#### MINUTES

## MONTANA HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES 53rd LEGISLATURE - REGULAR SESSION

### JOINT SUBCOMMITTEE ON INSTITUTIONS & CULTURAL EDUCATION

Call to Order: By REP. ED GRADY, Chairman, on January 28, 1993, at 8:00 am

### ROLL CALL

### Members Present:

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Rep. Ed Grady, Chair (R) Sen. Eve Franklin, Vice Chair (D) Sen. Gary Aklestad (R) Sen. Tom Beck (R) Sen. J.D. Lynch (D) Rep. Red Menahan (D) Rep. Linda Nelson (D)

Members Excused: NONE

Members Absent: NONE

**Staff Present:** Sandra Whitney, Legislative Fiscal Analyst Mary LaFond, Office of Budget & Program Planning Judy Murphy, Committee Secretary

**Please Note:** These are summary minutes. Testimony and discussion are paraphrased and condensed.

Committee Business Summary: Hearing: COMMUNITY CORRECTION and WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL CENTER Executive Action: NONE

HEARING ON COMMUNITY CORRECTION and WOMEN'S CORRECTIONAL CENTER Tape No. 1:A

### Informational Testimony:

Mickey Gamble, Corrections Administrator for the Department of Corrections, gave a short overview of community correction and the Women's Correctional Center.

**Steve Macaskill, Women's Correction Center Warden,** told the committee the facility the women are using for a correctional center has been temporary housing and they have outgrown the

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facility. The population at WCC has increased twice as fast as the population at MSP. The legislature passed a bill with the criteria for a new site. The site that was selected is in Billings. The original plan for the new facility was a 120-bed unit, now the plan has been altered to a 104-bed unit. This reduction in beds will meet the needs of the new facility.

The core building, which is a programming building, could program 120 to 130 inmates. In the Billings area the warden feels more things can be done with women in the criminal justice system, but may not be sentenced to prison in terms of programming which can reduce the possibility of them going to prison.

Mr. Macaskill would like to see no minimum custody women in WCC. He feels these women could be served in community based programs. An important element in their program would be a 32 bed treatment unit.

Judge Olson, Chairman of the Gallatin County Community Corrections. The board has been meeting under the Community Correction Act for about two years. The board reports to the County Commissioners. The board has joined forces with the state of Montana because under the Community Correction Act the board cannot generate the numbers of persons diverted from the prison to operate the facility by themselves. They want to form a partnership with the state on a pre-release center. The facility could serve persons sentenced locally that have been diverted from prison and for prisoners coming out of an institution or those that have been reassigned to the institution.

Mike Salvagni, Gallatin County Attorney, feels there are persons in MSP that should be in the prison, who should be kept in the prison, and should probably never get out of the prison. His primary concern is the protection of his community and the protection of the society in general. He feels that had there been some sort of intervention for some prisoners they may never have been sent to prison. He feels community based programs can help with the intervention. Mr. Salvangni is also a member of the Community Correction Board in Gallatin County. He supports the concept of a community correction program in association with a pre-release center for Gallatin county.

**Mr. Gamble** stated, having worked with Community Correction Boards under the Community Correction Act, he has found the three most critical people that make the board function are; the District Judge, the Sheriff and the County Attorney.

**Bill Slaughter, Gallatin County Sheriff** The mission statement of the Community Correction Board states, the mission of the Gallatin County Correction Board is to assist the courts in reducing the commitment of non-violent offenders to the prison by offering community correction facilities and programs based on citizen and victim participation. Such programs shall: be compatible with the plans of state government, emphasize the HOUSE INSTITUTIONS & CULTURAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE January 28, 1993 Page 3 of 10

programs that require accountability of sex offenders and integration into society as productive citizens, and address the injuries inflicted upon their victims. He feels the prisoners come back to their communities sooner or later so why not keep them there in a community correction program.

