



# Cuyahoga County Reentry Review

## Senator Rob Portman Visits Northeast Ohio

By Mary Kelley

A major government supporter of reentry spent a productive day in Northeast Ohio on January 6, 2013. US Senator Rob Portman (R-OH) visited the North Star Reentry Resource Center in Cleveland in the morning and then spent the afternoon touring the HOPE Center at the Grafton Reintegration Center and talking to inmates working in a variety of programs.

After the tour, Senator Portman was encouraged by what he saw, and was impressed by the good work being done at the Grafton Reintegration Center.

“I was really impressed. I think that this is a program that is doing all of the right things in terms of preparing inmates for what they’re going to face when they get out,” Senator Portman said. “My hope is that this will become a model for other prisons as well, not just in Ohio, but nationally.”

The Senator spent most of his time talking to inmates who are employed in different skills, jobs and training programs at the Center, including Braille transcription, art, computer graphic design, sewing, toy production and truck driving. He took the wheel of a virtual commercial driver’s license (CDL) training simulator as inmate Oliver Thomas explained how it works. The CDL simulator, and the CDL skills it can teach, is just one example of the benefits that can be available to inmates who want to make real changes in their lives and prepare for reentry while still serving their time.



▲ Senator Rob Portman stops in to a class at the Grafton HOPE Center



▲ Senator Rob Portman visits North Star Reentry Resource Center

The Senator was visiting reentry programs highlight his work to reauthorize the Second Chance Act in Congress. Senator Portman joined the late Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones in writing the original and introducing the original Second Chance Act which was signed into law by President George W. Bush in April, 2008. Since “being signed into law the Second Chance Act has made nearly 600 grants totaling approximately \$300 million to increase public safety and reduce recidivism through the development and coordination of pre- and post-release reentry services such as employment training, substance abuse treatment, mentoring, and improved community supervision. The evidence-based, innovative approaches authorized under this legislation reduce recidivism, and, as a result, help increase public safety and save taxpayer dollars,” according to the Council of State Government’s Justice Center.

“The new bill—the Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2013, introduced in the Senate by Senators Portman and Leahy and in the House by Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and Congressmen Davis, Coble, Scott, Spencer Bachus (R-AL), Marcia Fudge (D-OH) and Steve Chabot (R-OH)—expands the number of grant programs available and promotes increased accountability and outcomes from grantees. Applicants that partner with local evaluators in order to develop data-collection systems and outcome evaluations will be prioritized for

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### *Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland: Local Neighborhoods Depend on Reentry Success*

By Mary Kelley

A recent economic commentary published by the Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland highlights the economic realities of what happens to neighborhoods when the people who live there can't find and keep good jobs. Returning citizens know this reality all too well. Research shows that the employability of returning citizens is the key to revitalizing neighborhoods.

"Nobody really knows what the current unemployment rate is among returning citizens, but we do know that unemployment is extremely high in neighborhoods where returning citizens are concentrated. For example, in the Central, Hough, Glenville, Fairfax, and Mount Pleasant neighborhoods of Cleveland, which receive about 80% of the people released from prisons in Cuyahoga County, the overall unemployment rate is 27% (37% in Central, according to the 2007-2011 American Community Survey (ACS). Among the lowest-income population, the group in which these citizens nearly always fall, the unemployment rate is 50%," the report stated.

The challenge for communities is not just the large number of returning citizens, but also that these citizens tend to be concentrated in the poorest areas. For example, Cleveland's Central neighborhood, which has a population of 12,000, is expected to absorb 500 to 600 of newly released citizens every year, according to the report which cites data from area nonprofits. The cycles of poverty and incarceration can become increasingly difficult to break and can continue into generations of families.

Achieving stable employment is a challenging task for returning citizens, but their success is directly tied to the success of the areas in which they live. The report notes that,

"If those who have served their time in prison are not job-ready when they are released, these distressed areas may continue to struggle."

