

NAACP LOUISIANA STATE CONFERENCE

President Ernest L. Johnson
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July 28, 2016

Honorable Loretta Lynch
United States Attorney General
US Department of Justice
Washington, D.C.

RE: Recommendations - Baton Rouge Community Police Relations

Dear Attorney General Lynch:

As President of the Louisiana NAACP and a Member of the NAACP National Board of Directors, I hereby submit the following recommendations for action to address the Black Community/Police relations:

1. Creation of the Southern University Law Center (HBCU) Clinical Education Reentry Program funded by a grant from the United States Department of Justice. This program will allow law students under the direction of a license attorney to provide legal services to the Baton Rouge community through a Re-entry Program.
2. Creation of Police Department Interactive Training Program vs Residency Requirements. Primary police officers who are designated to patrol certain neighborhoods will receive interactive training by attending churches, schools, community centers and meeting with local community citizens during a three month training period each year.
3. The Tale of Four Cities. In 1947, white citizens created the Baton Rouge Plan of Government. Under this Plan of Government, there are now 4 cities located within the Parish of East Baton Rouge: The city of Baton Rouge, the city of Baker, the city of Zachary and the city of Central.

All of the cities except Baton Rouge elect their own mayors and city council members. The city of Baton Rouge (60% African American) does not elect its own mayor and city council members. The Baton Rouge Mayor/President is elected by all of the voters in the parish including those residing within the cities of Baker, Zachary and Central City. Individuals are elected from throughout the parish including the three other cities serve on what is called a "Metropolitan Council". Members serving on the Metropolitan Council are allowed to vote on City of Baton Rouge matters including taxation are able to do so through inter-governmental agreements signed each year.

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This Plan of Government is diluting the voting strength of those African American residing within the City limits of Baton Rouge. We believe that Section 2 of the Voting Rights Act and the Equal Protection Clause of the 14th of the United States Constitution are being violated. We need reform of the City of Baton-Parish of East Baton Rouge Government. To give the citizens residing within the city limits of Baton Rouge a real voice in the operation of the government. We are requesting an investigation and action by the Voting Rights Section of the Department Justice to help change this government which was created during the period of segregation in our state.

Thanks very much for your consideration and acceptance of these recommendations.

Respectfully submitted,

Ernest L. Johnson, Esq.

President Louisiana NAACP
Member NAACP National Board of Director

CC: President Cornell Brooks
National NAACP

President Mike McCalhand
NAACP Baton Rouge Branch

“ [I]mproving rehabilitation programs and reentry outcomes doesn't just help formerly incarcerated individuals; it's also good for our communities as a whole. ”

- Attorney General Loretta Lynch,
2/23/16

Reentry Program

Reentry programs and reentry courts are designed to help returning citizens successfully "reenter" society following their incarceration, thereby reducing recidivism, improving public safety, and saving money.

A primary focus of our reentry efforts is to remove or reduce barriers to successful reentry, so that motivated individuals - who have served their time and paid their debt to society - are able to compete for a job, attain stable housing, support their children and their families, and contribute to their communities.

EDVA's Local Reentry Program

The Second Chance Offender Rehabilitation Effort (SCORE) program began in the Eastern District of Virginia (EDVA) in 2009. SCORE is a reentry court that aspires to provide the means, opportunity, and inspiration for substance abusers to achieve and self-sustain a productive, more meaningful life for themselves. The goal of the program is to increase public safety by developing lawful citizens whose successful re-entry into society enhances the quality of life in the community.

The SCORE program for EDVA is available to offenders who are on federal probation or supervised release with a documented history of substance abuse, as long as they have at least two years remaining on supervision. The program is voluntary and requires participation for a minimum of 15 months. Graduates of the program will receive up to a one-year reduction in the

term of supervision. If an offender has less than one year left on supervision upon successful completion of the program, the remainder of supervision will be terminated.

SCORE participants are intensively supervised in this five-phase program. Requirements include, but are not limited to: sobriety, substance abuse and mental health treatment, employment or community service, attendance at regular support network meetings, obtaining and building a relationship with a sponsor, and regular court appearances. SCORE participants are rewarded for positive behavior and sanctioned for negative or illegal behavior. If a participant fails to successfully complete SCORE, the participant must appear before the U.S. District Judge who placed the participant on federal supervision.

Each SCORE program is overseen by U.S. Magistrate Judges, with input from the SCORE Team, which includes representatives from the U.S. Attorney's Office, the Office of the Federal Public Defender, the U.S. Probation Office, and a treatment provider. Community partners have also provided valuable assistance.

More than 20 participants have graduated from SCORE programs in EDVA as of April 2016.

Federal Interagency Reentry Council (FIRC)

The FIRC, established by the Attorney General in January 2011, comprises 20 federal agencies representing a significant executive branch commitment to coordinating reentry efforts and advancing effective reentry policies. It is premised on the recognition that many federal agencies have a major stake in prisoner reentry. [Learn more\[external link\]](#)

Reentry Issues



Public Safety

Reentry improves public safety. Approximately two million adults are incarcerated in state prisons and local jails. Nationally, two out of every three people released from state prisons are rearrested for a new offense and about half are reincarcerated within three years. Reducing recidivism is critical for increasing long-term public safety and lowering corrections costs.



Employment

Individuals who have been incarcerated can expect their future earnings to be reduced by about 40 percent after they return to their communities. Reentry efforts seek to reduce barriers to

employment so that people with past criminal involvement – after they have been held accountable and paid their dues – can compete for work opportunities.



Health

There is often a lack of continuity in care from inside the prison to the community. Reentry efforts can help ensure that the Affordable Care Act and other reforms will significantly increase access to appropriate physical and behavioral health interventions after release from incarceration. Substance abuse can be a significant impediment to successful reentry and a major health concern. Addressing the root causes of substance abuse leads to improved public safety.



Education

Education is a core resource for release preparation, and is an evidence-based tool for reducing recidivism among adults and juveniles. Participation in education programming was associated with a 16 percent reduction in recidivism in one study. Education is also a critical building block for increasing employment opportunities.



Housing

Stable housing with appropriate supportive services is a key factor in preventing homelessness and reducing recidivism. The goal is to reduce barriers to public and subsidized housing, and advance promising models that improve outcomes for people who repeatedly use corrections and homeless services.

Additional Resources

Please visit the following resources for more information about reentry:

- [Reentry MythBusters\[external link\]](#)
- [National Reentry Resource Center\[external link\]](#)
- [Federal Interagency Reentry Council\[external link\]](#)