

MTC Supports Corrections Reform

MTC Corrections Position Statement—June 30, 2015

Since 1987, MTC has been operating safe and secure correctional facilities and preparing offenders for successful reintegration into their communities. MTC believes all correctional institutions must be held accountable for the fair and humane treatment of those in their custody. All prisons must be held to the highest standards in providing clean and well-maintained facilities, quality and timely health care, and programs that are effective in preparing offenders for reentry. MTC is making a social impact by giving thousands of offenders an opportunity to change their lives

MTC advocates for innovation and continual improvement within correctional systems and supports broader reform efforts to responsibly reduce prison populations. MTC supports corrections reforms and initiatives that improve safety and prepare offenders to successfully reenter their communities, such as:

MTC Corrections Overview
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Operates 25 correctional facilities in eight states• Provides health and dental care to inmates in 15 correctional facilities• Secures over 29,000 offenders with programming to reduce recidivism• Employs 5,382 corrections staff• Provides probation and parole services to 40,000 offenders in the United Kingdom

- Maximizing opportunities for pro-social engagement of offenders
- Providing a greater continuity of services from custody to community
- Reforming the use of restrictive housing
- Allocating adequate resources for the treatment of mentally ill offenders
- Implementing sentencing reform policies
- Providing greater leadership, training, and professional development for staff

Maximizing Opportunities for Pro-social Engagement of Offenders

MTC believes the rehabilitative role of corrections is to prepare offenders to successfully reenter society. Offenders must be fully engaged in a pro-social learning environment with an array of programming opportunities to improve their values, habits, and skills and return them to society better equipped to lead productive and satisfying lives. Programs should be based upon the carefully assessed needs and risk factors of offenders and should include:

- Educational opportunities
- Opportunities to learn and use work skills
- Substance abuse education and treatment
- Programs to build and maintain family and community relationships
- Cognitive and behavioral skills programs
- Gender-responsive programs



Correctional institutions must be held accountable for engaging offenders in pro-social programs and activities on a consistent basis, ensuring staff spend the optimum amount of time directly engaged with offenders, and providing effective programs and activities to prepare offenders for reentry.

Providing a Greater Continuity of Services from Custody to Community

Nearly all offenders will reenter their communities at some point. When they do, offenders face multiple barriers to accessing housing, education, employment, substance abuse treatment, health care, and mental health treatment. Failure to address any of these barriers greatly increases an offender's chances of reoffending. Programs and services connecting offenders to the resources they need for successful reentry must begin in custody and continue after release into the community.

Reforming the Use of Restrictive Housing

While it is sometimes necessary to remove inmates from the general population for the safety of staff and other inmates, MTC supports changes to the use of restrictive housing. Changes should result in:

- Allowing the general population to engage in pro-social programs without fear
- Reducing the number of offenders in restrictive housing, reducing time spent, and reducing the types of offenses that lead to restrictive housing
- Providing a pathway back to the general population

Allocating Resources for the Treatment of Mentally Ill Offenders

Most correctional institutions lack the resources to adequately address the unique needs of the many mentally ill offenders in their custody. Many offenders have both mental health and substance abuse problems that, if left untreated, contribute to behavioral problems in custody and increase the likelihood of reoffending after release. Correctional institutions must have the resources and training to screen all offenders for mental health and substance abuse problems upon admission and refer them for further evaluation and appropriate treatment.

Implementing Sentencing Reform Policies

The United States has the largest prison population in the world. Mass incarceration has strained the resources of corrections departments and has negatively impacted many families and communities. MTC strongly supports finding solutions in the criminal justice system to responsibly reduce incarceration rates, while meeting the public safety needs of communities.

Prisons should be reserved for the most serious offenders and there should be adequate resources for alternative sanctions that hold offenders accountable for their actions. MTC encourages policymakers in all federal, state, and local jurisdictions to implement effective sentencing reforms such as:

- Establishing special courts for certain populations such as veterans, drug offenders, and the mentally ill
- Expanding the use of community-based sanctions

- Using graduated sentencing for probation and parole violators—alternative accountability measures such as electronic monitoring, day reporting centers, and community service as alternatives to prison
- Scaling back mandatory minimum sentences and allowing greater judicial discretion in sentencing
- Removing unnecessary barriers that prevent released offenders from securing housing, employment, and services needed for successful reentry

Providing Greater Leadership, Training, and Professional Development

Correctional institutions need strong leaders to enforce the highest standards of prison management and instill in all staff a sense of value and purpose. MTC has established a culture that promotes respect between and among staff and offenders. MTC leaders hold staff accountable for safety, security, and positive engagement with offenders.

The quality and commitment of staff are vital to the efficient and effective operations of correctional institutions. Corrections is a skilled profession which requires continual education, training, and professional development to ensure staff are using best practices and updating their skills. The expertise of all staff must be aligned to provide for the safety, treatment, and rehabilitation of offenders.

Transforming Lives and Making Communities Safer

MTC firmly believes in the capacity of corrections to transform lives and make communities safer. MTC will continue to devote its resources to improving operations at all facilities and providing offenders the pro-social learning opportunities they need to change their behavior and successfully return to their families and communities. As policymakers institute new reforms within corrections systems, MTC encourages them to hold all correctional institutions to the highest standards in providing for the safety, security, and lasting rehabilitation of offenders.