May 26, 2015

To Members of the CCJJ:

Recently there has been some discussion on how the Board of Pardons and Parole make their decisions on when an inmate should be released from prison. At the present time, there does not seem to be a fair and equitable method for determining whether or not a person is ready to be released and what the chances are that he/she will reoffend.

A former New York City Police detective, Mr. Lemons said. “Making a decision on someone’s life is extremely difficult.” You have to make a real quick decision during a 20-minute or half-hour interview with a person and consider his history and his likelihood of reoffending.”

I believe there is a better way. The Wall Street Journal printed an article that recommends using a computerized program for determining when an inmate should be released.

I have included a copy of the article with this letter. Or you can access the article by Googling the title:

**“State Parole Boards Use Software to Decide Which Inmates to Release”**

In the past several years at least 15 states have implemented computerized inmate assessments to help with those decisions. Although this method can contradict the instincts of corrections officials, it more accurately predicts recidivism and makes release decisions more objective. This method would help facilitate the Board’s decisions by giving them needed data about offenders.

Parole boards, typically staffed with political appointees, have lacked the information, training and time to make sound decisions about who should be released. They look at a few factors, while computerized assessments look at 50 or more factors. “Some people are surprised to learn that offenders who we think of as the worst offenders—murderers and sex offenders—have some of the lowest recidivism rates,” said Lee Seale, former director of research for California’s Department of Corrections.

Ohio and other states started using an assessment system called ORAS, other states have adopted a system called COMPAS, and these states have seen a drop in recidivism and in prison population. Computer assessments work!

Now is time for our legislators to cut ballooning corrections costs, and to make better decisions about which inmates to keep in prison and which to release. Now is the time to upgrade our present system by changing to a computerized system, which will significantly reduce our prison population.

Thank You,

Miriam Greenland

6608 W 10250 N

Highland, UT 84003

miriamgreenland41@gmail.com

801-766-6624