

ADDRESSING THE PROBLEM OF AFRICAN-AMERICAN MALE UNEMPLOYMENT

HEARING

BEFORE THE

**JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE
CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES**

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THURSDAY, MARCH 8, 2007

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES,
JOINT ECONOMIC COMMITTEE,
Washington, DC

The Committee met at 9:30 a.m., in Room 562 of the Dirksen Senate Office Building, the Honorable Charles E. Schumer, Chairman of the Committee, presiding.

Senators present: Senators Brownback, Klobuchar, and Webb.

Representatives present: Representatives Hinchey and Maloney.

Staff members present: Christina Baumgardner, Katie Beirne, Rachel Greszler, Colleen Healy, Jeff Schlagenhauf, Chad Stone, Justin Underwood, Robert Weingart, and Jeff Wrase.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CHARLES E. SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN, A U.S. SENATOR FROM NEW YORK

Chairman Schumer. The hearing will come to order. We're starting right on time because of everything that's going on, particularly in the Judiciary Committee today. I'm going to have to excuse myself at about 10 o'clock; where Senator Klobuchar will come and chair the hearing, so we want to get started quickly.

I would like to welcome my guests here today; this is our first Joint Economic Committee hearing on employment. As you know, we have an obligation to have hearings on employment; but the issue that we have chosen today to talk about is the problem of African-American male unemployment. This is one of the most serious problems America faces, and given its seriousness, it doesn't get paid attention to in terms of focus, in terms of dollars, in terms of trying to improve this problem.

I've been spending some time thinking about this, and let me say we can do a whole lot of things. So this is just our first hearing and our first foray, but we're going to try to make this issue in the new Congress a serious issue that the Congress grapples with, and I'm going to do my best to make that happen.

I want to thank our witnesses for being here today. I also want to thank both Senators Obama and Clinton, who have asked permission to submit statements for the record; and without objection, their statements will be made part of the record.

Today our focus will be on the growing crisis of joblessness for young African-American men. The crisis is profound, persistent and perplexing. Both across the country and in my home State of New York, far too many Black men are facing difficulty finding and

keeping work. The numbers are staggering, and I don't use that word lightly; and they are getting worse, particularly for young Black men.

Consider these statistics: In 1999, 65 percent of Black male high school dropouts in their twenties were jobless. In other words, not looking or unable to find work. So 65 percent sounds profoundly deep and bad. By 2004, the share had grown to 72 percent—72 percent jobless. This compares to 29 percent White and 19 percent Hispanic numbers for the same high school dropouts. That's profound. Something is wrong and we have to do something about it.

In inner cities, more than half of all Black men do not finish high school. Even when you consider high school graduates, though, half of Black men in their twenties were jobless in 2004. So we tell these young men: Work hard, graduate from high school, and your career will be much better off. And half of them can't find jobs. That's the bottom line here.

To make matters worse, incarceration of young Black men is at historic highs. A Black man with only a high school diploma has a 30 percent chance of having served time in prison by the time he turns 30. Without a high school diploma, his likelihood of having been incarcerated jumps to 60 percent. In fact, a Black male in his late twenties without a high school diploma is more likely to be in jail than to be working. How can we in 21st Century America countenance that?

These numbers take your breath away. These numbers should cause national alarm and demand a national solution. One reason this crisis is perplexing is because it is playing out against a backdrop of relative economic success and unprecedented historical advances for many sectors of our Nation's African-American population.

Obviously we know the stories of highly successful Black men and women. I'm particularly proud that in my city of New York we now have three Black CEOs of major companies; Richard Parsons of Time Warner and Stan O'Neal of Merrill Lynch, and Ken Chenault of American Express. Of course we have Oprah Winfrey and Senator Obama here amongst us, Condi Rice, Secretary Powell—countless others. And more importantly, there are burgeoning Black middle class communities throughout the country.

Come to Southeast Queens and you will see a beautiful middle class community—actually it's income is higher than White middle class people of the same basic level, a mile or two to the north—and these folks have made impressive gains in terms of workforce participation in just the last few years.

So it's not that the situation is totally bleak, but you have this disconcerting paradigm of progress at the top and middle and not only lack of progress, but actual decline from what started out as a low point for people who don't have the education or the income.

So given this contrast, it's sort of easy to lull ourselves into thinking things are OK; but we have to dig down into the numbers a little more to see how mistaken that belief is when it comes to Black males with less than a college education. And that's what we hope this hearing will do today; to give us a better handle on this problem and help us craft the right policy solutions to address it. Because one of the purposes of this hearing of course is to focus on

and highlight the problem, but the ultimate purpose is to come up with some solutions that really work.

There are many circumstances that have led us to this point, and many of them are familiar culprits: failing schools, dysfunctional families, high incarceration rates, overt and subtle racism, and the decimation of manufacturing and other jobs that typically afforded opportunities for young Black men to climb ladders and achieve a decent living.

These political, cultural, economic and personal elements are high hurdles that are tripping up far too many young Black men. And while this is a sensitive subject, it must be mentioned as well. There's a subculture of the street that provides easy money and allows some to eschew personal responsibility. It is our job as leaders of society to not sit by passively and let that subculture claim another generation of young men.

A longtime friend and community leader in Brooklyn, the Reverend Johnny Ray Youngblood said it best: "Government has a moral responsibility to compete against and win against subcultures that are immoral, illegal, and really inhuman."

Reverend Youngblood is 100 percent right, but this much is certain: On the Federal level, there has been no comprehensive public policy response to this situation. None. None. We have left the problems of Black men largely to the market, which is ignoring if not exacerbating the problem.

Our goal today is twofold. First, we must shine a bright spotlight on a problem that to my thinking has received scant attention, inadequate resources, intermittent focus, and poor coordination at the Federal level.

Second, I want to explore legislation, policy and programs that will have a real impact in addressing this crisis. This Committee's challenge today and in the weeks and months ahead will be to put forward a series of policy recommendations aimed at addressing the crisis of young Black male unemployment.

We will start by looking today at promising reform experiments at the State level, one in my home State of New York, and see what we can and should emulate on the Federal level. At the State level there has been much good news—or some good news; I don't want to overstate.

After much trial and error, we have several successful job training models that work. In a few minutes we're going to hear from Robert Carmona of STRIVE, whose job training program has been replicated with great success throughout the United States and around the world. And I have to say when I visited STRIVE, it was one of the best days in my Senate career, because I saw people really being given hope, and not just abstract hope, but solid opportunity, and it worked.

We will also hear from Dr. Ronald Mincy, who has helped design an earned income tax credit initiative for non-custodial parents in New York State that will help draw thousands of new workers into the labor force in coming years. You don't want to penalize fathers, and have the tax code and other things push them away from their responsibilities rather than towards it; and that's what Dr. Mincy has been addressing.

So I really respect the two of you. I can't thank you enough because of the programs that you have come up with that really give us hope, give me hope on a problem that really bothers me, and I think should bother all of America.

With that, our task is now an important one. We have models that work. The old Shibboleth, "Oh, well, there's nothing you can do; government isn't going to solve this problem. Or just have the economy advance in general, and everything will get better," when 72 percent of those who don't graduate from high school, young Black men don't have jobs, the advancing economy is not enough to do the job.

And so, we do have some new models, and we're hearing about two of them today. There are others. And it's not just that they work in one place. One of the great problems is you find a program, whether it's in job training or health care or education, that works, but it's only because of the charisma or the intelligence or the qualities of the person in charge, and it can't be replicated. These programs can; obviously the earned income tax credit can, that's a policy. But the STRIVE program has been replicated across the country.

So our task is going to be turning these local programs, models and ideas into national policies that can help us meet this challenge head on. I am dedicated to trying to get something done here. I feel passionately about this issue.

And with that, I'm going to turn to the Vice Chair of our Committee, Congresswoman Maloney, to give her the opportunity of an opening statement, give the other members a chance to provide statements before we proceed to the introduction of our panelists.

[The prepared statement of Senator Schumer appears in the Submissions for the Record on page 37.]

Congresswoman Maloney, my colleague in New York.

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. CAROLYN B. MALONEY, VICE CHAIR, A U.S. REPRESENTATIVE FROM NEW YORK

Representative Maloney. I thank the Chairman for his leadership in New York and for calling this important hearing, and I'm really thrilled to welcome our witnesses, Dr. Mincy and Mr. Carmona to talk about the issue of African-American male unemployment and what we can do to successfully reconnect this group of men to work.

As Dr. Mincy points out in his written statement, this is not a new problem; but if labor forces and trends among young Black men continue to deteriorate, we run the unacceptable risk of losing a generation of them to the streets or prisons.

More than 4 decades ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of the experience of many Blacks as "languishing in the corners of American society."

While progress has been made since the March on Washington, unfortunately Dr. King's words still ring true today. For too many young Black men, now as then, it would be unwise to ignore the urgency of the moment. An array of forces such as poverty, lower educational attainment, discrimination, high incarceration rates, and the decline of manufacturing employment have all contributed

to creating significant employment barriers for African-American men.

The problem is vividly illustrated when you consider Dr. Mincy's point, that even at the height of the economic expansion in 1999, only 35 percent of Black male high school dropouts were working, and that figure fell to just 28 percent by 2004. The comparable figures for White men were 81 percent in 1999 and 71 percent in 2004.

It's striking that an overwhelming majority of White male, high school dropouts are working even in the wake of a recession, but an overwhelming majority of Black male high school dropouts are not working, even in a strong economy.

When robust economic growth in a tight labor market are not enough to move people into the work force, we have to look at what policies might help build a bridge to work for these men. Dr. Mincy has a new twist on the Federal earned income tax credit that has worked well to help work pay for young Black women. By following the lead of my home State of New York, increasing the level EITC for non-custodial parents who are meeting their child support obligations would provide a strong incentive for men to enter the work force, and would strengthen families by encouraging men to stay current on their child support payments.

Mr. Carmona has a compelling personal story of success that makes his advice on this issue particularly relevant. The STRIVE model demonstrates the long-term commitment that we must make to personal development, job training, and career counseling, in order to break the cycle of detachment from mainstream society and poverty for so many of our young Black men.

The ideas our witnesses put forth should be seriously considered; but the issue of reconnecting these youths to school must also be addressed. Our public schools need to equip all our children with the education and skills needed to succeed in an increasingly global economy; and I hope the Chairman will be able to explore this issue in depth at future hearings.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you very much for calling this hearing and for your attention to this important problem, this challenge that we face. I look forward to working with you.

Thank you so much.

[The prepared statement of Representative Maloney appears in the Submissions for the Record on page 38.]

Chairman Schumer. Thank you. And I just might say to all of the members of this Committee, we do intend it to be a resource for everyone, and if people want to have hearings on subjects such as the one you mentioned, Congresswoman, I'd be delighted to have other people chair the hearing, set up the hearings, et cetera. We have a great staff, and it's really available for everybody.

Senator Brownback.

Senator Brownback. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman, Vice Chairman. I appreciate the hearing, and particularly appreciate exploring this topic. I've got a full statement that I'll put into the record, but I appreciate the chance to be able to talk about a long-term problem that we're having in the United States economy; this is something that I've certainly seen and noticed, and we do

need to be able to devise systems and take a very aggressive approach to try to change.

I chaired the D.C. subcommittee last Congress, and am the ranking member this Congress. We were looking at these numbers; the D.C. economy is growing a lot, and yet the same issue that you're talking—the lack of employment within the African-American community is reflected in DC as well. So you look and you see that there's a problem here or chains that people in the system are having difficulty breaking out of; a lack of education or whatever the issues may be.

One of the things we looked at, and I hope one of the witnesses or both will address it, is the issue on family structure. We ended up pushing with Mayor Williams at the time, Eleanor Holmes Norton, the Delegate, marriage development accounts, to encourage people on public assistance to get married and to form family units. And I'd appreciate that discussion as well.

I also have worked on issues like what we can do to help people that are on probation or coming out of prison systems, like the Second Chance Act. Hopefully we can get passed this Congress. We got close on the last one.

I applaud the Chairman for holding a hearing on this very difficult structural problem to see if we can start finding some solutions and look forward to the witnesses testifying.

[The prepared statement of Senator Brownback appears in the Submissions for the Record on page 39.]

Chairman Schumer. Thank you, Senator Brownback.

Senator Klobuchar.

Senator Klobuchar. Thank you very much, Senator Schumer, and thank you to our witnesses here for coming. You have to know that my background is as a prosecutor, and I represented an area that was primarily urban, with some suburban areas as well; so I saw firsthand the effects of unemployment in the African-American community, and I saw firsthand what happens when young men and women become disillusioned and lose hope, and have no possibility of advancing themselves, and sometimes fall into criminal activity.

And it was clear to me when I looked at this issue, that a lot of our teenagers and kids who came into the juvenile justice system did so because they just didn't have hope and didn't have the possibility of jobs.

And I always would remind people in our community when I went out that, we're not like a business, we didn't want to see repeat offenders. The best way that we can help kids and make a stronger community and save money in the criminal justice system is by making sure that there are jobs out there.

So I think looking at how to create an economic even-playing field has got to be the most critical thing that this Committee looks at. For years the economic policies in this country have benefited the wealthiest, while the poorest and middle class families individuals struggle to get by.

