Focus: Reentry Legislation ~ House Bill 113

Bill Summary:

♦ Requires the Department of Youth Services (DYS) to permit representatives of all nonprofit faith-based, business, professional, civic, educational, and community organizations to provide reentry services to youth.

♦ Directs DYS to post a department telephone number and list all organizations that are registered to provide services to DYS youth on the external web site.

♦ Prohibits DYS from endorsing or sponsoring any faith-based reentry program, from endorsing any specific religious message, and from requiring a youth to participate in a faith-based program.

♦ Requires DYS to annually issue a written report on our progress in implementing the recommendations of the Correctional Faith-Based Initiatives Task Force and provide a copy of the written report to all members of the Correctional Institution Inspection Committee.

Recommendations from the Correctional Faith-Based Initiatives Task Force Include:

The Department of Youth Services should:

♦ Develop a standard training program for staff, volunteers, and the community to facilitate working in institutions together.

♦ Revise statutes to increase judicial use of community options for non-violent offenders so facility space can be reserved for violent offenders.

♦ Expand partnerships with national organizations including faith-based and community organizations to provide programming in state institutions.

♦ Involve the faith community, when appropriate, in the development of release plans for the offender that flow from the institution to community reentry.

♦ Expand efforts to work with the employment centers and faith community to increase practical employment opportunities for offenders in the community.