Lois Heetderks, Citizen Supports the community correction programs. She quoted from an article called Public Opinion Research Challenges Perception of Widespread Public Demand for Harsher Punishment by Kay Pranis and Mark Umbriet. A PhD stated that four out of five Minnesotans favor spending on education, job training and community programs rather than on prisons in order to reduce crime. More than four out of five Minnesotans indicate an interest in participating in a face-to-face meeting with the offender in the presence of a trained mediator to let the offender know how the crime affected them, to discuss their feelings and to work out a plan for repayment of losses, if they were the victim of a nonviolent property crime committed by a juvenile or young adult . Nearly three out of four chose restitution as more important than jail time in sentencing for a burglary of their own home. The results were consistent across age, income, gender, race and education level sub-groups. EXHIBIT 1

Ms. Heetderks gave statistics on previous research that found broad public support for prevention strategies over prison strategies to control crime, support for restitution over incarceration for property crimes and a gap between public opinion and policymaker perceptions of public opinion. EXHIBIT 1

She urged the committee that in these tight financial times to invest money in the areas of greatest long term benefit to the community who supply the money and to whom the offenders will be returning. She asked for the support and funding for community based correction programs.

**Earl Peace, citizen,** has a personal interest in the community correction programs. He works with inmates on a one-to-one basis giving them the support they sometimes need.

Sam Hoffman, former legislator, is a member of a Justice Fellowship Task Force. The main interest of this group is to implement the Community Correction Act. Bozeman was selected as the city to have a pilot program. Indian tribes are also interested in the community correction program. Mr. Hoffman stated the courts need an option instead of turning the inmate loose or leaving him home with a suspended sentence. Judges like the option of having the inmate in his home community. This arrangement is better for the inmate, his job and he can support himself and his family. The inmate, if he is in the community program, is able to make restitution. The community based programs and pre-release centers help to keep the prison enrollment down.

### Questions, Responses, and Discussion:

**REP. RED MENAHAN** asked the committee if they knew what plan is being referred to?

Mr. Gamble responded by saying the Community Correction Act addresses the inmate on the front end of the sentence and the Pre-release Act addresses the inmate on the end of his sentence. These two programs can be run out of the same facility.

**REP. MENAHAN** asked **Mr. Gamble** if the department wants the committee to build them a new building?

Mr. Gamble said a building does not need to be built. These programs can be privatized community projects.

Dave Armstrong, Director of the Alpha House Pre-release Center Bozeman has started implementing some of the above mentioned plans. Finding a site for a pre-release center or a community correction program is a very difficult task. He represents five pre-release centers in the state; 1) Women's Center and Alpha House Pre-release Center in Billings, 2) Pre-release Center in Butte, 3) Pre-release Center in Great Falls and 4) Missoula Life Skills Center in Missoula. The Alpha House started out with 20 beds and now has 72 beds. They contract with Yellowstone County, Stillwater County, Carbon County, and also have federal contracts. Of the 72 beds 50 beds are state beds. He supports being tough on the criminal. This approach makes the criminal hold a job, pay their own medical expenses, pay their family support and makes them pay their restitution. The inmate type has changed over the years. Todays inmates have sexual abuse problems and were victimized. If you take people out of prison you must be able to supervise them. Having a variety of options for judges is very important because then a level of treatment can be found which fits the inmate and his sentence. Money is needed for medicine to stabilize the patient so that he is able to function on his own and become a part of his community.

**REP. MENAHAN** stated that Bozeman has never had a mental health facility. He asked if Bozeman has caught up to date on mental health or are they still ignoring that it exists?

A gentleman from the audience said Bozeman is working on their mental health issues and services are being offered. They have been working on mental health issues for the past two years.

Diana Waite, Community Alternative Corrections Centers: Christian stated that every inmate, except lifers, in our prisons will some day be back on the street. Either we send them out with the skills and support to live responsibly or we pay the price in crime, prisons, and lost, wasted lives. She feels her program saves life and saves money. **EXHIBIT 2** They are hoping to start a facility where they offer their own industry in Deer Lodge -Anaconda county. Ms. Waite feels the inmates need to learn to HOUSE INSTITUTIONS & CULTURAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE January 28, 1993 Page 5 of 10

make choices and she feels by setting up an industry which will force the person to make choices for themselves as well as for their entire community. This would force them to work on a cooperative level. She has the ability to offer a christian center as a means of rehabilitation. **Ms. Waite** feels there must be changes in the visiting polices and that they must be extended.