Under the tax cut, enacted in the last few years; for every dollar someone in the middle class got, the wealthiest Americans got \$111. When you lay that out to people, they know that that's not fair, that that isn't an even-playing field. Our economy in Min-

nesota is strong, but yet people saw that the future does not look bright if you don't have an even-playing field.

Clearly a critical part of creating economic opportunity for all is addressing the racial divisions that still exist within the work force, particularly within the African-American community.

And I'd like to hear from all of you; I think I don't need to tell you all of the statistics about the unemployment within the African-American community. I can tell you where I come from in terms of my job as a prosecutor and what I saw, and that I see this as one of the major focuses we should have in terms of moving things. When I get questions about why we have crime in this area, I think "Well, if we had jobs in this area, it would make the difference."

So I thank you for being here on this critical issue and look forward to working with you.

Chairman Schumer. Thank you, Senator Klobuchar.

Senator Webb.

Senator Webb. Thank you, Mr. Chairman. I would like to again reiterate my appreciation to you for having the openness to have such a wide variety of hearings under the rubric of this Committee.

Gentlemen, I want you to know that this is an issue that I care very deeply about, and we're in the unusual situation right now in the Congress where I actually have four committee hearings and a meeting with the leader all at the same time this morning; and this is the hearing that I want to be at the most. I'm going to have to leave, but I want to come back. It's an issue that I have cared about my entire life, particularly my entire adult life.

During the campaign, I spoke frequently about what I call the three Americas—the danger, and actually in many cases the reality of our country breaking apart into three different divisions along class lines in a way we've probably never seen before. The huge transfer of wealth that's happened at the very top; it's all documented.

The danger to the middle class, the disintegration in many cases of the middle class in the age of globalization, combined with the internationalization of the economy, and the stagnation at the very bottom, raises the prospect, which worries me very much, that we actually would as a country end up accepting the notion that we would have a permanent underclass. There are such a large number of people in this country of many races and ethnic backgrounds who look up and say that the American system doesn't apply to them anymore, that they don't have access in a wide variety of areas.

And part of that's education, which we're trying to look at, part of it is the implications of incarceration, and part of it is the barriers to employment. And a big part of it, something that I really want to try to focus on during my time here in the Senate, is what I would call second chances; I see that in your testimony today.

One of the issues with respect to education is adult education. We have so many people in this country who, for a wide variety of reasons, maybe because someone got pregnant when they were 16 years old, maybe because they got in trouble when they were 16, or decided that "I can leave school now and go get a job"; they go out and follow a trajectory in their life. This affects the way they

treat their kids, because they don't have the same standing when they're talking to their kids.

I would like to see, as much as I can, emphasis on finding those people and getting them into the educational system; and you have what someone might call a trickle-down effect on the kids, and the educational attitudes of people.

The other issue that I feel very strongly about and I was gratified to see in the testimony here is the notion of freezing people out simply because they have been incarcerated at one point in their life, some of them at a very young age. Then once they're frozen out, then what do we do? What do they do? And how does that multiply our problems in our society?

So I was very gratified, Mr. Chairman, to see the focus of these issues in these hearings this morning, and I look forward to participating with you. Thank you.

Chairman Schumer. Well, thank you. And the first thing I want to do is thank all of my colleagues for being here. I think the passion with which each of the opening statements was made shows how important we think this issue is. And hopefully we just opened the door so that we can get this issue on the agenda, because again it is such an important issue, and the befuddlement I have is such an important issue stays so underground.

I am going to make an apology in advance; thanks and an apology. I have the same problem as Senator Webb, a whole bunch of committee hearings which I knew about, but one of them on the U.S. Attorneys in the Judiciary Committee, which I'm in the middle of, is going to call me there for a brief while, and I really want to thank my colleague, Senator Klobuchar, who will temporarily chair the hearing while I'm gone; I have to leave in a couple of minutes and then I will be back.

But I want to first introduce the panelists, because they're both such fine people who accept real models out there that we can help follow.

Before my colleagues came in I mentioned, and I would recommend it, told Sam, to visit STRIVE in New York, which was one of the most uplifting days I've had as a Senator, to see a program really working, going right at people, no B.S., and it has an amazing success rate as you will hear. And the good news is it has been replicated in other places. So it's not just Mr. Carmona and his staff over at STRIVE in East Harlem who can do this, but this can be done around the country.

And so maybe with that I'll introduce—I was going to introduce Dr. Mincy first, but I'll introduce—I'm sure you don't mind, Dr. Mincy—Mr. Carmona.

Robert Carmona is the President and CEO of STRIVE National. It's an employment services program that we're going to hear a lot about in his testimony today, and I think we're going to be hearing a lot about later.

As cofounder of STRIVE—he's held this position 21 years. Under his stewardship, the organization has grown from a community-based organization to an international network of service providers with sites in 17 cities as well as overseas sites in London, England; Derry, Ireland; Dunbarton, Scotland; and Tel Aviv and Haifa, Israel.

Prior to his tenure at STRIVE, Mr. Carmona worked at a number of social service organizations, many of which are in New York; the Court Employment Project, where he served as a counselor for adolescents, Downstate Medical Center's Family Youth Center as an adolescent case worker, Greater New York Fund United Way, where he was the organization's assistant director of agency services at the City Volunteer Corps, and he served as the agency's senior planner. And then he went to Wildcat Service Corporation as the director of marketing and employee assistance program.

He's on the board of a whole bunch of prominent agencies. I'm not going to list them all but some of them include the Episcopal Social Services, Self Help National Student Partnership, and the North General Hospital, as well as a founding board member of the Workplace Alliance.

Dr. Ronald Mincy is the Maurice V. Russell Professor of Social Policy; and each has a different approach. One is an actual program that gets people back on the track to employment; you'll hear it has a remarkable success rate. The other is Dr. Mincy's program, which is a tax change that we could make that would help, too; and these are two parallel approaches. And that's why I wanted to have each of you here today and are grateful for your time.

Anyway, so Dr. Mincy is the Maurice V. Russell Professor of Social Policy and Social Work Practice at the School of Social Work, Columbia. He teaches graduate courses on social welfare policy program evaluation and microeconomics. He has published widely on the effects of income security policy on child and family poverty, family formation, and child well-being, responsible fatherhood, the urban underclass and urban policy.

Prior to joining the Columbia faculty, Dr. Mincy was senior program officer in the Ford Foundation's program for human development and reproductive health, where he developed the Strengthening Fragile Families Initiative, called SFFI. It was a Ford Foundation grant-making initiative working with Federal, State and local human service agencies to reform income security policies to enable low income mothers and fathers, to provide emotional, financial, and developmental support to their children.

As a result of SFFI, Dr. Mincy is widely regarded as a critical catalyst for changes currently underway in the treatment of low income fathers by U.S. welfare, child support, and family support systems.

He's been invited to speak and consult with donors, researchers, policymakers all over the globe. Dr. Mincy is a co-principal investigator for the Fragile Families and Child Well Being Survey, a birth cohort study of children born to unmarried parents, which is nationally representative of births in large cities; and his most recent book, "Black Men Left Behind" examines the consequences of the 1990s boom for the less educated men.

Mr. Carmona, Dr. Mincy, each of your statements will be put into the record in their entirety. Proceed as you wish. I've read your statements already, I think they're great, and I'm going to turn over the chair to my friend, colleague, and at this point someone—a friend in need is a friend indeed—Senator Klobuchar.

Senator Klobuchar. Does that mean I get the gavel?

Chairman Schumer. You do.

Senator Klobuchar. Excellent.

Chairman Schumer. May it happen more in the future.

Senator Klobuchar. All right. Dr. Mincy, do you want to begin?
Or Mr. Carmona.

Dr. Mincy. That's the way we lined it up.

Senator Klobuchar. OK. Excellent.

**STATEMENT OF DR. RONALD B. MINCY, MAURICE V. RUSSELL
PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE,
SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY,
NEW YORK, NY**

Dr. Mincy. First of all, good morning, and I'd like to thank the Committee for holding this important hearing on the unemployment problems of Black men, and for inviting me to testify on this very important subject.

Recent labor market reports show that unemployment rates among Black men are at about 7 percent; twice the national average. These data indicate that among those who are available and looking for work, Black men are twice as likely to fail than the average American.

My testimony argues that the official unemployment statistics only begin to scratch the surface of the problem, because they ignore discouraged workers who want to work, but who stop trying when the labor market softens, and those who are unavailable because they are institutionalized.

Since incarceration rates have risen in recent decades, and these increases are largely driven by policy, it's important to incorporate incarceration in our assessment of employment among Black men.

Of Black men between 22 and 30 years old, 5.7 percent were incarcerated in 2004. If you focus on those who are high school dropouts, who are overrepresented among the incarcerated, we reach a figure of 35 percent.

So in my testimony, I focus on the success among Black and other less educated men in finding jobs before and after accounting for incarceration.

The employment to population ratio data is highly related to the unemployment data. In 1999, 70 percent of Black men between 22 and 30 years old, who had not attended college, were employed; but by 2004, only 63 percent were still working.

Declines over the same period for White men were from 88 to 82 percent. So the official statistics show that Black men are much less successful at finding jobs than their White or Hispanic counterparts.

However, after adjusting for incarceration, we find that only 56 percent of young Black males who did not attend college were employed in 1999, and by 2004, that proportion had fallen to 50 percent. By comparison, 85 percent of young White men who had not attended college were employed, and by 2004, that had fallen to 79 percent.

Because fewer than half of young Black men graduate from high school, and high school dropouts are overrepresented among those in our Nation's prisons and jails, it's important to focus on the high school dropout population. After doing so, the picture becomes really alarming.

At the peak 1999 performance of the economy, only 35 percent of Black male high school dropouts were employed, and by 2004, that proportion had fallen to 28 percent. Comparable figures for White men were 81 percent in 1999, and 71 percent in 2004.

This does present, then, a truly alarming picture of the employment prospects of Black men in this country. Congress, however, made four important changes. During the boom period in the 1990s, that were very important in achieving welfare reform successes, which are for me the critical example we should follow.

First of all, Congress increased requirements on States to establish paternity and child support orders, and required more, non-custodial parents to support their children. This was the right thing to do. However, Congress also provided funds that allowed States to use their authority to require fathers, who could not pay their child support, to participate in employment programs.

We still have the requirements, but we no longer have the enablements, because the funding that supported the employment and training programs was eliminated in the 2001 budget.

Congress also created the Workforce Investment Act, which broadly improved access to employment and training programs; however, this made it much more difficult for disadvantaged workers to access services.

Thirdly, Congress created the Youth Opportunity Grant programs, which provided education, youth development and training programs for young people living in high poverty areas, which was critical for African-American men; but again, we eliminated this program in 2003. And finally, we provided a generous earnings subsidy called the earned income tax credit; but only a small credit goes to single men. Most non-custodial parents look like single men with respect to the Tax Code.

To turn this situation around, we will need money, patience, a multi-generational perspective, and responsible and reasonable policies. We spent \$50 billion annually to achieve the successes in welfare reform, and that took some 30 years to do. Welfare-to-Work began in 1967; 30 years later we figured it out.

So, in order to achieve some successes in this area, we will need to increase funding for the Job Corps, the most rigorously evaluated employment and training program. We must also restore funding for the Youth Opportunity Grant program, which was reaching young African-American men and others in high poverty areas, but was zeroed out before we really evaluated the program and learned how successful it was.

And finally, we need to continue encouraging and demanding responsibility of fathers. However, we also need to enable them to support their children, and we can do that preferably by establishing them as a priority group for WIA funding by amending the legislation to establish a national non-custodial parent EITC so that men, as well as women, who are meeting their child support obligations are given a work incentive which encourages and enables them to work.

And finally, we need to make child support orders proof that a man has a child so that he can claim the earned income tax credit—and I see my time is exhausted—I hope that we'll have more time to discuss these recommendations in detail. Thank you.

[The prepared statement of Dr. Ronald B. Mincy appears in the Submissions for the Record on page 42.]

Senator Klobuchar. And thank you Dr. Mincy.
Mr. Carmona.

**STATEMENT OF ROBERT CARMONA, PRESIDENT AND CEO,
STRIVE, NEW YORK, NY**

Mr. Carmona. Thank you. I begin by thanking the Committee for both the opportunity and privilege to appear before you today.

One thing I must mention, that in my testimony, half of the credit goes to my colleague, Steven Redfield. He's one of our in-house writers, and I wanted to make sure I acknowledge that.

A lot of what I describe today is not only based on experience through my work, but, is also of a personal nature, as I am an ex-offender, an ex-substance abuser. As one of four siblings raised by a single parent in New York City Housing Authority project, I begin with the following:

My mother was certainly able to teach me right from wrong; she could clothe me, feed me, house me. What she could not do was teach me how to be a man.

This phenomena in our communities of single parent heads of household, primarily headed by women, comes at a price to our communities. We have a generation of young men that seek to define their manhood by what they observe on the street.

For me personally, this became the guy with the biggest car, nicest clothes, most beautiful women, etc. Additionally, the larger society keeps sending us messages. It's amazing to me that in our society we always talk about the impact of the media but we don't necessarily concentrate on that as it relates to young Black men.

The messages are contradictory. Society wants to talk like me, dress like me, rap like me, but certainly does not want to be me. The former I derive from television, movies, the music industry, et cetera. The latter is the result of my day-to-day existence. I'm followed wherever I go, viewed with suspicion, in any interaction below 96th Street. On guard whenever a cop car passes me, no matter what I may be doing. In schools, I'm made to feel dumb and not worthy of educational attention. And finally, I move from grade to grade when I know I haven't done the work.