There is hope, however, for returning citizens who are able to obtain education, job and life skills so that they can remain in the community and support themselves and their families. Reentry programs both inside and outside of corrections facilities can provide valuable skills and training. Returning citizens need to be ready to show they are well-prepared and deserve a second chance. Finally, more job opportunities are needed from employers, especially those who have not yet become willing to consider hiring returning citizens.

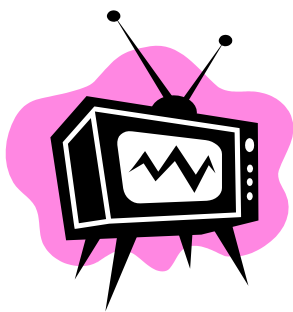
The report presented recommended remedies for the long-term. The Federal Reserve experts cited examples from both the Transitional Jobs Program at New York City's Center for Employment Opportunities and Evergreen Cooperatives in Cleveland's University Circle as programs that show that, "many returning citizens can and do find jobs and stay out of trouble when they are trained and properly motivated. Training and motivational intervention seems to matter most for the younger population, if it is administered soon after their release from prison."

There are also Federal and State programs that will provide some support to businesses that will consider hiring returning citizens. In Ohio, employers can be eligible for the Federal Bonding Program, a US Department of Labor program that offers bonds of up to \$5,000 to cover the hiring of a reentrant. Ohio inmates who demonstrate exceptional behavior can apply for a Certification of Qualification for Employment, which protects employers from negligent hiring claims if they employ a person with the Certification. For more information, please visit the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections website at <http://drc.ohio.gov/web/cqe.htm>

Finally, the report states that many more reentry programs and incentives will be needed and coordination with other existing programs to address the other barriers that some returning citizens face – such as low education, mental health or substance abuse problems is essential to improving outcomes. However, "given the high concentrations of returning citizen in some of the poorest neighborhoods, improving the employability of returning citizens could provide a needed boost to the economic conditions in these communities."

Source: O. Emre Ergungor and Nelson Oliver. "The Employability of Returning Citizens is Key to Neighborhood Revitalization." Economic Commentary published by The Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland. November 19, 2013.

### Anything *Good* on TV?



There *will* be!

Stay tuned ODRC Northeast Region! ReentryTV on the HOPE Channel will be here soon.

It's not reality TV- this is Real TV. A new channel with shows designed and produced by inmates for inmates with the reentry information you need to help you get out of prison – and stay out! Look for more info in upcoming issues of the *Reentry Review*!

## *Senator Rob Portman Visits Northeast Ohio*

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funding, meaning programs will be better prepared to measure and track recidivism consistently over time. The bill also authorizes separate planning grants that are designed to ensure that programs utilize evidence-based practices that are most likely to result in reduced recidivism and other improved outcomes,” the Justice Center reported.

“Second Chance works, and that is why we have joined together to craft a reauthorization bill for the legislation that has strong bipartisan support,” Portman said. “We all want to reduce the crime and violence that plagues our communities; that we read about in the paper and see on the news every night. Rather than incarcerating repeat offenders in the same families, generation after generation, we can put our taxpayer dollars to better use to break this vicious cycle and turn lives around. The ultimate goal of our criminal justice system is to make our families and our communities safer. The work done under the Second Chance Act helps us to accomplish that goal, one life at a time.”

## *Information & Inspiration from the Family Matters Program*

By Kelley Ross, LCDC II

The Family Matters Education Program meets Tuesday evenings at North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center in Cleveland. Participants learn about the process of recovery and how they can work together to avoid having their family member or close friend relapse. For more information or to register, call 216-881-5440.

When asked what makes me commit time and energy to be a part of the Family Matters Program, I think of the impact addiction has on all those around it; addiction is a family disease.

While it is evident that addiction is a problem for the individual that is experiencing it, often other family members believe that it is only that person’s problem. However, I have had the pleasure of working with families and what I have seen and know to be true is addiction takes from every member of the family. It steals time, sleep, hope and dreams; it destroys everything it touches; it causes stress, anxiety and even depression.

