

MINUTES OF THE HOUSE COMMITTEE ON FEDERAL AND STATE AFFAIRS

The meeting was called to order by Chairperson Bill Mason at 1:30 p.m. on January 27, 2003 in Room 313-S of the Capitol.

All members were present except: Representative Rehorn - E
Representative Wilson - E

Committee staff present: Russell Mills, Legislative Research Department
Mary Torrence, Office of Revisor of Statutes
Rose Marie Glatt, Committee Secretary

Conferees appearing before the committee: Representative Candy Ruff
Don Raymond, Director, The InnerChange Freedom Initiative (IFI)
Samuel Mutfwang, IFI
Timothy Diemart, IFI
Scott McLean, After care management, IFI

Others attending: See attached list

The Chairman opened the hearing for bill introductions. Hearing none, he introduced Representative Candy Ruff that presented The InnerChange Freedom Initiative, a faith-based prison ministry program underway at the Ellsworth Correctional Facility (Attachment 1). Although a new program in Kansas, a similar Texas program has an extremely low recidivism rate. She introduced Don Raymond who explained the program.

Don Raymond, Director, InnerChange Freedom Initiative, provided details of the program stating that inmates enter the program on a volunteer basis. In prison they meet mentors that provide spiritual classes, GED classes, Bible studies, tutoring, computer classes and literacy classes. They work toward identifying positive outcomes while incarcerated and once released, they continue that commitment with the support of mentors from a community church (Attachment 2). He introduced two inmates that were currently in Phase II and Phase III of the program that shared their stories.

Samuel Mutfwang, who was born in Nigeria, reviewed his educational background and the events that led to his incarceration. He testified that the program changed his life and gave him the opportunity to utilize his education applying it to daily life (No written testimony).

Timothy Diemart stated that a life of alcohol and drugs led to his imprisonment in 1996. The IFI program was very structured and taught discipline and self-control, and inmates who accepted the Biblical teachings, and applied them to their lives generally excelled in the program(Attachment 3). He explained the importance of community support in becoming acclimated to life outside prison.

Scott McLean who oversees the after care management program for IFI explained the inmates progress as they left prison (No written testimony). Volunteers from local churches serve as mentors for one-on-one aftercare counseling to help men rebuild their lives with a foundation based on Jesus Christ. They help them reunite with family, secure living quarters, provide transportation, secure employment and deal with life's challenges for 6-12 months after their release from prison.

The meeting adjourned at 2:20 p.m. with the next meeting scheduled for January 28, 2003.

CONTINUATION SHEET