One of the things that all our teaching over the years informs us of is that these folks need support. There are so many barriers that they're challenged with and one of the things that never comes to mind is that work is a learned trait.

I can recall as a child, that I didn't know where my mother was going; she ended up being a nurse, but she would disappear to this mysterious thing that they call work, and every Friday I would get a milkshake. So I equated work with stuff.

We've created a generation of individuals that don't make that connection. We talk about the skill development that people need, the educational attainments that they need in order to succeed, and that's all valid.

But one of the things that people never speak about is that emotional thing that takes place in any job interview; whether you're applying to be a CEO or a janitor; and that's that the person that's interviewing you has to have some positive sentiment towards you.

We, in fact, have a generation of young men—and ladies to a lesser extent—that have no understanding of the culture of work. One of the things that STRIVE was predicated on was going after those attitudinal components that make up a good worker; those kind of features that one has to personally excel at.

Over the years what we've seen is a disinvestment in education and also in support services. In education it comes out that when we first started STRIVE 20 years ago, I could literally take a young man and put him in the back office operation of a bank or a law firm, and he could actually grow to a living wage in that occupation.

Now they need a secondary intervention; the first intervention was attitudinal, entry level placement, demonstrate that they've internalized the work ethic, and then bring them back for a bigger dollar investment in skill development.

I've been asked if the clients have gotten different. I said I don't think the clients have gotten different; I think that the educational disinvestments and the social support disinvestments are really telling for us.

There is, I think, a silver lining. This may apply to some of the people in this room. There's going to be a mass exodus of retirement baby boomers, and there are a lot of skilled trade jobs, particularly in the larger urban areas, that these young men can fill.

Unfortunately, they have to be at the tenth grade level in both math and reading in order to be able to get the skill sets they need for these kinds of occupations.

One of the things that we found is that there's been about a 40 percent reduction in workforce dollars for this kind of work. What we've been able to do, thanks to the help of Ron Mincy and individuals like him, is piece together supports for these programs that we've been concentrating on, issues of fatherhood, child support and the like, and using those dollars to support our core activities.

As we move forward, though, one of the things that we would certainly appreciate from this body and from the larger society is an acknowledgment that these things happen.

And the thing that I would close with, and I think that people forget is, race matters. Race matters, and it matters big. And until we grapple with that and have a very candid conversation with that, then I'm not sure we can move forward. But I'm confident that an opportunity like this presents an opening for that.

Thank you very much.

[The prepared statement of Robert Carmona appears in the Submissions for the Record on page 47.]

Senator Klobuchar. Thank you, both of you. And I'm going to allow my colleague here, Senator Brownback, to go first, and ask questions, and then I have a number of questions. I was impressed by both of your testimonies. Thank you.

Senator Brownback. Thank you very much. I appreciate the chance to be able to go, and I appreciate the testimony and I appreciate the chance to delve into one of the most vexing problems I think we have as a society.

I've worked on this issue a fair amount. I've spent a couple of nights in prison on my own volition, trying to look and see why is the thing working the way it is or not working at all.

I've met with a number of people here in D.C.; and I appreciate some of the thoughts you've given us. I would like to get a little more point to it, if we could.

What could we do? I take it from what you're saying, Mr. Carmona, that your mother did everything she possibly could for you, but there was one thing she couldn't do for you, was to teach you how to be a man. From what I gather, she worked hard and she just—she did everything she could do.

What would you suggest that we do to reconstitute or to try to urge that family structure or policy signals we can send to try to help that family structure be reconstituted?

Mr. Carmona. Well, as I mentioned earlier, Senator Brownback, there has been some disinvestment in social support programs. One of the things that young men need to see is living, breathing examples of individuals that came from similar circumstances that they had, and have succeeded.

If organizations can be provided with the kind of support to embellish mentoring programs, internship programs and the like, and with industries' involvement, we can develop those kind of representatives in the community.

It's a reciprocity, I think, of responsibility also. I think that it is the responsibility of Black men that have made it, if you will, to come back to their communities and be present and accounted for in terms of working with young men. And that also would require investment, because nonprofits need the fiscal wherewithal to reach out to individuals like this in a sustained fashion.

Senator Brownback. Dr. Mincy, I want to pose the same question, but a little more pointed, to you. I've seen where you've worked on this topic for some period of time in the past as well.

Last session of Congress, we put together a marriage development account in Washington, D.C. to put a savings account, Federal dollar matched by two raised private dollars, one by the couple if they were on public assistance, or 185 percent of public assistance or below, if they'll get married.

We were talking about, and a number of the leading institutions commented that we should use the welfare program and instead of taking assistance away if you get married, leave it in place. And even use, say housing assistance if you're low income, you get first in line for housing assistance. So even incentivize the public assistance program for family formation.

What do you think of those concepts?

Dr. Mincy. Senator, first of all, I thank you for your question and for your work in these areas.

I think that we have to understand that we have a distribution of parents who are having children out of wedlock, some of whom transition to marriage and some of whom don't.

So in the Fragile Families and the Child Well Being survey that was mentioned, we interviewed some 3,000 non-marital parents in 1996. Only about 15 percent of them ever transitioned to marriage. But when we asked them at the birth of their child, "What would help them actually make decisions to marry?" They talked not about the absence of a job as a barrier to marriage, or an absence of an apartment; they talked about, in effect, an absence of assets.

“Until we get savings, until we have a home, we’re doing a variety of things to get there, but the absence of assets is really preventing us.”

So I think some of these approaches would be appropriate for the least disadvantaged, for couples who have been living together, for couples both of whom are employed, and who are delaying the decision to marry until they get what appeared to be the markers of the American dream: Enabling them with a transfer, with an asset that said, for example: “If you’re living in public housing and you marry, we’re not going to hold that against you. If you in fact marry, it will increase the level of income that’s coming into your household.”

I think for those couples who are, as it were, at the top of this disadvantaged population, these things will be very important.

Senator Brownback. The thing that we talked about, was that in essence you would hold harmless the couple for getting married—

Dr. Mincy. That’s right.

Senator Brownback [continuing]. For a period of 3 years. So that health care assistance, any of these programs—now there would be a pretty high price tag, when we looked at the initial dollar cost of this, it’s a fairly high price tag to do this. But I looked at it and I thought “This is ridiculous for us to do it the other way. You’re basically forcing people not to form families.”

Dr. Mincy. And I think there are many areas in our public policy that do have marriage penalties built into them. And again, for those at the top among the disadvantages, these things would be helpful.

But I also think it’s important to acknowledge that there is a large population for whom these things are not going to help, because within 2 years of the birth of the child, even before the child is born, many of these couples have broken up. Seventy percent—I want to nail that number in—70 percent of African-American children are born to non-marital parents, and only a few of them transition to marriage.

So even to the extent that public policy can do things that enables those who are on the margin of marrying to do so, there is a broad population who won’t benefit from marriage-enhancement sorts of policies, but they still have children in common. Those children are going to need the support of both their mothers and fathers throughout their life course, and we have to worry about, “How are we going to help these parents, who do not intend to marry, to collaborate around the raising of their children?”

So I think these marriage inducement policies are important, but they are only a part of the solution; and for too long we’ve ignored those parents who will not marry, especially the fathers. We are not enabling them to meet their financial and other obligations to their children.

Senator Brownback. Can I have another question? Do you mind here?

Senator Klobuchar. No. Please go ahead.

Senator Brownback. Because this is an excellent witness, and a chronic problem that we’re trying to figure out.

That number, 70 percent, in the sixties, early-sixties kind of before the major changes that we saw, demographic shifts as far as married couples in the society, that number in the African-American community, what was it prior to the sixties?

Dr. Mincy. This is spooky, because I was teaching this yesterday in class.

In 1950, about 57 percent of African-American children were born to unmarried parents, and that number—

Senator Brownback. To unmarried parents.

Dr. Mincy. Right, to unmarried parents, and that number has steadily increased to about 70 percent in the last several years; and it's declined a little in the last several. So now about 69 percent of African-American children are born to non-married parents.

So we've been in this space for decades, and I've been doing—

Senator Brownback. If I could, because that's not what I understood the number to be prior to the big generational shift that took place in the sixties. The number I had seen was in the thirties.

Dr. Mincy. No, sir, actually—

Senator Brownback. Prior to the sixties.

Dr. Mincy. I'm looking at the Blackboard in my mind, and it's been very high for decades.

Senator Brownback. But has it been lower at any point in time?

Dr. Mincy. Well surely. Sort of prior to the 1960s, but if you're thinking about—

Senator Brownback. That's what I'm talking about, the period prior to the 1960s.

Dr. Mincy. Yes, it would have been—marriage rates would have been higher among African-Americans, but we're thinking about a period after the migration from the South to the North after World War II, after the concentration of African-Americans in urban areas; at that juncture you do get very high rates of non-marital births among African-Americans, and I think this is an issue that absolutely has to be addressed; it is being addressed.

One of the helpful things that the Healthy Marriage Initiative that this Administration has pursued is, opening a conversation among African-Americans about why are we as a people tolerating this high rate of non-marriage among us, and the consequences for our children.

That conversation is therefore underway. However, again, I want to emphasize that it's going to be effective for a small portion of the population.

Senator Brownback. I hear your—

Dr. Mincy. You have to worry about, what about those who don't.

Senator Brownback. I hear your point.

The rate has been substantially lower for the entire population prior to really the sixties mega change that took place, and it was substantially lower for the African-American community as well; and I do think there's an agreement or a system to be had here of working on this in the total, like we've done major bipartisan issues around here where you talk about the desires kind of of both parties of how would we address this? And one's going to probably

emphasize family structure more, and the other's going to emphasize "Well, what can we do to help into the workplace more?"

I think there's an agreement to be had here, to move this forward. Because everybody recognizes this is a horrible problem for the society, for the country, for African-Americans, and particular for African-American men. And we should address it.

Dr. Mincy. Yes.

Senator Brownback. And there's no lack of a will to do that, but I think maybe what we need to do is to really sit down at the table with ties loosened up and say, "OK, here's what we can do to get this done." It's the sort of thing I did with your former colleague, Paul Wellstone, from your State on trafficking issues, where you gather each side together, and the thought there, and put together something that comes at a bipartisan approach to a big problem, which we could do.

Madam Chairman, thank you very much for letting me talk about this.

Dr. Mincy. Can I just make one other comment on this?

I agree with you, but I also understand that if 35 percent of African-American high school dropout males are incarcerated, if the employment rate among those who are not incarcerated is in the 20 percent range, then who are they going to marry?

So I think this really involves, again, the bipartisan dig-deep sort of effort to deal with the health, the incarceration, the other causes—

Senator Brownback. Absolutely.

Dr. Mincy [continuing]. That deplete Black men from—

Senator Brownback. That's why I mentioned the Second Chance Act. I don't know if you've had a chance to look at that. We got it almost through last Congress, I hope we can get it through this Congress; it has Administration support. But that's a big piece of the puzzle here.

And there are people—we all have problems, but sometimes we're going to have to help some more than others to dig on out of them, and we ought to do it, rather than just kind of keep saying "All right, well that's just the way it is." It isn't just the way it is. It can be different.

Thank you, Madam Chairman.

Senator Klobuchar. Thank you, Senator, and thank you for your offer to work on this in a bipartisan way with our ties off. I don't have a tie, but—

Senator Brownback. I could say sleeves rolled up.

Senator Klobuchar. But in any case, I do appreciate your comments and your interest in this issue, and being here today.

As I was listening to both of you, I thought of two things that we'd worked on in the last 8 years in our county, and one was an African-American men's project for men 18 to 30, realizing that this was the key group that we wanted to focus on, with some of these family issues that the Senator brought up, and also with some of the issues with employment.

And then there was another thing that sounds similar to STRIVE in what you talked about, Mr. Carmona. We have something called Minnesota RISE, started by a former General Mills executive. Minnesota RISE not only teaches job skills but also tries

to turn around the work ethic that you're talking about, Mr. Carmona. It has amazing success rates.

They did this by working with corporations in the Twin Cities. As you talked about, it was easier to place people years ago. It was also easier to get through some of these barriers that we're talking about, that makes it not only hard to marry, but makes it hard to get a job and to get placed somewhere.

By working through this organization they've actually placed people that may have a record of some kind. So I want to explore some of the issues of the records in a minute, but I thought I'd start with just talking about the labor experiences and what you're seeing.

First of all, I think Dr. Mincy talked about the differences between the African-American women's placement and African-American men's. Could you elaborate a little on that? What do you see as the causes of that?

Dr. Mincy. First of all, I think it's really important for us to understand that we have been working on Welfare-to-Work for 30 years. So the programmatic innovations included a combination of work requirements, a substantial investment in an earnings subsidy in the earned income tax credit, and then the good fortune of history to have a booming economy—this was not a short-term policy success, yet it is one of the most important policy successes in the last 30 years.

But it came about slowly, as a consequence of a great deal of trial and error and learning. It also came about as a consequence of having a funding stream that was working on Welfare-to-Work, reducing teenage pregnancy, and so on.

So having people in the field, working with young women, over a period of 30 years who were rookies at one point and came to be executive directors at another, because they had an ongoing set of resources with which to work on the same population. This has not occurred with respect to the challenges of African-American men.

