. In developing these projects, we continue to work collaboratively with community groups to ensure that our presence is welcome and our mission is known.

- We have achieved a 94 percent response rate to offender supervision violations. The implementation of the Reentry and Sanctions Center will increase the range of sanctions available to us, but I am pleased to report that we are already responding to the vast majority of violations. The Pretrial Services Agency also improved its response rates in FY 2004, sanctioning 80 percent of drug testing violations, 79 percent of contact conditions, 83 percent of curfew conditions violations, and 97 percent of treatment program condition violations.
- The Pretrial Services Agency increased the use of electronic monitoring to all defendants assigned to Heightened or Intensive Supervision.
- We continue our faith initiative, matching returning offenders with volunteer mentors from the area's faith institutions. This January, we celebrated our fourth Reentry Week, a series of events highlighting the faith community's concern for, and contribution to, returning offenders. This year's Reentry Week featured a community forum organized by previously incarcerated persons to discuss implementation of the District's Citywide Reentry Strategy, which CSOSA played a major role in developing.
- We continued our outreach to the Rivers Correctional Institution in North Carolina, which houses over 1,000 D.C. offenders. We are now conducting quarterly "Community Resource Day" presentations via videoconference. These presentations provide information on housing, health care, education, and employment—as well as presentations about supervision and release—to inmates within 90 days of reentry.

In conclusion, I want to thank the Subcommittee for your continued support for our program. As you can see, CSOSA is in transition. Soon, we will be able to say that we have completed the system we set out to build. I remain confident that it is the most effective community supervision program possible, and that the citizens of the District of Columbia will be safer as a result of its implementation.