Ron Silvers, Represents the Montana Sex Offenders Treatment Asociation and Director of Helena's Center for Sexual Health The Center for Sexual Health works with sexual assault victims and perpetrators of all ages. The organization invites probation officers to their group sessions. The MSOTA's primary purpose is to prevent sexual assault from occurring, to hold those who have committed these offenses accountable for their acts, to get them committed, to repairing the damage as much as possible, to pay for their treatment and the treatment of their victims. Mr. Silvers feels pre-release centers, more monitoring, specialized training for probation and parole officers, continuum of care for sex offenders, and deferring offenders who admit they need help, all help in making community sex offender treatment effective. Structured long term specialized sex offender treatment programs retrain individuals to attain a healthy life style. The program gives the sex offender the needed support to stop their harmful activities and turn their lives around.

**REP. MENAHAN** asked **Mr. Silvers** if, in his program, does the sex offender have to admit they have a problem and what percentage will not admit to the problem?

Mr. Silvers answered yes to the first question. There are various levels of denial. A small percentage will not admit to some level of having committed a sexual offense. Most of the offenders are in heavy denial about the degree of damage they have done. The vast majority will admit that they committed the sexual offense. The offenders must be honest, pay for their own treatment, work and make restitution in order to be in the program. Some offenders feel that prison would be easier.

REP. MENAHAN asked what percentage fail?

Mr. Silvers said as many as 30% do not make it. This program is the only one that has a case manager who tracks sex offenders.

SEN. J.D. LYNCH asked if it was true that less than 10% of the child molesters at Warm Springs can be rehabilitated.

Mr. Silvers stated that when offenders get out of Warm Springs they are not tracked, monitored and they are not in therapy with qualified therapists. Mr. Silvers favors lifetime probation/lifetime sentences in terms of monitoring these people for their whole lives. The offenders in Warm Springs will never be released. HOUSE INSTITUTIONS & CULTURAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE January 28, 1993 Page 6 of 10

**REP. MENAHAN** said the legislature and **Mr. Silvers'** organization should work together to change sentencing patterns for all of the community based programs.

Scott Crichton, Executive Director of the American Civil Liberties Union of Montana. ACLU has as part of its policy a position that the least restrictive environment is in the best interest of both the inmate and the state. He feels because of tight budgets and low funds pre-release centers are essential in keeping offenders in treatment.

Joy McGrath, Executive Director of the Mental Health Association of Montana, asked the committee for their continued support of the a new WCC facility. She would also like the committee's support in the continuation of the current level or additional metal health treatment for WCC and MSP. Mental health treatment is necessary for some people but not everyone can be saved. Mental health should have the same level of treatment capacity as basic medical care and physical care. More services and training are needed for the professionals who are working with the inmates. The victims of sexual abuse at WCC have extreme mental health needs.

Mark Cramer, citizen, has worked with the Indian tribes in the state. He supports the after care facilities using volunteers as staff.

Ken Heikes, citizen, said the city of Billings selected a site two years ago for the new WCC facility. It has been discovered that the soil at the site will not support a heavy facility. The engineers are working on plans for the foundation structure. The most recent cost has been \$573,000 and involves a cement slab and 200 pilings. The city, county and trade port will participate in 50% of the additional cost for the extra work done on the foundation if the plans for the new WCC facility are ongoing.

### Tape 1:B

Mike Mathews, National Association of Counties Steering Committee, served as chairman of the selection committee. The committee wants to build the new WCC facility in Billings. In order to have the correction program work there must be a full range of options available and for the options to work there must be an actual structural prison facility. The city is putting about \$700,000 into infrastructure, sewer, water, etc. The community commitment to this project is about \$1.1 million dollars. Mr. Mathews said there will be a full range of programs at the new facility.

Jerry Thomas, Executive Director of the Montana Tradeport Autority in Billings. Mr. Thomas bought the land for the new WCC facility. HOUSE INSTITUTIONS & CULTURAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE January 28, 1993 Page 7 of 10

Mark Watson, City Administrator for the City of Billings, feels the WCC facility is a very important project. Mr. Watson has only been in Billings for four weeks but shared with the committee that Mayor Larson and the rest of the city council also support the project. The city feels this project is a partnership in corrections for the entire state.