About 10 years ago, it's sort of surreal; Rob and I were testifying before the House on this very same issue. We have seen funding related to the challenges of African-American men come and go. That has a consequence for capacity. Some of those community-based organizations, some of those professionals who run these programs are no longer in place. They don't have the lessons from 10 years ago, they don't have the capacity to develop junior staff; moreover, we have not carefully evaluated, unlike programs that work with respect to women, carefully evaluated programs, taken our lessons learned, taught them to the next generation and so forth.

We were laughing as we were in the elevator; I don't have a lot of time to be about this again; I don't want to be back here 20 years from now, a little older, et cetera, a little grayer—we have to get into a place where we make this issue a priority, we put resources behind it, but we also undertake the ongoing execution, evaluation, learning, incorporating those lessons into subsequent rounds of programs until we get to a place where we're able to turn this—we have a lot of debris in the field of working with men as a consequence of this intermittent investment, and that's really part of the challenge that we face.

Senator Klobuchar. I think that's a very good point, Dr. Mincy, because what happens, as you know, if there's a program that's funded and you don't see those kinds of results, people then get very hesitant about continuing funding. I think a piece of this hesitancy is that people want to see research that shows programs that actually have gotten results. Then the programs can be replicated and money spread based on what's working.

Would you like to comment on that, Mr. Carmona?

Mr. Carmona. Yes, I do want to comment, because in fact what we've seen over the last several years is, a deliberate disinvestment in programs that do work. For example, STRIVE was able to secure a roughly 3 to 4 million-dollar Federal grant from the Department of Labor to place and retain ex-offenders on jobs. The grant was for the national network, to place 700 individuals.

We not only exceeded the placement goal, we exceeded the retention goal as well as the recidivism goals for this group. At the end of that grant, we certainly expected to be considered for renewal, but it died after that. So with 620,000 ex-offenders being released every year, so now there were 619,300 left, and we weren't funded to continue the work.

Dr. Mincy. Moreover, when such a thing occurs, we're not evaluating these programs, we're not going in there asking, "Why did this work? What about it worked, what about it didn't work?" So that in the next round of ex-offender programs we jettison the things that are not effective and improve upon those that are.

The same with the Youth Opportunity Grant program, which is an enormous disappointment. We had 36 high poverty areas where a lot of the African-American men who are the subject of this meeting were being reached prior to becoming fathers with youth development, educational investments and the like. We have not even completed the evaluation of that program in order to figure out how effectively it worked.

So again, this is an ongoing challenge that we not only have to sort of try certain things and do experimentation, the research and development which is the work of public policy, but we've got to learn these lessons and stay at it long enough to find some success in the same way that we did with respect to welfare reform.

Senator Klobuchar. I really appreciate your honesty about that, because—we can't hide from the race part of this as we go forward in this area. In the last few years I have seen that people are hesitant about government in some ways. On the other hand, I think this last election showed that people are very concerned about the unfairness of some, and really the immorality of the system and what's happening.

So our job, in this area, is just to show them "well, we know these things work, and we know where we can go." And I guess one of the things I wanted to follow up in that vein was the earned income tax credit. And you talked about it in your testimony and how you've seen that as helpful. What level of investment do you think is really going to work, and how should we proceed and go forward on that?

Dr. Mincy. Well, I think there are a couple of things we're learning. First of all, even though the earned income tax credit in New York is just getting under way.

In the first place, who should be eligible for the earned income tax credit? Initially the legislation in New York kept income eligibility at \$12,000 or so, and there's much discussion that that's too low. I think the Federal legislation from Senators Obama and Bayh are also in that neighborhood, and they're much too low.

What happened in New York was, the income eligibility level went up to \$30,000, but the maximum amount of the grant is now \$1,000. And as a consequence, many more men can be reached.

So Rob Carmona can get a young man who has a substantial child support obligation, can get him a job at 16–20,000 dollars a year so that he's just getting started in the labor market; but if he has \$20,000 worth of arrearages, which is not difficult, he's not eligible for the earned income tax credit. He would not have been, under the Federal legislation that is being proposed.

So I think the income eligibility level needs to be higher, and we can sort of balance the cost by maxing out the grant at—the same as the New York attempt to do so at \$1,000.

But the other thing that we're learning is very instructive. So it turns out that in New York, we now have—there is a concern that men won't take up the earned income tax credit, that there would be an offer out there but there would be no take-up.

What we're finding in New York is we have what are called—tax assistance organizations in the community. Many men go into these organizations in order to get their taxes done at the end of the year, and when they go the workers are telling them about the New York State or non-custodial parent EITC, and asking them “would you like to get it?”

And so men are learning about these as a consequence of their contact with tax workers in the community; but it turns out that if they didn't know the social security numbers of their children, they think that they cannot, that they are not entitled to the EITC.

So we have to figure out—now, we have huge firewalls between child support enforcement and everything else. The child's social security number is an important privacy issue. So we have to work out the kinks in this policy such that we get information to these men, who are applying for the EITC. If they have paternity established, if they have a child support order, they should be able to get the child's social security number and apply for this EITC to supplement their income so that they can continue to work.

Moreover, why does he need the child's social security number at all? If he has a child support order, that in itself ought to be the primary—beside the income, the primary eligibility criteria to get the EITC and then to increase his work incentive.

And finally, the other thing that we know is that we have data from demonstration projects in Wisconsin that show that earnings supplements do work for men. So I think we can avail ourselves of the transitioning of the baby boom generation, who is leaving behind skilled jobs with substantial earnings potential; move some of these younger men into that with the appropriate training and the like, but boost their earnings as a consequence of the EITC, and give them an incentive to work, and pay their child support, which is what we should be doing.

Senator Klobuchar. Right. Just to summarize where you are in this, the idea would be to look at the amount and how much it is.

We then have to look at this incredible red tape bureaucracy that isn't matching the reality when we have a lot of young men with child support obligations. How can we make sure that they know that they're still eligible for the EITC, and how we can we make it work for them.

Dr. Mincy. If I could. The other issue is, the amounts of arrearages. I think we are approaching \$100 million of arrearages in the child support enforcement system, much of which is uncollectable because the origin is men whose earnings are \$20,000 a year or less.

Senator Klobuchar. I've seen these.

Dr. Mincy. This is pretty extraordinary. Much of it results from, part of the time these men were incarcerated, so throughout the time they were incarcerated, their child support orders were growing, growing and growing, with interest and penalties.

So we have to also think about ways in which we can abate their child support arrearages over time. Reward them for being current on their orders; demonstration projects are underway in Connecticut and in Maryland to help men be responsible and meet their obligations to their children on the one hand, but also unburden themselves of this extraordinary debt on the other.

Senator Klobuchar. There is one more thing, to add something we'd done out of our county, is the issue of making sure that the men stay involved in the lives of these kids, especially the young boys and how important that is and how you work that with the child support system, so you make sure that's still a priority.

Dr. Mincy. I think this is critical. But you know, I think the glass is half empty and half full on this score.

The children we have in our survey who were born to unmarried parents, we are now following these children who are 5 years old. Fifty percent of them have frequent visits from their nonresident fathers who are not romantically involved with the mothers anymore.

That 50 percent is great, that 50 percent of these children rarely see their fathers is a problem. The other question is: Do these men know what to do in order to increase the well-being of their children? We also have not invested much in parenting programs that target men so that they know in their interactions with their children what improves child well-being. So this is the other part of the puzzle.

I think we can focus on the money, but there is also the child development that needs to occur, and the fathers can be a critical part of that.

Senator Klobuchar. OK, Mr. Carmona.

Mr. Carmona. Yes, just a quick comment.

Ron and I had worked on this issue, I guess about 15 years ago, particularly around notions of child support and the like. And consequently when a young man gets out of the penitentiary, he is handed a bill that says he has accumulated \$20,000 in arrearages.

This consequence is frightening to him, and he knows that he can never pay that. One of the things we were able to develop with the assistance we got through the Ford Foundation was being able to go to child support authorities, and let's say that, I don't know, Rod Mincy had a \$10,000 child support obligation. We were able

to get the arrearages, the payments towards the arrearages as low as possible so that he could then begin paying the current amount, moving forward.

Void of that, most men, when they're handed this bill, know they cannot get credit and feel like they cannot come to see their children bearing gifts. And that creates an even further rift between that individual and his children.

With more support, organizations could develop the wherewithal to work with child support to ameliorate those situations; that's certainly been our experience at STRIVE.

Dr. Mincy. Senator, when the Administration cut support for the Welfare-to-Work program, the money that supported organizations like STRIVE to do that work disappeared. So we want to incent men to work more with the income tax credit. But it turns out that organizations like STRIVE—because they've been working in this arena for a while—they're not worried at all about the social security problem. They're able to help their clients work through it.

They also have developed, over the past 10 years, the capacity to go into court with the father, to help him demonstrate how much income he has. When the judge sees that, that he is willing to work, he is enrolled in a program, the judge then has the ability to hold him accountable but to, as it were, release him to the agency which will help him find a job and be accountable for his child support.

But when we removed that money in 2001, we left these men essentially to fend for themselves. As a consequence, when they lose a job, they don't know, it doesn't occur to them: "Oh, I ought to go in and have my child support order modified."

So the absence of resources in this field means that the capacity to work with these men, to help them as it were, manage their obligations to their children responsibly, and to intervene with courts and various public agencies is absent, and this is one of the reasons why we are growing arrearages at this extraordinary clip; and many of these men feel that, "Listen, I'm never going to get out of this. Therefore, let me sell stuff under the table, let me do this, let me do that." They don't require work experience. Not surprisingly, they get to 40 years old and they've never spent much time in the formal labor market and as a result, their earnings are very low.

So we've got to arrive here but we've got to hang out here long enough to build these organizations to do the job.

Senator Klobuchar. So the pilot programs, are there some worth looking at in this area?

Dr. Mincy. There are actually many. And in addition to that, there are several organizations around the country which have been doing this work for 15 years. Organizations based in Washington, DC, like the National Partnership for Community Leadership, that have testified before this body 10 years ago.

There are many organizations who stand ready to help our policymakers, first of all, learn about what are best practices in this field; learn about what sort of ideas need to be tried, what ideas need to be discarded. And where legislation needs to be modified in order to get this done. And it would be no problem for me to direct members of your staff to these organizations.

Senator Klobuchar. OK. Thank you very much.

I'm going to turn it over now to Representative Hinchey, who was kind enough to come over here, and join us from the House side. And I still want to follow up with some questions, as I said initially about the issue of the criminal records and what can be done.

So Representative Hinchey, thank you for joining us.

Representative Hinchey. Well, Senator, thank you very much. And I'm going to anticipate your questions and listen to them carefully, and the answers as well. And please excuse me for being late. But I wanted to be here for this hearing, to hear some of the things that you had to say; I wish I was here a little bit earlier.

But I appreciate particularly what you said about the Welfare-to-Work program, which is—the elimination of that program or the reduction of it has been very, very critical. The whole problem of welfare reform was sort of based upon the idea that you had to have some means by which to transport people from the welfare circumstances into the general economic circumstances; find a job, get to work, participate in the economy, elevate yourself, your stature in society, your contribution to your family and your community.

So that's something that really has to be addressed, and really has to be addressed aggressively.

The National Partnership for Leadership in New York does a good job, but they can only do it in a certain dimension; they're very limited in their capacity to deal with this. But nevertheless the people that they work with are influenced very positively as a result. But we need a lot more.

Dr. Mincy. I think you're absolutely right, Senator—

Representative Hinchey. Congressman. I'm just a—

Dr. Mincy. Congressman, excuse me.

Representative Hinchey. Yes, I'm just a congressman.

[Laughter.]

Dr. Mincy. But I also think that, again the removal of these Welfare-to-Work funds at a juncture—we have amnesia in this particular field. The best evaluated demonstration that worked with fathers is a demonstration project called Parents Fair Share, that was launched in the early 1990s.

The early reports of Parents Fair Share indicated that the demonstration project increased compliance but it didn't increase employment. That's the headline that most of the public remembers.

It turns out that a subsequent report shows that these programs increase compliance, but they also increase earnings for men who are high school dropouts, and for men who don't have much work experience. We forgot that.

And therefore, in thinking about how to replicate and build on these programs, it appears that that's where we should go. We should go toward the programs that work with exactly the population we're talking about right now. The less advantaged men who are unable to find jobs on their own so that we can increase their earnings, which they've been able to do, and then pay their child support payments.

But again, our failure to stay in this field long enough to generate some lessons and apply them in the field is what gets us to these extraordinarily high unemployment rates that we have today.

But fortunately you have a few programs. Rob Carmona won't say this for himself: he is one of the few workforce development providers that have been working with these low income men and incarcerated men for 25 years or more. And because there are so few of them, as it were, old heads to raise another generation of practitioners to learn what he's learned; and therefore we don't have the capacity in the field to do this work well.

Mr. Carmona. Earlier the Senator mentioned the Second Chance Act. In fact, that act was predicated on one of our STRIVE sites in San Diego, Second Chance Drive.

As I look around the country, though, and we mentioned that STRIVE is in 17 cities—this notion of ongoing sustenance for the service capacity of organizations has suffered over several years. I would submit that of the 17 cities that have sites, and in some cities are multi-site, are probably all operating at a deficit level.

To the extent that this body can take whatever comes out of these hearings, and incorporate the things that Dr. Mincy articulates and enhance the capacity of our organization, it would certainly be helpful. I think that we have the answers.

