

THANK YOU FOR HELPING TO MAKE OUR SERIES A SUCCESS

[Commuting and Transit Innovations: Wednesday, December 9, 2009](#)

Nearly a quarter of the nation's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) are produced by light vehicle traffic. While increased fuel efficiency and low carbon fuels have the potential to modestly reduce transportation CO2 emissions, it is also necessary to reduce vehicle miles traveled (VMT). We recently organized a webinar to discuss effective, low-cost options for reducing VMT by promoting the use of mass transit and alternative transportation. The webinar discussed both Boulder's EcoPass (Martha Roskowski - City of Boulder, [Go Boulder](#) Program Manager) and San Francisco's commuter tax benefit ordinance (Stuart Baker - Accor Services, Commuter Check and Lillian Chan - City of San Francisco, Transportation Demand Management Coordinator).

For materials from this discussion, information on future webinar topics and recordings of other previous webinars, visit: www.stateinnovation.org/webinars.aspx

Spotlight on State Innovations

Prison Closed due to Declining Inmate Populations

December 1, 2009

Connecticut [Governor M. Jodi Rell](#) announced the closure of the Webster Correctional Institution within the next 8 to 10 weeks. The closure, which will result in the transfer of around 220 inmates, is the result of budgetary pressures and a consistent decline in the state's prison population from 19,900 in February 2008 to 18,300 this month. The Governor attributes this decline to re-entry initiatives by the Department of Corrections and comprehensive and timely reviews by a newly full-time Board of Pardons and Parole. The closure of the facility will save Connecticut \$3.4 million a year.



Work-Release Expanded



December 7, 2009

[Governor Joe Manchin](#) announced that West Virginia would double the size of its work release program at Jackie Withrow Hospital in Beckley, West Virginia. The state will make security renovations to the

fourth floor of the hospital and increase the number of work-release employees from 70 to 140. The state estimates that the program will save \$2,000,000 in construction costs, and at least an additional \$250,000 a year in housing and treatment services. The work-release program is one of the recommendations of the Governor's Commission on Prison Overcrowding which released its [final report](#) in June.

More Leeway for Judges in Drug Sentences

December 10, 2009

New Jersey [Governor Jon Corzine](#) will soon sign into law a bill that rolls back mandatory minimum sentences and restores judicial discretion for some nonviolent drug offenses. endorsed by eight former New Jersey Attorneys General, and approved in the senate 24-11, [S-1866/A-2762](#) allows judges to favor treatment or probation over jail time in certain cases, and calls for judges making sentencing decisions to consider factors such as a defendant's criminal record, the proximity of school property, the likelihood of exposing children to drug-related activity, whether school was in session, and whether children were near.



December Reports in Public Safety

[The First Line of Defense: Reducing Recidivism at the Local Level](#)

The [Urban Institute](#) recently offered this [testimony](#) on recidivism to the Senate Subcommittee on Crime and Drugs. One in every 100 adults in the United States is now behind bars on any given day, according to the [Pew Center on the States](#). Without treatment and transition planning, most of these individuals are released with the same problems that led to their incarceration. The result is that two-thirds of state prisoners are rearrested within three years of their release, and half are re-incarcerated for a new crime or a technical violation. This testimony outlines a Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) model that can be adopted in jurisdictions large and small, urban and rural to limit recidivism.

[Charting a New Course a Blueprint for Transforming Juvenile Justice in New York State](#)

Governor Paterson's [Task Force on Transforming Juvenile Justice](#) finds that institutionalizing young people should be "the choice of absolute last resort, reserved only for those who pose such a serious threat that no other solution would protect public safety." In most cases, the state should instead treat and rehabilitate young offenders who can be well served by community-based supports and services that align with best practices in the field.

[Improving Responses to People with Mental Illness](#)

The [Justice Center](#) of the [Council of State Governments](#) examined probation programs that target individuals with mental illness. Probation officers across the country are supervising unprecedented numbers of people with mental illnesses. This population has extensive treatment and service needs and requires supervision strategies that traditional probation agencies are not designed to provide. This report is intended to provide practitioners and policymakers with a common framework for designing and implementing a program that achieves positive probation outcomes for individuals suffering from mental illness.

[Racial Disparities in the Criminal Justice System](#)

Marc Mauer, Executive Director of [The Sentencing Project](#), recently [testified](#) on racial disparities in the criminal justice system before the House Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism and Homeland Security. He noted that one of every three black males born today will go to prison in his lifetime, as will one of every six Latino males. His testimony concluded by recommending coordinated efforts among criminal justice leaders, policymakers, and community groups to reduce unwarranted disparities in the system.

If you have a program or report you'd like other states to know about, something you think we should include in the newsletter, or other questions or comments, please contact us:

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