Mr. Crichton told the committee there is an ACLU policy that reads in part that all confined persons are entitled to adequate living space, food, recreation, medical and mental health care, and protection from physical mistreatment by guards and other inmates. There should be adequate opportunity for selfimprovement. He feels that women have been treated as "after thoughts" for far too long.

**REP. MENAHAN** asked **Mr. Crichton** if there are women in the WCC who will never get out?

Mr. Crichton responded by saying there are some women that are long-term inmates.

Mr. Macaskill said that women are fundamentally different than men. Women have different needs and issues. There are some women that require a level of control and that is one reason women end up in prison because they are out of control. There are some women at WCC that do not walk the grounds. The level of control is determined by the classification system.

SEN. J.D. LYNCH asked for a list (no names) of the women and their crimes at WCC. How many women will be going to the facility if we use the same criteria that we use on the men going to their facility. How many women could not be better served in a least restrictive environment? How many women will be going to Billings?

Mr. Macaskill said the type of crime determines where the women will be placed. He told the committee that 35% are violent offenders, 25% are drug offenders and the remaining ones are basically property offenders. There are 90 women in the system. The average length of sentence for a woman is about 10 years. The longest sentence is 100 years and there are 15 who have sentences over 20 years. The facility tries to get the inmates out into the community as soon as possible.

SEN. LYNCH feels we should have the same opportunities and alternatives for women prisoners as we do for men in the communities. If there are the same alternatives he feels this would cut down the 104 population. SEN. LYNCH asked Mr. Macaskill about "day fines". "Day fines" are programs which inmates attend only during the day. SEN. LYNCH feels "day fines" would only serve the women who live in Billings.

Mr. Macaskill said they are using this as an alternative because in the community of Billings they could utilize "day fines" as a part of the diversionary process to help keep women from going to prison. He feels they can reverse the spiral of women population going to prison.

SEN. LYNCH asked Mr. Gamble what their criteria are for sending women to WCC or to community programs?

Mr. Gamble responded by telling the committee that the selection factors will be similar to men based on the classification process. The department is currently working on an objective classification. The decision will be a combination of assessment by the parole and probation officers and judges.

**REP. MENAHAN** asked if the inmate that has the 100 year sentence has ever been up for parole?

Mr. Gamble said the inmate has never been paroled or been up for parole.

**REP. MENAHAN** asked how many women are in the secure part of the facility?

Mr. Gamble said they have 12.

MR. MENAHAN asked how many of those are emotionally disturbed or are in there for drugs or alcohol use and are under age 25?

Mr. Macaskill said all 12 of the women are there for behavioral problems and they all have some emotional difficulties. These 12 women need a much higher level of control than the other inmates. The majority of these women are under age 25.

Bernie Vanee, member of the Evangilical Churches of Montana, stated he supports the second chaplain position at MSP.

Melinda Erickson, Gallatin Community Corrections Board Member, said the people of Bozeman are anxious to be involved in the community correction program. True justice holds offenders accountable for paying restitution and it restores victims. Restored justice promotes three reforms. The first is that the victim has explicit rights in criminal cases, the second is that sentences should include restitution and community service instead of prison, and the third promotes reconciliation between victim and offender. The advantages to the reforms are they protect the public by using prison space for dangerous offenders, they save money because community correction programs cost much less, they reduce the need for new prison construction, and they promote justice.

Harley Warner, Representative of the Montana Associations of Churches, said the association supports the new WCC building in Billings. They support not only the new building but the programs that will go with the building. HOUSE INSTITUTIONS & CULTURAL EDUCATION SUBCOMMITTEE January 28, 1993 Page 9 of 10

Jim Reno, advocate of education believes the facility should be built in a community that has an education component. He stated Billings has a great community wide program which could educationally support the new facility.

Kathy Hanson, volunteer, visits with inmates at MSP, WCC and Mountain View School on a weekly and monthly basis. She supports the new women's facility.

**Colleen O'Conner, MS Counselor,** feels the women need to be able to visit with a chaplain and that group programs are very necessary.

Berta Halverson, volunteer, supports the new women's facility. She feels the women need more space and more staff for their programming.

**REP. MENAHAN,** asked **Mr. Macaskill** how many people in his facility have been to Mountain View School?

Mr. Macaskill responded by saying that 20% of the inmates have been to Mountain View School.

