

1 children, to get them to be successful after they leave that  
2 facility, is not an opportunity to be missed, and I'm  
3 hopeful that by working together we can change that ethos so  
4 that it's unacceptable and people look at it as a matter of  
5 concern, not a matter of levity. And, so, I appreciate the  
6 opportunity to testify before you this morning.

7 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Thank you very much for your  
8 testimony.

9 Ms. Chunn, thank you for being here.

10 MS. CHUNN: Thank you.

11 CHAIRMAN WALTON: Nice to see you.

12 MS. CHUNN: It's my pleasure.

13 Distinguished members of the Commission, let me  
14 just begin by saying the American Correctional Association  
15 has a longstanding track record of trying to make sure that  
16 it stems the flow of young people from the juvenile system  
17 into the adult system. While our organization began in  
18 adult corrections, it's very clear that the commitment  
19 that's demonstrated through the policies and resolutions  
20 that we've promulgated make it clear that our commitment is  
21 not just a passing fancy. My written comments speak very  
22 much to the notion that there are very few organizations who  
23 really understand the connection between the juvenile system  
24 and the adult system, while, in fact, the general public  
25 does, and most other persons outside the system understand

1 that there is a growing flow from the juvenile system to the  
2 adult system that all of us want to see reduced.

3 I'd like to spend my time talking to you a little  
4 bit about things that you probably already know but I'd like  
5 to remind us of as we move through this. One thing is,  
6 there's a real issue about who's being locked up too often.

7 We began to look at what happens with poor and inadequate  
8 representation of juveniles, parents who are often confused  
9 completely about the system, and the notion of selection of  
10 people. There are a lot of politics involved in selecting  
11 leadership in juvenile justice at the state and local  
12 levels. Since kids don't vote, their parents don't vote,  
13 and their communities don't generally support in financial  
14 ways candidates for office, it becomes a no win proposition.

15 As one legislator in my home state said to me when I was  
16 Director of Youth Services, there's just nothing in it for  
17 us, there isn't really a payoff, except that you have a  
18 moral and an ethical responsibility to move forward. Most  
19 people don't see it as what gets you elected or keeps you  
20 elected. Add to that that the field has little consensus  
21 about what is good practice.

22 In the thirty years that I've been in juvenile  
23 justice, I've watched us move from positive peer culture,  
24 WEDWING (phonetic) was the thing to do, to close all the  
25 training schools -- Massachusetts sort of led the way to

1 that -- to now let's have small facilities, we jump from one  
2 thing to another, which shows a true lack of consensus about  
3 what good practice can be. If there's an organization  
4 that's done something to really intervene in that lack of  
5 consistency, I would submit it's been the work of the  
6 American Correctional Association. While our accreditation  
7 efforts began for adult facilities in 1974, by 1979 we were  
8 doing accreditation for juvenile facilities. I was a part  
9 of the landmark conditions of confinement study in the early  
10 '90s that was commissioned by Congress and carried out by  
11 the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention, and  
12 while we looked at assaults, we did not place a lot of  
13 emphasis on sexual assaults. Perhaps now we recognize that  
14 perhaps we should have done more than that. It is very  
15 difficult to get some consensus on what is important in this  
16 field. Add to that that you don't run for the Supreme Court  
17 based on your track record as a person who's worked in  
18 juvenile justice. So, there's no money, there's no status,  
19 there's very little payoff and respect. As the kids would  
20 say on the street, "You don't get no respect" for having  
21 worked in juvenile justice.

22           Leaders more often than not are appointed at the  
23 state and local level for reasons other than their  
24 experience in the criminal justice system. At times they  
25 are appointed because they need to meet other issues like do

1 we have anybody in the cabinet who's a minority person, or  
2 do we have the representation of women, or do we have  
3 somebody that will work well with the legal community. So,  
4 there are various other reasons that often hold more sway  
5 than does this person bring experience to the field.

6 More often than not, advocates have led the way in  
7 making some changes, but it's rarer that these advocates  
8 have concerns for children in trouble. More often, they are  
9 interested in foster care children, and there is a link  
10 between the two, but these children in juvenile justice are  
11 destined to become the backbone of America by being our  
12 minimum wage people and, so, we have to look at what are the  
13 outcomes that we can structure for them.

14 Besides the inconsistency, we also don't get  
15 resources. It's quietly kept, majorly speaking, the  
16 resources that come to the criminal justice system come last  
17 to juvenile justice. So, it means, then, while we  
18 understand that these are the young people who move through  
19 the system, we are often reluctant to provide the money and  
20 the support that they need.

21 Being a good juvenile justice executive means  
22 having a personal commitment to wanting to see children do  
23 better. Often when one is appointed, that is not part of  
24 the Governor's agenda. He doesn't say to you, I want to  
25 make sure you do a great job. More often than not, they

1 say, do the best that you can with what you have. Well,  
2 unless you have a personal commitment to the values that you  
3 believe are important in public service is very different.  
4 Every system is unique, and like brothers and sisters, when  
5 we were coming through we didn't want to be compared to  
6 Massachusetts, and now people don't want to be compared to  
7 Missouri. Each state has its own roots in how its system  
8 evolved; therefore, any objective oversight that is not  
9 already a part of the system begins to complicate and add  
10 layers of bureaucratic response that perhaps are not  
11 warranted.

12           What we can do is retrofit and revise some of the  
13 things that we are doing already, because we know that  
14 through, for example, accreditation, that people do the  
15 right thing because they want the pride that comes with  
16 having been accredited. You distinguish yourself as an  
17 organization when it is clear that your work force and your  
18 community and your constituencies have a great deal of  
19 respect for how you do business and they can expect that  
20 from you consistently.

21           What do we need to do? First of all, we need to  
22 make sure that those who are appointing authorities, we need  
23 to influence folks like the state council -- the Council of  
24 State Governments, the National Governor's Association. We  
25 need to provide them with the leadership information that

1 says you can choose somebody who can structure a safe and  
2 therapeutic community. We need to encourage child advocates  
3 to be as concerned about delinquent kids. For a while, the  
4 ACA, as I was told, is not your friend. I found that not to  
5 be true. The ACA, the ACLU, the ABA, all of those  
6 organizations have demonstrated over time an interest in  
7 doing the right thing, notwithstanding the hard and long  
8 work of the Office of Juvenile Justice Delinquency  
9 Prevention. We need to encourage people to be involved in  
10 some kind of accreditation. That is the outside measure  
11 that helps people to look at whether or not they're changing  
12 the culture of the organization rather than simply  
13 complying. Not everybody can do performance-based  
14 standards. Not everybody can do ACA accreditation, even  
15 though ours is performance-based, too, but you need to look  
16 at some measure that changes the culture rather than just  
17 getting things in shape for some outside person who's going  
18 to oversee what's going on.

19           And last but not least I'd say we need to do some  
20 things about empowering parents to understand how juvenile  
21 justice systems work, and there needs to be a way for  
22 parents to have some guidance besides having those people  
23 who are court involved who are desperate a lot of times just  
24 to look at the response that they need to make.

25           Thank you.