Also want to segue backwards. There was some mention about education earlier. There's been some discussion about those that do stay in high school still not having an understanding of the connection between high school and work; and there has been discussion about having a more kinder and gentler STRIVE in the high schools so that there's a more seamless transition between high school graduation and what is expected from us in the workplace.

Currently, schools do not have any curricula that kind of enlightens young people about the culture of work. And I think that need- ed mentioning.

Thank you.

Senator Klobuchar. Thank you.

Representative Hinchey. We dealt with a lot of problems in the 1960s, and a lot of the dealing with them in the 1960s was effective; it wasn't all effective, but a good part of it was effective. And we began to see a whole lot of progress.

But since those issues have been abandoned, the circumstances have gone down very decidedly. For example, as you were pointing out, if you don't have a connection between education and your future in the minds of a lot of kids who go through crowded educational situations where the classes are too large and the equipment that they have is old and outdated, even the books are old and outdated; they don't see—and as a basis of that experience—how that is going to affect the rest of their lives.

So that kind of connection really has to be made, and we need to establish some way in which to do that—at the same time that we need to do an awful lot of work to improve our educational system and the basic infrastructure of education, particularly in urban areas.

But, in a lot of rural areas also, across this country, where lower income people basically live; whether it's in cities or out in the country someplace, they really need to be addressed.

Dr. Mincy. But I also think the world has changed since the 1960s, and that's part of the challenge. We are talking about the high unemployment rates of high school dropouts.

So when I go home this afternoon, I'm going to get on a train and take a nap, and I'll wake up in Trenton. And as I pass Trenton, there's a bridge. It says: "Trenton Makes and the World Takes."

We had a manufacturing base that was able to employ men without a high school diploma at very decent wages, and as a consequence, they could support themselves and support their families. Gone.

And as a consequence, the ticket to the middle class now is something more than a high school diploma. And so we have to figure out ways to provide men and women who—but we're making progress again, and this is the extraordinary success of the 1990s. We had an extraordinary economy, we had a policy that made sense, and we got the job done.

Here I think we have some structural opportunities in the aging of the population, and we need to put the policies together so that these men can join the mothers of their children and support them well.

Mr. Carmona. Ron and I keep outdoing each other on pointing out the other's accomplishments—

[Laughter.]

A number of years ago, this was when Ron was still at the Ford Foundation—one of the things that he was able to craft for STRIVE was a secondary investment in the individuals—I call everybody a kid if they're under 40—that go to STRIVE. And we called it at that time the Access Support Advancement Project.

The preponderance of our young kids—Black men, are not going to go to college; that's a given. But what we were able to do through the support of the Ford Foundation was actually engage community colleges to take these young men, in large part ex-offenders, and kind of take the fat out of the subjects of computer assembly and repair, and just have them concentrate on the technical aspects of that.

And then we formed a triumvirate partnership with a group called Technology Service Solutions, a subsidiary of Xerox and some other company. The long and short of it was that these individuals were able to, if I remember correctly, have earning increases in a year of over \$4,000.

The challenge then became translating that to policy. And, you know, the Workforce Investment Act did not enable agencies to make that kind of deep-dive dollar investment in individuals. And sometimes people look at the number that it takes to invest in something like that, and they get astounded by the number.

But the consequence is, or the flip side of that is, we have no problem paying \$40,000 a year to incarcerate that same individual.

Senator Klobuchar. Thank you. Thank you, Representative Hinchey.

Just a follow up on incarceration. In my county, prosecutions are divided; prosecutors at the county level work only on felonies. Prosecutors do not prosecute misdemeanors except with juveniles.

But one weekend every few months, we had a sort of day of atonement or a day of forgiveness. We started this a few years ago for misdemeanor warrants and similar complaints where people—and it was mostly African-American young men—could show up on

a Saturday and do some community service—work squad stuff—to get their records straight.

This program wasn't for felonies, because as you know, there's a lot of lower level felonies that can stay on records. But it was really quite a sight to see all these young men showing up on a Saturday to stand in line to get their records straight.

So I see that as, sad as the story is, I see it as hope. Because as you said, sometimes these things just mount up to the point where one more traffic ticket or one more minor thing can cause someone's life to fall apart. Because then you don't have a car, the car gets impounded, so then you can't go to work and then you lose the job.

So the idea with this program was to look at the problem as what's best for a community, and work towards that. We didn't get a lot of heat from the community for doing that, because there was some kind of a punishment; there was community service.

I know, Mr. Carmona, in your testimony you mentioned that some of these programs don't really work with the employers. You even mentioned the Federal bonding program and some of these other things. I asked both of you, what do you think would work as we look into this very difficult area. Employers want to know people's records. But yet at the same time, these records can become such a barrier for people to get work.

I find this to be one of the most difficult issues we're confronting right now. It is certainly politically difficult. If you could give us some ideas that are pragmatic, knowing how are we going to move this in a way that you're going to get people behind you to do it.

Mr. Carmona. Well, it's interesting, Senator, because I think there are laws on the books that preclude excluding ex-offenders from certain opportunities; it's just this stigma that people carry in the larger society that I'm not sure we can legislate away.

I think that to the extent that we can get the larger society to change their perception of what the ex-offender is or may be could help. The way we work with it at STRIVE is, to work with employers that are ex-offender friendly, if you may, and try to identify those.

We have to do the hard work, at least from my standpoint, on the client side. And we train our clients when they go out on these interviews to be very candid, of course, about their criminal history. And they may make a comment like, "If I was to read this, I wouldn't like this guy." "But let me tell you who I am now" and the presentation has to come from the individual. And that likability factor I mentioned earlier has to kick in where he gets a buy-in.

The other thing, too, is—and this is a pet peeve and I've got to throw it in because I got a chance to mention it—in a lot of States, New York being one in particular, we've stopped inmates being able to go to college while inside. Which to me is just—I don't know—nuts? When all the indicators show that for every year of college, the recidivism rate drops precipitously. With 4 years of college they come out and the recidivism rate drops 7 percent.

There are some colleges that still operate in the prison system but they pick up the whole tab; they're not eligible for BEOG (Basic Educational Opportunity Grant)/TAP (Tuition Award Programs),

things like that. If the Federal Government could change that, where they become eligible for those grants again, it could go a long way to changing the mindsets at the State level.

Senator Klobuchar. Very good.

Dr. Mincy.

Dr. Mincy. My own thoughts about this are first of all, we do have a record of successful programs that work with ex-offenders; and there is expertise again that I could share with your staff about where to find them.

But there is also a sort of a strategic issue. Three years ago, when I moved into Harlem, one day when my wife and I were coming home from church, there was a sign posted on my door. We went upstairs to see the sign and it was an advertisement for low cost discount fares to prisons.

In other words, there are so many ex-offenders who live in my neighbor, that it's profitable for a business to offer my neighbors and myself low cost fares so that we could go to prison to visit our sons, our uncles and the like.

So ex-offenders are coming back in concentrated ways to minority communities. Those 600,000 prisoners who are being released a year are arriving en masse in several selected areas in every major metropolitan area in this country.

There is a project that is going on now that's called the Million Dollar blocks, and the purpose of it is to document where these communities are around the United States that are receiving disproportionate numbers of ex-offenders. Those ought to be economic development sites.

Those ought to be sites where the Youth Opportunity Grant Program is revived, so that the communities who are receiving this mass of ex-offenders in the community, who are in need of economic development so that they can offer these men opportunities to reintegrate into the community, so that the schools indeed, the children in the schools whose fathers will be coming back, and the challenges that they will have are reconnecting with the mothers so that they can receive some set of support around this extraordinary influx of challenge that is returning to the communities.

We will know within 3 years, we will know within several months where these communities are all around the United States, and they ought to be sites where there's an infusion of resources to match the infusion of the population that's coming.

So this is a strategic way in which we can approach it; and I will also point out this: The change, the Workforce Investment Act has meant that there are fewer resources. It is much more difficult to get training funds to any of the men we're talking about because of the change in the structure.

Fortunately, the Senate in its Bill 1021 reduces the obliteration of—the House proposal is to obliterate the distinction between adult programs, youth programs, and dislocated worker programs. Give it all to the governors and let them figure out what to do with it. And to reward the governors if 100 percent of the trainees get jobs.

What that's going to mean is mass cramming throughout our workforce development system. If you've got a guy who looks like he can get a job on his own, train him. But if you've got a guy who

has a criminal justice experience, who is an ex-offender, forget him; because he's not going to count in terms of your placements at the end of the year.

That will make it extraordinarily difficult for us to use the public purse in order to fund some of the things we do. So I applaud the Senate's action in 1021 but stay there and do not allow these long-standing programs that have focused on hard-to-serve target populations to disappear because if they do, I don't know where the resources to train the people we're talking about will come from.

Mr. Carmona. Ron mentions the million dollar blocks; that's common to most cities. You go into any city, you could identify the zip codes where these young men are coming back to. And they're usually devastated communities.

One of the reasons why they're devastated is that those young men are counted in the census tracks of the prisons they're in. So if I'm from Brownsville-Brooklyn and I'm doing time at Comstock, I'm counted as being a resident of Comstock even though I don't vote, and so of course educational resources are deployed—you know, away from the community I'm coming back to. And I think that that's also an issue that has to be looked at and rectified.

Senator Klobuchar. Thank you very much.

Representative Hinchey, if you want to maybe ask a few more questions before closing.

Representative Hinchey. I know we're running out of time, but I appreciate being here with you, Senator. Thank you.

I think that the subject you were just talking about, turning over the authority of how to spend that money and putting it into a much broader category doesn't make any sense. I think it's a big mistake because you might have a good governor who's sensitive and who understands these things and knows how to spend that money in the best way for the community, for the society; but you may not.

And you're pointing out the issue in New York, where you had the loss of education in the prison system, was an example of how governors can make big mistakes. Not just mistakes in terms of the impact on those people in the prison, but impacts through the entire society. And eventually it's going to cost you more money.

I know the origin of that particular initiative; it was a right wing ideological idea that if people are convicted of a crime, you shouldn't reward them with education while they're paying for that crime. Which is absurd because we know that people who go into prison are going to come out and you want them to be better when they come out than when they went in.

If you run a prison that's going to guarantee that they're not only not better when they come out but they're likely to be worse, then you're just creating more and more problems for yourself.

So the lack of education in prisons is absurd, and it really, really is something that needs to be changed. And when you were saying that, I was thinking about how expensive it is for somebody in a prison to call home. The cost of making a phone call back to your wife or to your parents is ridiculous; and that's in New York. I don't know if it extends all across the country or not but that's a situation in New York and it's under the process, I believe, of being

changed under the new administration there. At least it's been mentioned in that way, as well as education in the prison system.

The other thing is that we have a lot of—I think we have a lot of dropouts in the employment situation in the country now. There are a lot of people who go around talking about the fact that the unemployment rate is fairly stable—could be lower than it is, but who talk about that, but who forget to mention that there are an awful lot of people who have just dropped out of the economy completely. And those people are the ones that you're talking about.

So I'm just wondering if you would care to comment on those issues.

Mr. Carmona. Well, the rule of thumb we use is whatever the official unemployment rate, you double it for the general population and quadruple it for the communities like Harlem, East Harlem and the South Side of Chicago. And that rule of thumb has generally held true.

Dr. Mincy. Well, I think it is the case, as I said in my testimony, that the general unemployment statistics do understate the unemployment problem we have because lots of workers become discouraged. And as a result, if they're not actively seeking work, they're not counted in the unemployment statistics.

It's really part of the challenge that we face, and I'm just concerned and have been concerned for years that, again in the absence of this infrastructure that I've been talking about, there's really no place for these men to go. There's no place for them to get information about the ways in which they—you know, we can assist them.

I think the other issue, however, is that we also have to get down to the pure, unadulterated challenge of discrimination against Black men. You have to stay there and face this.

I have a colleague at Princeton University who has done a study that shows that a White male who is between 22 and 40 years old, who has a criminal record, is more likely to be offered a job than an applicant who is a Black male, a Latino male with the same profile who has not been incarcerated.

So it's clear that these men face employment discrimination; but this geographic concentration of ex-offenders also means that there is statistical discrimination. Employers often do not do background checks, but they're assuming that if you're an African-American male who lives in a neighbor that's one of these neighborhoods where there's a high concentration of crime, that "there's an issue with you and I'm not going to hire you."

So clearly, enforcing anti-discrimination laws in the way they affect Black men generally and the way they affect those who are young and ex-offenders is going to be a critical part of fixing this problem.

I would just finally like to say I actually have employed ex-offenders in my home. There's an extraordinary thing that's occurred in Harlem in the last 10 years—an extraordinary amount of economic development that has occurred in our neighborhoods—but there's a moment occurring here wherein the transformation of these communities is going to happen or it is not.

You tend to have families who move in—middle income, Black gentrifying families, and increasingly White and African

gentrifying families who move into these communities, and have the potential of turning these communities fundamentally around.

But they don't tend to send their kids, they don't tend to have children, so they're not bringing their kids into the schools and improving the quality of the schools.

We spend our money—the first thing I spent my money on when I moved into the neighborhood was gates and bars and stuff in order to secure my home because there are low-income men around the community and I have to be concerned about the security of my home and my family.