**REP. MENAHAN,** asked why something is not being done to stop the influx into the prison with programs rather than what is being done at the prison today. He feels the students could be identified and receive help before they get to Mountain View School.

SEN. TOM BECK, said that everyone wants new programs and there is no money for these programs.

A motion was made to adjourn.

## ADJOURNMENT

Adjournment: 10:00 am

ÉD GRADY, Chair MURPHY, Secretary JUDY

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## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

# INSTITUTIONS/CULTURAL EDU. SUB-COMMITTEE

ROLL CALL

DATE - 5-53

NAME	PRESENT	ABSENT	EXCUSED
SEN. GARY AKLESTAD			
SEN. TOM BECK	*		
SEN. EVE FRANKLIN, VICE CHAIRMAN	$\checkmark$		
SEN. J.D. LYNCH	1 st		
REP. RED MENAHAN			
REP. LINDA NELSON			
REP. ED GRADY, CHAIRMAN			

# Public Opinion Research Challenges Perception of Widespread Public Demand for Harsher Punishment

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October, 1992

# Introduction

The results of a Minnesota public opinion poll challenge conventional wisdom about public attitudes toward crime and punishment, raising serious questions about the direction of public policy on sentencing. This report will present those results, discuss implications for public policy and compare the results to the outcomes of previous public opinion research.

# **Findings**

• Four out of five Minnesotans favor spending on education, job training and community programs rather than on prisons in order to reduce crime.

• More than four out of five Minnesotans indicate an interest in participating in a face to face meeting with the offender in the presence of a trained mediator to let the offender know how the crime affected them, to discuss their feelings and to work out a plan for repayment of losses, if they were the victim of a nonviolent property crime committed by a juvenile or young adult.

• Nearly three out of four Minnesotas chose restitution as more important than jail time in sentencing for a burglary of their own home.

• The results were consistent across age, income, gender, race and education level subgroups.



# <u>Methodology</u>

A statewide survey of attitudes of Minnesota adults toward issues of crime and punishment, part of an omnibus survey consisting of questions on a variety of topics, was conducted by the University of Minnesota Center for Survey Research in October and November of 1991. The survey was conducted through telephone interviews and sampled 825 Minnesota adults. The sample was demographically and geographically balanced to reflect Minnesota's total population. A sampling of this size would be expected to have a sampling error of plus or minus 3.5 percentage points.

"Minnesota has several programs which allow crime victims to meet with the person who committed the crime, in the presence of a trained mediator, to let this person know how the crime affected them, and to work out a plan for repayment of losses. Suppose you were the victim of a non-violent property crime committed by a juvenile or young adult. How likely would you be to participate in a program like this?" Not very likely 18% Very likely 51% Somewhat likely 31% "For the greatest impact on reducing crime, should additional money be spent on more prisons, or spent on education, job training and community programs?" Both (volunteered) Other. 2% 3% Prisons 16%% Education, job training & community programs 80%

# Implications for Public Policy

The results of this poll uniformly reflect a far less vindictive attitude toward offenders than is commonly assumed. Responses reveal a greater public interest in restitution and prevention than in retribution. They also indicate low public confidence in incarceration as an effective strategy to reduce crime.

The traditional concerns of the public for safety and holding offenders accountable are reflected in this poll, but not in the simplistic terms commonly attributed to the public. Results indicate a greater public interest in personal accountability to the victim, through restitution and face to face meetings with the victim, than in retribution through jail or prison sentences. Public safety is seen as an outcome of education, job training and community programs rather than incarceration.

The overwhelming support in the poll for investment in prevention strategies rather than prisons is consistent with traditional Minnesota public policy which has invested heavily in education and social programs while using prisons sparingly. However, policy trends in Minnesota between 1986 and 1991 drifted away from that traditional approach. While the prison population and corrections budget grew rapidly in the eighties, Minnesota fell from 4th to 28th in the nation in the percent of children in poverty.

The public policy trend toward increased use of incarceration is premised on the belief that the public is clamoring for a "tougher" response to crime, primarily through harsher sentencing. This public opinion research raises serious doubts about the validity of that assumption which is the rationale for most sentencing legislation in Minnesota.