Since the whole family is impacted, it is important for the family to heal even if it means the one they love may not. What I find in working with families is even the ones who say they have no hope left, do. When a family member has been addicted for some time, roles change within the family and not just the role of the person who is affected.

Coping mechanisms developed to deal with the using member’s highs and lows destroy love and trust. Family members don’t know the difference between the truth and a possible lie. Everybody is so consumed with the cycle of addiction that they don’t even now how things got to this point. In the beginning, with Family Matters’ support people, they know they are tired of hurting and not knowing what to do.

For a long time, I’ve been very passionate about the family influence on the recovering person because I understand and know it is a critical part of recovery. In 2010 I began working in

programs centered and built around assisting families whose loved one has been affected by substance abuse.

Working in this field taught me the impact that the family has on recovering addicts. I also gained knowledge of the how the internal problems of a family can amplify addictive behaviors. In my experience, even while the family is experiencing confusion and suffering, no one knows how to address the elephant in the room.

What I discovered is the more families learn about effective communication, boundaries, triggers, relapse, and substance abuse the healthier and stronger the families become. This strength can become the most powerful source that they have. It is amazing to watch families grow and their loved ones obtain sobriety.

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For a complete list of programs, activities, and resources available at the Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center, please contact, or just stop by at:

North Star  
1834 East 55th Street  
Cleveland, Ohio 44103  
(216) 881-5440  
[www.northstarreentry.org](http://www.northstarreentry.org)

***We want to hear from you...***

Your comments are important to us.

***Write to us at***

Cuyahoga County - Office of Reentry  
310 West Lakeside Avenue, Suite 550  
Cleveland, OH 44113  
[www.reentry.cuyahogacounty.us](http://www.reentry.cuyahogacounty.us)



## Information & Inspiration from the Family Matters Program ...Continued from page 3

Learning new tools and new skills to deal with life and each other is something that even I squawk about it at times, because I too feel that I should know what to do and how to handle things when it comes to my own family. What I witness and discover is that life is forever changing and as we change everyone around us changes too. Learning how to implement different skills can contribute to a better success rate for all.

For me, coming here to Oriana House and being a part of what I call "the key to success," or Family Matters, and continuing to work with families is an honor. See, substance abuse doesn't have to take everything; you can rest peacefully, hold employment, have a less stressful life and maintain your sanity in spite of what others are doing.



You can also learn how to assist your loved one in maintaining their sobriety through obtaining and implementing new skills daily. The beautiful thing about these skills is they work for anyone and everyone in your life; so it is a universal program of recovery, hope and change.

In order for us to continue to grow on this journey, we all need that positive support because sometimes we just don't know how or what to do on our own.

Together we can assist each other back to a better life.



## The Citizen Circles Concept



Citizen participation and guidance is essential for correctional practices inside and outside institutions. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has embraced the needs related to offenders returning home from correctional settings and as such

one strategy is the implementation of Citizen Circles. Circle members address risks that contribute to criminal activity by taking ownership of the solution. It is an opportunity for citizens to communicate expectations for successful reentry and help offenders recognize the harm their behavior has caused others. Offenders are able to make amends and demonstrate their value and potential to the community.

### Reentry Review Staff

Editor - Mary Kelley, Office of Reentry



## Citizen Circles Locations

### Downtown Citizen Circle

216-268-1600 x506

### The Euclid Avenue Citizen Circle

216-421-0482 x282

### First Love Outreach Ministries

216-391-9247

### Surehouse Citizen Circle

216-441-4211

### Glenville Citizen Circle

216-224-7902

### Cleveland Rise Citizen Circle

216-341-5004

### COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry  
email: [ReentryInfo@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto:ReentryInfo@cuyahogacounty.us)  
phone: 216.698.2501

To receive a copy of

## Going Home to Stay

contact First Call for Help at 216.436.2000 or go online and download a copy at: [www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf](http://www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf)