I also very aggressively and selectively employ ex-offenders in the community. Why? Because when I'm here, my wife is at home by herself, right? And I said, "You know, baby, maybe it doesn't make sense not to give this guy a job washing windows. Because what else is he going to do?" Maybe when I'm away he will tell one of his boys, "No, don't mess with her. They're OK."

We have to understand that the flooding of these communities with men who have been incarcerated places the whole community at risk, and places the very job of turning these communities around at risk.

And so, in a way, the challenges that these men face are challenges for us all. And if we want to see these communities fixed—the quality of their communities turned around and the like, we're going to deal with the issues that we're facing today; and again, I just want to underscore, I really thank you, Members of this Committee, for going to this issue. And I hope, again, we'll have an on-going dialogue as we work this out, unfortunately over the years.

Senator Klobuchar. Senator Schumer.

Chairman Schumer. Thank you. First I want to thank my friend, colleague, great Senator already, Senator Klobuchar for chairing in my absence. I apologize for not being here; and if you have to get on, I'll take the chair—

Senator Klobuchar. I won't—

Chairman Schumer. I'm happy to have you there.

Senator Klobuchar. You think I'm going to give up this gavel?
[Laughter.]

Chairman Schumer. I just wanted to ask one question of Mr. Carmona, which I know there's been great questioning, and the interest here is high in terms of people who really care about this issue.

When I went to visit STRIVE, and I'd love to get our whole Committee to visit, I told Senator Brownback, Congressman Hinchey maybe they'd like to come and visit.

Here's what's so interesting: It's a moving thing to see, and what you have is the teachers—who are incredible people—they don't get paid that much; they're really dedicated—in a classroom. And they're basically trying to change attitudes.

What STRIVE does is not go straight to the skills; and in fact they, I think—and Mr. Carmona, you'll correct me if I have this slightly out of kilter a little bit—but the goal is to first just accept the job, entry level; you might make 9- or 10- or 11,000 dollars a year, but they talk about attitude.

And the teacher in one of the classrooms I visited was playing "the boss." And he was telling the worker—and a lot of the people

in the room were ex-offenders and young African-American, Hispanic men. "When the boss says something, you've got to listen. He's got power over you." It's a whole attitudinal change.

And if you don't get it—and what was so interesting is the students—you call them some other word, I forgot.

Mr. Carmona. Clients.

Chairman Schumer. Clients. At STRIVE, some of them really argue back. They didn't get it. They weren't role-playing. And they would get fired and they'd be out of a job and back where they started from.

The early training is attitudinal, what it's like. And when the boss disses you, he's not dissing you; he's doing his job, make you work harder or do this or do that. And the goal of STRIVE—and again, correct me, I may have the exact numbers wrong—is entry level job for the first period of time but then skills, once you get that.

Because if you just emphasize the skills—that's why so many of these programs don't work—but you haven't changed attitude, and you haven't told these young men who have never been in this kind of situation—they've been in a street situation—that "This is a different world, and you can do it. And what's hurting you is not your intelligence and not your physical skills, but you've got to get with the way of it. And it's not the way of the street. And doing what might be great on the street is going to kill you in this job."

And that's what they focus on early on. And they have classrooms that do it but they're real life type things. There's real tension crackling in the room between the teachers and the clients.

You don't call them teachers, I guess. Trainers and clients.

And it works because as I'm sure you've said, as I know you said in your testimony, they have a very high retention rate, and not only a very high retention rate, but the people actually advance. And instead of making \$9,000 or \$12,000 a year, they're making 15. And man, that's great.

So could you talk a little bit about the difference between the skill training, which STRIVE—different than most groups—tries to do later and the attitudinal training—you probably have a better word for it than I'm using.

Mr. Carmona. And I'm also going to get into this thing that we call code switching. The kind of persona that African-American and Latino men develop, either on the street or in prison, is appropriate for those communities, right? Because you don't want to look like lunch money on the street; and in prison it helps you do your time so you have this affect, if you may.

What we get across to them is that that affect that you have has validity in a certain environment; it is not valid for the world of work.

The other thing we try to get across to people is that the world of work is not a democracy. Rule No. 1, the boss is always right; rule No. 2, if the boss is wrong, refer to rule No. 1. And that respect isn't something that you get by just showing up; it's something that you have to earn over time.

Probably half—no, maybe more than half of the individuals that are trainers at the STRIVE organizations were, in fact, clients of the agency or have lived the client experience at some point in

their lives. And I think what that does is give a living, breathing, role modeling function that clients can see, because people have to be able to look at somebody and say, you know, "I can do that also."

I know when I address the clients I have—I'll tell them that I have a degree from an Ivy League university, from Columbia University, which means nothing to them nor should it. What they need to know is what have I gone through in my life that says I can inform them.

The other thing about this clientele that's very interesting, and I hope this doesn't sound sexist, but I liken it to women's intuition. Poor people develop a sixth sense. They've heard words before so words are not what they hang onto.

What they hang onto are feelings and sentiments. And if they feel that the person in front of them, in this case the trainer, has their best interest at heart, they will follow them. And in fact, even suffer their mistakes. This notion of soft skills—it's just now popular—has been undervalued for years.

Here in Congress, and all you guys and gals are obviously very well-educated, very talented, but think of how much you get done by being able to—this sounds silly—to schmooze, to be able to get your colleagues to like you, to buy into what it is that you're presenting to them.

That is the same kind of dynamic that we try to impart to our individuals; and we'll give them examples of that.

The other thing that we emphasize is this notion of personal choice. Every convict always has a brother or sister that's out in the street doing swell. I know for me, I was in jail and my brother was an ordained minister, and I used to blame everybody until it was pointed out to me, that we were both raised by the same parent with the same values. Why was I in jail and he an ordained minister?

It really enabled me to focus on the personal choices I made or didn't make in my life; and that's the other thing we emphasize. And we do it in manners that they can flash back to rather quickly; the things that happen in their own family structures. It can be kind of confrontational, quite candidly.

With the younger people we have to be much more nurturing in that approach, but that has also proved valuable. And as I said earlier, Senator Schumer when you were here, if we could also do a STRIVE in schools, I think would be eminently helpful for this group of young Black men that we're trying to work with.

And if I don't get a chance, I wanted to thank Senator Schumer and Senator Klobuchar for this opportunity; it was really great.

Chairman Schumer. Dr. Mincy, please.

Dr. Mincy. Sometimes when I listen to Rob talk, I want to bottle him, you know? The phrase is, sell him.

But you remember Project Match?

Chairman Schumer. Uh-huh.

Dr. Mincy. We bottled it. Every workforce development organization in this country that works with low-skilled women has the knowledge about gradually entering them into the labor force. First working with them so that they are child care providers at their children's school, so that they're getting the habit of getting out of

bed in the morning; and they gradually develop a set of habits over time that enable them to become mainstream workers in the work force.

We've learned that over 25 years, we've bottled it, we've done research, we disseminated research so that people who work with low-skilled women have developed a technology in order to figure that out. We have not bottled this.

Chairman Schumer. And that was my next question. Mr. Carmona in a sense has bottled it; STRIVE has bottled it. How many places, how many sites?

Mr. Carmona. There are about 30 sites in 17 cities, because some cities are multi-site.

Chairman Schumer. So it's bottle-able, so to speak.

Mr. Carmona. That's right.

Chairman Schumer. How do you do it? What do we have to learn how to do? How can we, because when we're sitting up here, what I'd like to do is put enough money in, so for as many bottles as you can make, we'll pay to fill them, you know.

So could you explain, both of you, a little bit elaborate on how we replicate this, how we get it going? Too often I've seen programs, I see them, I love them. And then you try to extend it to someone else, and it's all related to the person who's in charge.

And, you know, Mr. Carmona's a powerful man, and the people who I met at the STRIVE in East Harlem are powerful. But it works every—I asked them for the statistics; it works all over.

How do we do it?

Mr. Carmona. Well, being in New York, you would probably appreciate this, Senator, we have to be very sensitive to other cities. We will not go to any city unless we're invited. Because you don't need some New York wise guy coming in to tell you what to do.

So what we have found is, that we have to be invited into a city, and then we try to identify what we call the champion. And that individual, could be a nonprofit head, or could be somebody from the private sector that has a passion and dedication to this kind of work; and have that individual put together key stakeholders.

The other thing that we were able to do, and this was also with support of Ron when he was at Ford—this is when Ron had money; he doesn't have any money anymore—we created this vehicle we call the STRIVE Academy where, when a city or a town expresses an interest in a STRIVE, we actually invite them to New York, take them upstate, and put professionals through a 5-day deep immersion in the client experience.

For a number of reasons. One, to make sure that we're philosophically in accord; but I think more importantly, to get professionals to understand that they are no different from the clients; that the only thing different between the client and them is that at that point they have paychecks and they have jobs. And that they'd like to think that they've matured and we managed their personal baggage in a much more positive manner.

But we immerse them in that, and then enable them to go back to their respective locales, mull over, noodle on the experience; and then we'll come to that locale and actually give them technical assistance on the ground to get the STRIVE program off.

Chairman Schumer. Do some of the trainers initially—let's say Cincinnati invites you in—just pick a city. And do any of the initial trainers come from an existing STRIVE office, and they help train the other trainers and work with them there, or he can set it up from scratch? How does that all work.

Mr. Carmona. There are two models. Half the STRIVE sites are separately incorporated new STRIVE sites that we've put up. The other half are components of existing not-for-profit organizations.

In San Diego, it was a program called Second Chance that worked exclusively providing housing for homeless individuals. Then they finally realized homeless individuals need jobs, and they added the STRIVE component.

Our trainers will actually go and live in that city for 2 weeks, a month, and hand-hold that first cycle. For example, we started in Tel Aviv in January of last year, and my colleague Frank Horton—who was the architect of training, quite frankly, the founding staff person that developed the training as we know it—went to live in Israel for a month, and actually was on the ground with them.

First, their staff will come to STRIVE and stay for a month and do what we call shadowing. Then they'll go back to their locale and Frank or one of our trainers will go and stay on the ground with them for a month, and hand hold them through the first cycle.

But then there are ongoing interactions. We have two functions a year where we convene what we would call a summit, where we invite all board executive directors and board members to one site, so we can get together for a few days and come up with strategy about the direction we're going in; and then we also have, for line staff, a gathering every year where we disseminate best practices. But what we found is that interacting with your colleagues from Israel and you're from San Francisco is very powerful, because you feel like you're part of a collective. And there's power in that, and it energizes our individuals.

Chairman Schumer. One final question, because I don't want to keep everybody.

Did you want to say something, Dr. Mincy? Then I'll ask my question.

Dr. Mincy. But this replication is all funded off of private dollars.

So where's the policy role? The Department of Labor replicated the Youth Build program, OK. The Department of Labor replicated the Quantum Opportunities Project where we took the teenage children of welfare recipients, we were concerned about their graduation; we found a diamond-like model in Philadelphia—"Oh, that's a good idea." The Department of Labor then funded the replication in several other places around the country.

And it worked. So again, what has been curious is that in our euphoria about the booming economy and welfare reform, we have neglected this population; and as a consequence, the Department of Labor has cut these opportunity grant programs but not replicated diamonds such as this that work with this population.

Chairman Schumer. Just one final question. Have you tried to set up certain new locations that have failed, and why? What is the lesson you learned from that one?

Mr. Carmona. We tried it in Denver with a group of people that made up the board that were more interested in the glory, rather than the actual substance, and on the ground work.

And in Battle Creek, Michigan we had a program initially funded by the Kellogg Foundation, and the city government didn't pick up the tab after the grant terminated—so it folded.

There are actually case studies on where the organization was successful and where it's failed. In fact, I don't know if I mentioned this, STRIVE is a case study at a number of schools; Harvard, Duke, Cornell, and it is actually a case study for their graduate degree programs in business.

Dr. Mincy. I really appreciate your indulgence.

Ten years ago when we met, Rob, one of the things that most work force development organizations did, they would never serve a female client without asking if she had a child care need. Never, as part of the assessment. Because going to work is not real for her unless her child is taken care of.

Most workforce development organizations that work with men do not make as part of the assessment: Do you have a child support order? If I get you a job making \$22,000 a year, how much of it are you going to keep? But as a consequence of the capacity building that they did over the last 10 years—I was there yesterday or day before yesterday doing a site visit for the New York State evaluation.

They have now internalized, men are fathers, they have child support—it is fundamentally inserted into their services, and as a consequence they have expertise to help men make money and keep it, and pay their child support and the like.

But this is done, this can't be done unless there's a resource base that enables these organizations to build capacity and do what they're doing.

Senator Klobuchar. Well, thank you so much. This has just been a tremendous hearing, and I have to tell you that the last few weeks, I've seen some sobering things, and you've given me hope. I went to New Orleans. I had seen those images on TV and always thought about that as sort of a mirror in the reflection of the leadership of our country. And then I went down there. There's been some work done, and we can't deny that. But we still have incredible problems in poverty. Things haven't been fixed the way they were supposed to.

I was at a hearing this last week on early childhood and child nutrition, and one of the people from one of the school districts, talked about how their school district gave free breakfasts to poor kids the day of the standardized test—but not any other day. Because they knew that it would improve their scores for that test, but they didn't do that for them other days.