# Previous Public Opinion Research

The results of this survey are consistent with a growing body of public opinion research across the United States. Previous research has similarly found broad public support for prevention strategies over prison strategies to control crime, support for restitution over incarceration for property crimes and a gap between public opinion and policymaker perceptions of public opinion.

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• A national poll conducted in the summer of 1988 by Louis Harris and Associates found that when asked which approach would be most effective in cutting the rate of crime, 80% of the respondents chose spending to attack the causes of crime (poverty, lack of education) rather than spending to send more criminals to prison for a long time.

• A September, 1991, national poll conducted by The Wirthlin Group found that four out of five Americans favor community corrections programs over incarceration for non-dangerous offenders.

• Public opinion research conducted through focus groups by the Public Agenda Foundation in Alabama in 1989 and in Delaware in 1991 found that public attitudes toward sentencing shifted dramatically to more support for community corrections punishments when participants were given more information about non-prison sentences, problems of prison overcrowding and costs.

• A public opinion research project conducted in Hennepin County, Minnesota, in 1991 by Imho Bae, University of Minnesota, found strong public support for restitution as an alternative penalty to incarceration for property offenders. This research also found a significant lack of awareness by criminal justice officials of public support for restitution and found that crime victims seem to be less punitive than nonvictims. Bae concludes that his findings imply that citizens perceive crime issues in a broader social context and independently from reports of the mass media.

• A study by Gottfredson and Taylor in Maryland in 1980 found serious misconceptions among policymakers of the public will with respect to corrections issues. Policymakers based their priorities for the operation of the correctional system on their perception of public will. However, policymakers' perceptions of public opinion were almost the exact opposite of measured public opinion. Policymakers perceived the public to give the highest priority to incapacitation and punishment when the public's actual highest priorities were deterrence and rehabilitation. Punishment was the lowest priority for the public.

• A study in 1985 by the Michigan Prison & Jail Overcrowding Project found that policymakers believed that 12 percent of the general public would support increased use of community corrections when, in fact, 66 percent were supportive.

The findings of the current research, like those of previous research efforts, suggest an urgent need to examine the underlying assumptions of policy directions in criminal justice. This lack of congruence between policymakers' perceptions of public opinion and actual public opinion may explain the widespread dissatisfaction and frustration with the criminal justice system. Policymakers are systematically trying to please the public, but the public wants something different. The more policymakers misread the desires of the public, the farther they get from satisfying the actual desires of the public.

## **Restorative Justice**

The results of this survey demonstrate broad public support for central tenets of the emerging criminal justice reform movement called restorative justice. The restorative justice model views crime as a conflict between the victim and the offender, not between the offender and "the state." In this model offenders are held accountable through taking responsibility and taking action to repair the harm done to the victim.

The restorative justice model proposes increasing public safety through building community harmony and meeting community needs. Public support for prevention programs over prison building indicates public agreement with that principle. The public expresses strong support for restitution for victims and very strong interest in face to face meetings with offenders. Similarly, the restorative justice model places a higher priority on the restoration of the victim than on retribution and values personal accountability to the victim more than abstract punishment imposed by the state.

Payment of restitution to victims and involvement in victim offender mediation programs, both supported by this survey, allow for much greater involvement of both victims and offenders in the criminal justice process which is another goal of the restorative justice model.

## <u>Summary</u>

This research provides us with significant information about public ideas of certain DOs and DON'Ts of criminal justice policy.

- DON'T spend money on more prisons to prevent crime;
- DO spend money on education and job training to prevent crime.
- DON'T lock up every burglar;
- DO make them pay restitution.
- DO expand victim opportunities, as a volunteer choice, to be a part of the process by meeting with the offender to: let the offender know how the crime affected them, to get answers to questions, to work out a restitution agreement.
- DO encourage processes which hold offenders directly accountable to victims.

This research shows significant public support for the legislative direction of the 1992 crime bill which emphasized investment in prevention. However, many changes in criminal justice public policy in Minnesota in recent years are in a direction contrary to that suggested by the public in this poll. Those initiatives should be re-examined in light of this research.

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## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES VISITOR'S REGISTER

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ARE AVAILABLE IF YOU CARE TO SUBMIT WRITTEN TESTIMONY.

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