

- 1) During our presentations we heard that Defense systems in place for Juvenile Offenders needs to be improved. To begin to remedy this it is recommended that KBIDS (Kansas Board of Indigent's Defense) focus on providing attorneys who will work to find alternatives to incarceration. For example, The Federal Job Corp in Manhattan is an example of a place where juvenile offenders who have not been convicted of a crime can go in lieu of incarceration, get their GED or high school diploma, learn a job skill and be given a chance to build a new and productive life style. Yet attorneys that are assigned to juvenile defense may not have knowledge of this or other choices.

- 2) When the committee toured the Women's Prison in Topeka last year, we saw women doing laundry and sewing quilts and prison uniforms. While these skills are quite important for homemakers, we need to prepare our women prisoners for today's job skills and today's workforce. Women in the general populations have been disproportionately affected by the COVID19 pandemic. Normal job opportunities that center around the social industry such as food service, waitressing and cosmetology have been greatly reduced. Because of the slowing of the economy, women have been forced to stay home to be with children who would have normally been in the classrooms, and women who would be able to continue their work have lost their childcare providers well. Women in prison need to learn new job skills in order to be able to hold a meaningful job once they are released from prison.

When I inquired about Work Keys testing and technology-based learning programs in the adult and juvenile facilities in Kansas I learned that we do offer such learning programs in all correctional facilities and the juvenile facility in Kansas. The KDOC began deploying tablets two years ago to residents and provide self-directed/self-learning content. The current ratio is one table to four residents. KDOC is exploring allowing residents with financial means to lease their own tablets to reduce the demand. However, the program does not allow residents to gain credit toward a high school diploma, GED or post-secondary degree. But this is a goal for KDOC. The costs of adequate bandwidth and wireless networks in the unique environment of a correctional facility have not been accomplished.

I recommend that the KDOC review purchasing opportunities through the Midwestern Higher Education Compact (MHEC) regarding purchasing more tablets so that more prisoners can be involved in this educational opportunity.

- 3) In 2008 we passed legislation to allow courts to set a price and collect money for granting an Expungement of felony convictions. With a felony on one's record it is difficult to get a job, a bank account, or a professional license. Expungements require a length of time without any new criminal offenses. This time period is part of the punishment -which also could be reconsidered – but it places such an unnecessary burden on someone who has followed the rules after a conviction. Legislation should be passed to repeal this funding source and the SGF should pay for our court services.

- 4) In our discussions we heard about the barriers to employment and the high social and economic costs of the state suspending a driver's license for unpaid fees, fines, or court costs. This is an economic harm to individuals who are trying to recover from prior convictions and court appearances.

It was noted that people who can legally drive are much more likely to have jobs. Public transportation, where available, is an option. But many professions require people to drive, have a valid license, and insurance. Research indicates that approximately 75% of all suspended drivers continue to drive. We need to explore alternatives and do away with this practice in Kansas.

Representative Sydney Carlin
District 66
11/17/2020