

Pa State Legislators

I am a retired State Parole Agent with 21 years' experience supervising adult offenders.

I spent 9 years as a field agent and 12 years as a parole supervisor.

My role was to protect society and to assist adult offenders to re-integrate into the community.

Employment was the key to success in many of my cases. I found it disheartening when a new release showed up for their intake and I found that their driving privileges were suspended for 10 to 15 years due to a drug conviction.

Most employers will not hire an individual if the individual does not have a valid driver's license.

If they did find employment it was usually for minimum wage through an agency that hired out laborers like "Labor Ready". Some days they found no work. Very difficult to be successful in recovery when worried about the next meal.

Having a driver's license upon release opens many avenues to the offender. My co-worker Joyce Douglass was able to find her offenders, that had a license, meaningful employment by placing them in schools for welding and truck driving. She also was able to place them into the best outpatient drug and alcohol centers because they could drive. Those without licenses spent an inordinate amount of time on busses to attend therapy and meetings, if they had bus service at all. Otherwise, the responsibility of getting to and from mandatory treatment, or work, fell on family members.

I am hopeful the legislation is passed to put an end to driver license suspensions for those convicted of drug offenses and Court suspensions for the use of a vehicle in a crime.

It just makes sense if lowering recidivism is the goal of Parole Board and the Pa Legislators

Very Respectfully

Nester L. Werkstein

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