

FLORIDA COUNCIL ON THE SOCIAL STATUS OF BLACK MEN AND BOYS

MEETING MINUTES

A teleconference meeting of the Florida CSSBMB, Criminal Justice & Gangs and Education Subcommittee was held on Wednesday, July 6, 2011.

Council Members Present:

Argatha Gilmore
Eddy Regnier
Matthew Gregory
Andre Smith
Shila Salem
Albert Simpson
William Hardin

Council Members Absent:

Gypsy Gallardo

Others Present:

David Denson (Tampa)
Ervin Cohen (Jacksonville)

First Agenda Item: Welcome

Ms. Argatha Gilmore, chair of Criminal Justice & Gangs subcommittee welcome everyone on the call.

Second Agenda Item: Roll Call

Roll call was executed by Council staff Tawanna Leven-Forbes.

Third Agenda Item: Opening Invocation

Opening invocation was rendered by Andre Smith.

Fourth Agenda Item: Call to Order

The meeting was called to at 9:15 a.m.

Fifth Agenda Item: Chairman Comments

Ms. Gilmore expressed her appreciation to David Denson, Community participant and Ervin Cohen for their participation on the conference call. She asked that everyone on the conference call give a brief introduction.

- Mr. Ervin Cohen, Executive Director for the New Town Success Zone at Edward Waters College in Jacksonville
- David Denson, Men & Boys Program, Tampa

Sixth Agenda Item: Data Collection Discussion

Ms. Gilmore talked about focal points for the committee.

- What have the Council recommended in the past?
- What has happened to those recommendations?
- Where do we need to go next, given that much of disparity identified in the past has remained unchanged?

- Looking at Florida, how has the ongoing recession affected violent crime rate among African American boys and men? (What are the statistics on the number of African American men between the ages of 14-24 incarcerated in Florida?)
- What is the cost of incarcerating nonviolent African American men in Florida?
- What percentage of them could have been diverted to less costly alternatives?
- What is the total number of African American men and boys incarcerated compared to white Floridians?
- Are there more African American men incarcerated than white men proportionally?
- Is there a sentencing disparity for African American men?
- How can we address these disparities?
- What information do we need to have, and what alliances, coalitions and partnerships, i.e. (NAACP, Urban League, ACLU, Attorney General's office) do we need to have in order to effect change?

Seventh Agenda Item: Member Comments

Ms. Gilmore asked for ideas base on historical perspective of the Council.

Rev. Simpson talked about the prospective of the CJ&G sub-committee and what was done in the past. He talked about some members on the Council acting as advocates to get some support.

Mr. Smith talked about the challenges in the recommendations process and asked what happened to the recommendations that were submitted in the past. He mentioned that the next view months are critical where departments are submitting budget request for next year's budget; any request for support to the Council has to be done soon.

Ms. Salem talked about the recommendations and who they are directed to. She mentioned that her agency is moving forward with legislative budget request for next year's budget.

Rev. Simpson asked Ms. Salem about a programmatic model that's designed for impacting or empowering programs to address those wrap around services for the ex-offenders once they transition.

Ms. Salem talked about the new focus on re-entry that will assist ex-offenders and the solution to move towards more programmatic models.

- Reallocate current resources
- Each correctional institution would have one academic teacher
- Utilize inmate teaching assistance

Mr. Smith talked about recommendations that had been submitted in the past that the methodology of the reasons behind the recommendation was never used.

Rev. Simpson stated that the focus for the sub-committee could be both a preventive and interventional model which goes hand-in-hand.

Mr. Hardin talked about part of intervention diversion and costly incarceration to community base programs which would be a better sale to both the Legislature and the Governor.

- Prevent some concerns with gang activity
- Gives opportunity for treatment
- Keep families whole

Ms. Gilmore talked about the idea is to focus on prevention, and incorporating the methodology.

Rev. Simpson stated that the prevention model would be ideal, but diversionary programs are needed as well.

Ms. Salem talked about putting the recommendations of the past into action.

- **Other Comments:**

- Mr. Cohen talked about being mindful of current policy that is in affect that will contradict the work that departments are trying to get done.
- Mr. Denson talked about the Civil Citation that was put in place in Tampa which does not put the child in the criminal justice system but give them a chance to get their act together.
- Mr. Cohen talked about what he believed would be more of an impact if the appropriate parties was aware of the opportunities they missed by not implementing the recommendations of the Council.

Ms. Gilmore talked about not reinventing the wheel and would like to use the methodology in the Annual Report.

Mr. Smith talked about his approach in dealing with the Annual Report. He would like to assure that the education portion of the report is a committee's effort and not placed on one individual. Mr. Smith talked about the impact of education being the foundation in all of the sub-committees and its impact. He talked about his focus for the sub-committee which will be:

- How students exit the education system
- The different ways of exiting (special certificate, diploma etc.)

Mr. Smith stated that he would like to accomplish the outline of the Annual Report for the education sub-committee for the next meeting.

Eighth Agenda Item: Upcoming Meeting

The next meeting for the education sub-committee is scheduled for August 3.

The next meeting for the criminal justice & gang's sub-committee is scheduled for August 17.

Ninth Agenda Item: Adjournment

Chief Gilmore asked for a motion for adjournment. Bill Harden motioned that the meeting be adjourned; Chief Gilmore seconded the motion and declared the meeting to be adjourned.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:50 a.m.

