

## A New Year's Message from the Secretary

Ladies and Gentlemen under our care, custody, and supervision, I sincerely wish you a Happy New Year. You might find this greeting odd or unexpected, given your current situation and my duty position, but I am sincere in this wish for your well-being and future happiness.

I have served as your Secretary for the past year. I have focused on learning about our State government, the Florida Department of Corrections, and about you. I have used this year to decide if I can help improve public safety and in giving you an opportunity for success. Coupled with the excellent support of our Governor and Legislature, the commitment and competence of the FDC staff, and the amazing service of our army of volunteers, I believe I can help.

Earlier in my 35-year military career, I was a warden at the U.S. Army's maximum-security prison, the United States Disciplinary Barracks at Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. That correctional facility's motto is, "Our Mission, Your Future." The USDB is not only safe and secure, but most inmates choose to take part in their individual treatment and programming plans and choose to follow facility rules and regulations. Violence is rare. That is my experience, and that influences my actions, decisions and hopes for you.

The Courts, based on your actions, have placed you under our care and custody, or supervision. Some of you came ready to use your time with us to improve, while some at this point appear to want to continue a criminal lifestyle. I suspect most of you just want to spend your time in custody or under community supervision safely and with the least amount of friction. But I also believe if given the opportunity of either sitting around and being bored or being active, most of you will choose to take part in programs and activities that will better you now and prepare you for your future.

I want you to know what we are doing for you this year and in the years to come to address violence and improve programs. I hope that if you know the "why" of what we are doing, that most of you will support our actions, or at least not hinder our actions. I will provide you periodic messages explaining ongoing issues, plans and programs, and why we are taking certain actions. I promise to make future messages shorter and more direct, though I hope you will read this longer message to the end.

Here is the bottom-line. We at the FDC work for the citizens of the State of Florida, under the leadership of our Governor, following Florida statutes and National corrections and probation standards. We do this to meet five purposes: retribution, incapacitation, deterrence, rehabilitation, and restoration (if you are interested, you can read more about these five purposes of corrections below). The first three purposes deal directly with your past, present or potential for future criminal behavior. The last two are all about your success as a returning citizen to your community and your positive participation and performance if you are currently or will be on community supervision.

The Florida Department of Corrections exists to support Public Safety, which includes your safety, and improve your chances for success as a returning citizen or while under community supervision. It is our intent to create a safer environment for you with more opportunities to take part in vocational, educational, and wellness programs and to meet your treatment needs. Your choices and cooperation can help us support you, or your actions can detract from our rehabilitation and restoration goals for you and shift the balance of resources to fighting crime inside the fence and on the streets.

On the wall of my family living room, we display a text of ancient wisdom that asks, "What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" It's not a bad approach to corrections, from my perspective. Retribution and incapacitation are just (and it is our duty to carry out the sentence of the Courts and combat crime inside our facilities or in our communities), and rehabilitation and restoration are a transformational expression of mercy (and my true want for you).

You all get a vote on whether our facilities and communities are safe, through your personal choices and actions. You can choose to follow facility rules and programs of supervision, and seek self-improvement. You can choose to walk a path of peace and restoration with your family, your community, and our State. If that is your choice, then we want to support you on this honorable path forward.

Perhaps as odd and unexpected as my first greeting, I ask you for your cooperation with our FDC staff and volunteers



to see what we can accomplish together. I want to be able to shift a greater amount of our current and future resources to your treatment and programming needs, and your present and future success.

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## The Five Purposes of Corrections

(or an entire college course in five not-so-easy paragraphs)

First, under our State's laws and court systems, there are punishments such as a variety of fines, community service, restrictions, directed education, and yes, confinement to jails and prisons. It is the just retribution (punishment) of society on behalf of victims of crime and to uphold the rule of law. Community supervision places requirements on you, that if you do not follow, could lead to prison. Incarceration is a significant punishment, but its significance is not that we punish you in prison, it is that the deprivation of your liberty and freedom is that significant punishment. We clearly work hard to keep you with us for the exact number of days and years ordered by the Courts. We are also committed to work with those of you in a community setting, under the guidelines and length of supervision ordered by the Courts. This is our duty and statutory responsibility.

Second, during your period of incarceration and while under community supervision, you should not have the opportunity to commit crime or prey upon each other, the community, or our staff; this is incapacitation. If retribution is in response to what you did in the past, incapacitation is our present relationship and all the rules and procedures designed to keep you safe, especially if you are in prison. There is an expectation from our State's leaders, citizens, and frankly your family members, that we run our prisons and community supervision programs safely and securely, free of crime. •

Third, and there is much debate on this matter, some argue that the threat of imprisonment serves as a deterrence to future crime. I do not put much emphasis on this, given the number of people that commit crime under the influence of drugs, alcohol, intense emotion or in reaction to past trauma. People must be thinking clearly and soberly to properly weigh the potential cost of crime. Clearly, the threat of prison was not a deterrence for you. But here is an important point, some argue that prisons with a harsh or distressing environment increases its deterrent effect; I do not believe that to be the case. All facilities, even facilities or parts of facilities that must exercise close management of activities for safety reasons, should address your total well-being. The whole intent of community supervision is to address the factors that led to your criminal behavior, so that you will never come to prison or return to prison. This is not as a deterrence, but as a program to address your underlying needs and issues, and hold you accountable under supervision, to help you avoid future criminal behavior and incarceration.

Corrections professionals, with the resources we are given by the State and donors, strive to structure your time in prison or in a community setting to be safe and productive, preparing you for the future. The fourth purpose of prisons and community corrections is to provide rehabilitation. It is easy to understand why we do this for the 80% of you under community supervision that have never come to prison, and for the over 85% of you in prison that will be released and move back into your community (with then the 30% of you that will come under community supervision after prison). Corrections and probation professionals, volunteers, and community representatives prepare you for the time when you are a returning citizen and support you in the community, with the hope that you choose to be law-abiding and productive, filled with right purpose. But this goal also applies to those of you with longer sentences, to include Life. This preparation helps you live more productive and satisfying days while incarcerated, and perhaps gives you an opportunity to help others preparing for their release. There can be great personal satisfaction in helping others and I believe many with longer sentences, if given the opportunity, will use their skills to positively support their fellow inmates or the community. ••

To the side of rehabilitation, I add restoration. The Florida corrections system combines community corrections and supervision with the structure that runs our prison system, into one Department. This gives us a better ability to reach into our local communities to help you with reentry and restoration with your family and community. This is an intentional act, and key to this action is how we best prepare you to find a good job and housing. We want to connect you with agencies and both secular and faith-based organizations in your community who are willing to support you and welcome you into their civic groups, clubs, and houses of worship. We will strive to have those agencies connect with you now, while you are still in prison or under supervision, so your reentry can be smoother and more successful,

and with greater predictability. The unemployment rate of the previously incarcerated and those under supervision is five times the national average. We are going to change that in Florida! But you must choose to want this and to focus your efforts on your personal rehabilitation and restoration. No excuses, in the end you have to own this.

Secretary Inch

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