I see these statistics, and they're incredibly sobering. But now let me talk about the hope that I've heard today from both of you. I have the seat that was held by Hubert Humphrey, a great civil rights leader, and I see this as the civil rights issue of our time, economics. I don't say this to dispute the fact as you mentioned, Dr. Mincy, that there's still discrimination and that race is a big elephant in the room as we look at this issue.

But I see different solutions than we had back in the 1960s, as we discussed. And I think so much of this has to be acknowledging this issue, not running from it, talking about how we're out of time in our country when we have to compete with China and India and these other countries. We have all these potential workers but we need to give them a ladder through education, and we haven't been doing that.

I think that's one argument that's going to work. With my suburban constituents in Minnesota who understand that we need to do address this.

I think we also have programs like STRIVE and the Twin Cities RISE that I mentioned that work. I feel very strongly, as Senator Schumer said, that we're going to have to use numbers with these programs as we look at how to replicate them across the country so that we can show the American people "this is what works".

We also need to make some tough decisions about what doesn't work, so that we can move ahead in this area.

I see hope in my own daughter's school, when she was in school back in Minneapolis. She was at a school until fifth grade that was 50 percent free and reduced lunch, 70 percent minority. They had the third highest test scores in the State of Minnesota because they were together, it was a neighborhood school, and it worked. And I saw how these kids did.

So I see hope out there, and I just want to thank you. You mentioned, Dr. Mincy, how you don't want to be here 20 years from now with gray hair. Well, I hope you are here 20 years from now, and I hope we're going to be able to discuss some of these successes.

When you have these two other great people representing our Nation up here, you captured the imagination from Senator Brownback; he already e-mailed us that he wants to start working on this. So I urge you not to give up, as difficult as these issues are; that there are people that care, and we need to move forward.

Thank you very much.

Oh, the gavel. This is our moment.

[Gavel down.]

[Whereupon, at 11:26 a.m., March 8, 2007, the hearing adjourned.]

Submissions for the Record



Joint Economic Committee Senator Charles E. Schumer Chairman



PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR CHARLES E. SCHUMER, CHAIRMAN

I would like to welcome my fellow Members, our witnesses and guests here today for our first Joint Economic Committee hearing on employment in the 110th Congress. The Joint Economic Committee, which was created by the Employment Act of 1946, has a tradition of holding hearings on the employment situation. Going forward, we hope to use the timing of the monthly releases of employment data as an opportunity to investigate problematic trends lurking behind the headline numbers that warrant national action. Today, our focus will be on the growing crisis of joblessness for young African American men.

The crisis is profound, persistent and perplexing. Both across the country and particularly in my home state of New York, far too many black men are facing difficulty finding and keeping work. The numbers are staggering and getting worse, particularly for young black men.

Consider these statistics:

In 1999, 65 percent of black male high school dropouts in their twenties were jobless—in other words not looking or unable to find work—and by 2004, the share had grown to 72 percent jobless. 72 percent jobless! This compares to 29 percent of white and 19 percent of Hispanic dropouts.

In the inner cities, more than half of all black men do not finish high school. Even when you consider high school graduates, half of black men in their twenties were jobless in 2004.

To make matters worse, incarceration of young black men is at historic highs. A black man with only a high school diploma has a 30 percent chance of having served time in prison by the time he turns 30. Without a high school diploma, his likelihood of having been incarcerated jumps to 60 percent. In fact, a black male in his late twenties without a high school diploma is more likely to be in jail than to be working. These numbers take your breath away.

These numbers should cause national alarm and demand a national solution.

One reason this crisis is perplexing is because it is playing out against a backdrop of relative economic success and unprecedented historical advances for many sectors of our nation's African American population.

Obviously we know the stories of highly successful black men and women—Richard Parsons, the head of Time Warner, Stan O'Neal, the head of Merrill Lynch, Oprah Winfrey, Senator Barack Obama, Condi Rice and countless others. And more importantly there are burgeoning black middle class communities throughout the country and lower income black women who have made impressive gains in terms of work force participation in just the last few years.

So, we can lull ourselves into thinking things are all right. But we have to dig down into the numbers a little more to see how mistaken that belief is when it comes to black males with less than a college education. And that is what we hope this hearing will accomplish today—to give us a better handle on this problem, and help us craft the right policy solutions to address it.

There are many circumstances that led us to this point, and many of them are familiar culprits. Failing schools, dysfunctional families, high incarceration rates,

overt and subtle racism, and the decimation of manufacturing jobs that typically afforded opportunities to black men in the labor market.

These political, cultural, economic and personal elements are high hurdles that are tripping up far too many young black men. And while this is a sensitive subject, there is also a subculture of the street that provides easy money and allows some to eschew personal responsibility. But we can't sit passively by and let that subculture claim another generation of young men.

A long-time friend and community leader in Brooklyn, the Reverend Johnny Ray Youngblood said it best: "Government has a moral responsibility to compete against, and win against, subcultures that are immoral, illegal and really inhuman."

Reverend Youngblood is 100 percent right. But this much is certain: on the Federal level, there has been no comprehensive public policy response to this situation. We have left the problems of black men largely to the market, which is ignoring if not exacerbating the problem.

My goal today is twofold: first, we must shine a bright spotlight on a problem that—to my thinking—has received scant attention, inadequate resources, intermittent focus and poor coordination at the Federal level.

Second, I want to explore legislation, policy and programs that will have a real impact in addressing this crisis. This committee's challenge today, and in the weeks and months ahead, will be to put forward a series of policy recommendations aimed at addressing the crisis of young black male unemployment. We will start by looking today at promising reform experiments at the state level—such as in my home state of New York—and see what we can and should emulate on the Federal level.

At the state level, there has been some good news. After much trial and error, we now have several successful job training and placement models that do work. In a few moments, we'll hear from Robert Carmona of STRIVE whose job-training program has been replicated with great success throughout the United States and around the world. We'll also hear from Dr. Ronald Mincy who has helped design an Earned Income Tax Credit initiative for non-custodial parents in New York State that will help draw thousands of new workers into the labor force in the coming years. Our task will be turning these local-grown programs, models and ideas, into national policies that can help us meet this challenge head-on.

With that, I will turn to the Vice Chair, Ms. Maloney, to give her opening statement, and give the other members a chance to provide statements before we proceed to the introduction of our panelists.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE CAROLYN B. MALONEY, VICE CHAIR

Thank you, Chairman Schumer. I am pleased to welcome our witnesses, Dr. Mincy and Mr. Carmona, to talk about the issue of African-American male unemployment and what we can do to successfully reconnect this group of men to work.

As Dr. Mincy points out, this is not a new problem, but if labor force trends among young black men continue to deteriorate, we run the unacceptable risk of losing a generation of them to the streets or prison.

More than four decades ago, Martin Luther King, Jr. spoke of the experience of many blacks as languishing "in the corners of American society." While progress has been made since the March on Washington, unfortunately Dr. King's words still ring true today for too many young black men. Now, as then, it would be unwise to ignore the urgency of the moment.

An array of forces, such as poverty, lower educational attainment, discrimination, high incarceration rates, and the decline of manufacturing employment have all contributed to creating significant employment barriers for African-American men.

The problem is vividly illustrated when you consider Dr. Mincy's point that even at the height of the economic expansion in 1999, only 35 percent of black male high school dropouts were working and that figure fell to just 28 percent by 2004. The comparable figures for white men were 81 percent in 1999 and 71 percent in 2004. It's striking that an overwhelming majority of white male high school dropouts are working, even in the wake of a recession, but an overwhelming majority of black male high school dropouts are not working, even in a strong economy.

When robust economic growth and a tight labor market are not enough to move people into the workforce, we have to look at what policies might help build a bridge to work for these men. Dr. Mincy has a new twist on the federal Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC) that has worked well to help work pay for young black women. By following the lead of my home state of New York, increasing the federal EITC for non-custodial parents who are meeting their child support obligations would provide a strong incentive for men to enter the workforce and would strengthen families by encouraging men to stay current on their child support payments.

Mr. Carmona has a compelling personal story of success that makes his advice on this issue particularly relevant. The STRIVE model demonstrates the long-term commitment that we must make to personal development, job training, and career counseling in order to break the cycle of detachment from mainstream society for many young black men.

The ideas our witnesses put forth should be seriously considered, but the issue of reconnecting these youths to school must also be addressed. Our public schools need to equip all of our children with the education and skills needed to succeed in an increasingly technological and global economy. I hope we will be able to explore this issue in-depth at a future hearing. Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding this important hearing. I look forward to the testimony of our witnesses and their thoughts on policies that can help create a brighter future for young African-American men.



PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR SAM BROWNBACK

Chairman Schumer, let me commend you for dedicating Joint Economic Committee time to examine the need to address the disproportionately bad labor market and social outcomes encountered by African Americans, and particularly by young African-American males.

While labor market and social problems afflicting African Americans have been known for decades, it is important to continue to focus attention and efforts on resolving those problems.

Recent research, including some by Professor Mincy, one of our witnesses today, highlights a large pool of African-American males who are relatively poorly educated and seem in some ways to be more and more disconnected from mainstream society. It is important to determine ways to change some of the forces leading to such a disconnection.

For young African Americans, especially in inner cities, finishing high school is often the exception, prison time is often the routine, and incarceration rates have climbed even as overall urban crime rates have declined. Young African-American males have fared poorly in the Nation's labor markets—even during the arguably over-heated expansion of the late 1990s.

I am a firm believer in the positive power of the family. Too often, young African-Americans obtain their start in life in fatherless families. They often obtain life skills from distortions in the media or from the streets and their role models often seem to come more from the media or young friends than from parents and family.

To help counter these and other difficulties, some programs exist that place as much emphasis on teaching life skills such as parenting, conflict resolution, and character building as they do on the more traditional approaches of teaching job skills. To his credit, Mr. Carmona has channeled his energies into a comprehensive program called STRIVE in response to the difficulties encountered by many young African-American men and women. His efforts deserve recognition.

Education and incarceration are also important components of the adverse labor market and social outcomes that many young African-Americans experience. By 2004, around 50 percent of African-American males in their twenties who lacked a college education were jobless, as were 72 percent of high school dropouts. In the inner cities, more than half of all African-American males do not finish high school. Incarceration rates for young African-American males climbed in the 1990s and have also risen in the past few years. By their mid-thirties, around 60 percent of African-American males who dropped out of school have spent time in prison.

Mr. Chairman, I want to thank you again for calling today's hearing on this important economic and cultural issue. I look forward to our witnesses' testimony and our question and answer time. I am particularly interested in our witnesses' views on what we can do to strengthen the family structure in the African-American community. It is clear to me that we are unlikely to have any meaningful impact on this problem if we fail to do what we can to restore the fabric of the family and social responsibility in this nation—particularly in our inner cities.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR HILLARY RODHAM CLINTON

I want to thank the Chairman of the Joint Economic Committee and my distinguished colleague from New York, Senator Schumer, for convening today's hearing on the serious problem of African American male unemployment in our country. I want to also commend the members of the Joint Economic Committee for holding this hearing so that we may begin a serious discussion about federal policy solutions to this persistent yet under-reported problem. The most recent figures that put the unemployment rate for African-American men over 20 at 7.5 percent, more than double the rate of white males over 20, only underscores the timeliness and importance of today's search for solutions.

Indeed the challenges facing African American males in the workforce are daunting. The hollowing out of the our Nation's manufacturing sector, the bedrock of our economy that enabled the creation of the middle class as we know it, presents fewer and fewer opportunities for African Americans to get into the jobs that can provide a level of income that enables home ownership, saving for their children's education and their retirement. Outsourcing challenges from other rapidly developing nations creates even more competition not only for blue collar jobs, but increasingly for skilled, white collar jobs as well. The tax and economic policies of the last 6 years that have been focused on rewarding the wealthy at the expense of our fiscal stability, the needed investments in education, job training and small business development, have failed to produce the rising tide that lifts all boats. Instead, while worker productivity is up dramatically, wages and income have remained stagnant and the gulf between rich and poor, between have and have not has only widened. The fact that our upside down economic priorities have resulted in the United States spending more each year simply paying the interest on our exploding debt, than on education, job training, and poverty relief combined shows that we need to put forward an agenda that will put workers and job opportunities first.

Indeed, government can, and should, play an active role in ushering in prosperity for all, and I hope that today's hearing will begin to address the underlying causes for such a wide gap of employment and employment opportunities among African American males as well as sensible and innovative solutions to curb this trend. The proposals that will be discussed during this hearing such as the STRIVE approach, which combines innovative job training while opening up new employment opportunities hold great promise, and I am heartened that the Committee will address them today.

There is no reason why in 2007, in these United States of America that our government cannot take steps to ensure an equality of opportunity for all Americans and address the troubling unemployment rate of African American males. I believe that over the last 6 years, we've only lacked the leadership, commitment and vision to take action.

Senator Schumer today has shown his understanding of these challenges and has demonstrated his leadership and willingness to take these issues head on in holding this hearing. I welcome the opportunity to work with him and all of my colleagues in Congress in moving an agenda forward.

Today, millions of Americans, and not just African Americans, are asking the question: "Isn't this America?" When it comes to our broken health care system, crumbling schools, lack of affordable housing, and so many other challenges this is a question we not only should ask—but answer with smart solutions that uplift all. We must speak out and work hard so more Americans have the opportunity to realize their potential and follow their dreams.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR EDWARD M. KENNEDY

Joblessness among young African American men is a persistent and under-reported problem that affects all Americans and threatens the strength and stability of our economy and our society.

The statistics are appalling:

- The unemployment rate for young African American men is over twice the rate for other groups of men.
- The average number of unemployed African American men has risen by over 150,000 since 2000—a 25 percent increase.
- 24 percent—nearly a quarter—of unemployed African American men suffer from long-term unemployment, which means that they have been unemployed for more than 26 weeks.

The promise of the American Dream is that everyone will have the opportunity to work hard and build a better life. But that dream is far from reality for these

young men. They want to work, provide for their families, and contribute to our economy, but the opportunities aren't there.

The crisis of high unemployment among young African-American males is a crisis for America. These men are fathers, husbands, sons, and role models. Over 30 percent of unemployed African American men are married. Yet, one out of every three is not in the workforce.

Their ongoing struggle is a shameful reminder of how far we still have to go to eradicate poverty and end racial inequality in America. Our country is weaker when we do not allow each generation to meet its potential. We are at risk of leaving an entire segment of society behind.

We must dismantle the barriers that are blocking opportunities for young African American men. We have to create the good jobs with good wages and good benefits that enable workers to build better lives for themselves and their families. We must improve opportunities for training, so that unemployed workers are qualified to hold the jobs of the future and respond to the challenges of the new economy. We must expand opportunities to higher education, so that everyone has the opportunity to succeed.

Above all, we must attack the continuing problem of racial discrimination. We can't keep pretending that discrimination is a problem of the past. We have to find new ways to fight the persistent, subtle, and sometimes not-so-subtle, forms of discrimination that hold back young African American men.

They deserve the opportunity to provide for their families, contribute to our economy, and achieve the American Dream. I commend the Joint Economic Committee for holding a hearing to call attention to this important issue, and I look forward to working with my colleagues in Congress to increase the opportunities available to all young African-American men in our nation.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF SENATOR BARACK OBAMA

I would like to commend Chairman Schumer and Members of the Committee for holding this hearing on the critical issue of joblessness among African American men. The data reveal that more than half of all African-American boys in some cities do not finish high school, and half of all black men in their twenties are jobless. The unemployment rate for young African American men is over twice the rate for other groups of men. One study a few years ago found more black men in prison than enrolled in college. This hearing is important to keep the spotlight on the issue, to continue the dialogue, and to fashion sound policy solutions to a problem that reflects the broader issue of poverty and racial inequality in America.

African American men and women have made significant strides in breaking down barriers that prevented full participating in the U.S. economy. African Americans have risen to some of the highest levels of corporate America, higher education, sports, medicine, and government service. Despite these gains, however, there remains a growing disparity, particularly concerning African-American men, with respect to educational achievement and labor force participation.

The crisis of the black male is our crisis whether we are black or white, male or female. We need a new ethic of compassion and a new commitment to break the cycle of educational failure, unemployment, absentee fatherhood, incarceration, and recidivism. The failure of government policies to recognize black men as husbands, fathers, sons and role models cannot be tolerated any longer. We need new policies that deal with the breakdown of families, close the educational achievement gap, promote high-wage employment, and reduce racial discrimination. We need to reauthorize effective early education and training programs and enact new legislation like the Second Chance Act and Responsible Fatherhood legislation that seek to close the enduring gaps.

Of course we need to expect and demand good choices and responsible behavior. We need to expect black fathers, for example, to be responsible fathers and we need to call them to account when they're not. All of us have a responsibility to instill in children the values of self-determination and self-sacrifice, dignity and discipline, honesty, accountability, and hard work. But let's support and reward good choices. Let's not degrade ourselves with divisive rhetoric or cynical neglect of vulnerable Americans. Let's not fail to give people the first chance they deserve, the support they may need, and the second chance that we all sometimes require.

I applaud the chairman for having this hearing, which I hope will be the first of many to examine the various issues, in addition to joblessness, that combine to limit the life choices and life chances of young African Americans. I want to work with the Chairman to assess additional employment training options including transitional jobs, public-private training partnerships, and career pathways. I want to

work with my colleagues here as they evaluate African-American healthcare access and pathways to higher education as well as reentry programs that help African-American men, and all men and women, transition from periods of incarceration to the ability to make meaningful contributions to their families and communities. I want to work with you to consider tax law changes and programs that help young fathers to be effective parents, role models and members of their neighborhoods.

This is a very important topic that we all need to worry about as we seek to make the American dream, and the American ideals of opportunity and equality, real. This topic needs to be a major part of our national conversation.

Finally, let me acknowledge one of the witnesses here today, Prof. Ron Mincy, who has been extremely helpful to my office in developing legislation related to responsible fatherhood and healthy families. Ron's contributions and commitment to this area are extraordinary and we are lucky to have him with us today.

Thank you.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF DR. RONALD B. MINCY, MAURICE V. RUSSELL PROFESSOR OF SOCIAL POLICY AND SOCIAL WORK PRACTICE, SCHOOL OF SOCIAL WORK, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY

Almost a year ago, The New York Times reported the results of three research efforts which highlighted the long-term detachment of young, less-educated black men from mainstream society. The findings from my research project, which are reported in *Black Males Left Behind* (2006), show that during two of the longest periods of sustained economic growth in our nation's history (between 1979 and 2000), the employment and labor force participation rates of young less-educated black men consistently fell and this particular group of men was even more likely to be incarcerated. In contrast, young, less-educated black women from the same families, communities, and schools made substantial economic, educational, and social progress. Among black females, welfare dependency and teenage pregnancy rates fell while employment, high school graduation, and college enrollment rates rose. For young, less-educated white and Hispanic men, employment and labor force participation rates also registered long-term declines in contrast to rates for comparable women, although the rates are not as dramatic as for the black population. In sounding a wake-up call, the article substantiated serious racial and gender inequalities for the long-term.

More recent data confirm the predictions from this study, namely that the labor force trends among young less-educated black men would continue to deteriorate over the decade, as the economy softened from the peak achieved in 1999. However, the declines in labor force participation and the increases in incarceration mean that in slack labor markets, official labor force statistics mask the real employment problems many young black men experience.

This occurs for at least two reasons. First, the labor force consists of individuals who are working or looking for work. However, in slack labor markets many who are looking for work simply stopped trying. These discouraged workers withdraw from the labor force, but this hidden unemployment is invisible in official labor force statistics. Second, labor force statistics exclude institutional populations, because these individuals are not available for work. Historically, voluntary decisions made by individuals or policymakers have played little role in the size of institutional populations. In recent decades, however, crime and fears about crime have led to criminal justice policies that have an especially adverse effect on young black men. Although these men are not available for work in the civilian labor force, they could be if criminal justice policies were relaxed. Therefore, official labor force statistics understate the number of young men who could be available for work. In 1975, 5.7 percent of black men in this age group were incarcerated; by 2004 that proportion rose to 13.5 percent. Thirty-five percent of those who were high school dropouts incarcerated in 2004.¹

In view of these problems, researchers are paying increased attention to employment rates and employment-to-population ratios, adjusted for incarceration, to get a more accurate picture of the status of black men in the labor market. The remainder of my testimony follows this practice (Western and Beckett 2000).

In 1999, 70 percent of black men between 22 and 30 years old—in the non-institutional, civilian population, who had not attended college—were employed. By 2004, only 63 percent were still working. Declines over the same period were from 88 to 82 percent and 88 to 85 percent for comparable white and Hispanic men, respec-

¹ I am grateful to my colleague Bruce Western at Princeton University who provided the raw data on which these calculations are made. I remain responsible for any errors.

tively. Adjusting labor force statistics for men in prisons or jails yields an estimate of the proportion employed in the civilian population. This adjustment reveals a more discouraging picture. Only 56 percent of the young black males in the civilian population, who had not attended college, were employed in 1999. By 2004, the proportion had fallen to half (50 percent). White men were far less likely to be incarcerated than black and Hispanic men; so the incarceration adjustment makes little difference. In 1999, 85 percent of young white men in the civilian population, who had not attended college, were employed. By 2004, this proportion had fallen to 79 percent. Eighty-three percent of young Hispanic men in the civilian population were employed in 1999 and by 2004 the proportion employed had fallen only 2 percentage points to 81 percent.

Because fewer than half (47 percent) of young black men graduate from high school, a comprehensive picture of their labor market status requires a focus on the high school dropout population. Doing so shows that just over half (52 percent) of young black men in the non-institutional population, who dropped out of high school, were employed at the 1999 peak; by 2004 this proportion had fallen to 43 percent. Comparable figures for white men were 76 percent in 1999 and 66 percent in 2004. Dropping out of high school did not constitute an employment barrier for Hispanic men, 86 percent of whom were employed in 1999 and 85 percent in 2004.

Finally, high school dropouts were overrepresented among those in our nation's prisons and jails; therefore the full picture of the employment status of black men requires adjusting employment rates of high school dropouts for incarceration as well. After doing so, the picture becomes alarming. At the peak of 1999, only 35 percent of black male high school dropouts in the civilian population were employed and by 2004 that proportion had fallen to just 28 percent! Comparable figures for white men were 81 percent in 1999 and 71 percent in 2004. Though Hispanic men also had high dropout and incarceration rates, the overwhelming majority (81 percent) remained employed throughout this period.

To sum up, after accounting for those who were incarcerated, under two-thirds (67 percent) of young black men in the civilian population, without a college education, were employed in 2004, compared with 84 and 82 percent white and Hispanic men, respectively. Young black men were also as likely to graduate from high school as not. The overwhelming majority (72 percent) of the latter were not working in 2004. By contrast the overwhelming majority of comparable white and Hispanic men were employed (79 and 81 percent, respectively), although dropping out of high school was uncommon for white men and quite common for the latter.

THE NEW POLICY ENVIRONMENT AND YOUNG LESS-EDUCATED MALES

During the boom economy of the 1990s, Congress made four important policy changes that should be reconsidered to address the employment crises of young less-educated black men. First, through the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1992 and the Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunities Act of 1996, Congress mandated in-hospital paternity establishment programs, increased funding for such programs, and required states to automate processes for establishing and enforcing child support orders. These changes increased the fraction of non-marital children with paternity and child support orders (Mincy et al., 2005a). Because nearly 70 percent of black children are born to unmarried parents, these changes substantially increased the proportion of young, less-educated black fathers who were required to pay child support.

However, the second policy change was designed to assist unemployed and underemployed fathers (of children on welfare) who were unable to meet their child support obligations. The Welfare-to-Work Program, funded under the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1997, provided funds for states to enroll these fathers in employment and training services. Unfortunately, funding for this program was discontinued in 2004; so only the stiffer requirements remain. Disadvantaged, non-resident fathers with no or low-earnings pay a higher proportion of their income in child support than their more advantaged counterparts. The former are more likely to default on their child support orders (Huang, et al., 2005). As a result of such defaults, and the interest and penalties imposed, arrearages are rapidly mounting in our nation's child support enforcement system. Much of these arrears are uncollectible because they fall disproportionately on fathers with annual earnings between \$0 and \$20,000 or those who work intermittently. In seven states (Florida, Michigan, New York, New Jersey, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Texas) 81 percent of the arrears were owed by parents who had no reported income for six quarters or their reported income was unstable (Sorensen 2007). Unless we require and enable disadvantaged fathers to meet their child support obligations, neither children nor taxpayers benefit. In-

stead, tougher requirements may simply reduce participation by these fathers in the formal labor market (Holzer, Offner et al. 2005).

Third, in 1993 Congress expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit (EITC), which provided critical work incentives for less-educated women leaving welfare for work. This expansion helped to increase employment rates of less-educated black women and reduce poverty and welfare dependency among children, including black children (Blank and Haskins, 2005). Unfortunately, non-resident fathers were eligible for a maximum EITC benefit of about \$300.00 per year, a far lower work incentive than that available to custodial mothers.

Finally, in 1998, Congress passed the Workforce Investment Act (WIA), which fundamentally altered the structure of youth and workforce development services that had existed under WIA's predecessor, the Job Training Partnership Act (JTPA). In 1998, the last full year of JTPA, the Department of Labor spent \$4.5 billion for adult, youth, and dislocated worker programs (U.S. Department of Labor, 2005). Under WIA, this amount grew modestly until 2002, when it began to decline in to \$5.1 billion in 2004. Over the same period, funding for the Job Corps grew consistently from \$1.25 billion to \$1.54 billion. By contrast, funding for programs serving disadvantaged adults declined slowly from \$9.8 to \$8.9 million. Besides the decline in funding, WIA restructured adult service programs so that they would be broadly available, and required participants to undergo assessment, job search, and intensive services before they could access training funds (Nightingale and Sorensen, 2006). As a result, the number of adults who actually received training declined by 17 percent between 1998, the last full year of JTPA, and 2003. Further, JTPA required states to spend 90 percent of training funds on low-income participants, while WIA simply required that low income participants receive priority when training funds were limited. Thus, the proportion of low income persons retrieving training declined from 90 percent in 1998 to 68.4 percent in 2003 (Frank and Minoff, 2003). Finally, after initially rising from \$1 billion to \$1.38 billion between 1998 and 2002, funding for youth programs also declined to less than \$1 billion in 2004.

With virtually constant funding for employment training and youth services between 1998 and 2004, the five percentage point increase in the share of all such spending on Job Corps was almost exactly offset by the reduction in spending for youth and adult programs. Expansion of the Jobs Corps was likely due to its proven effectiveness (Haskins, 2006); however, the Youth Opportunity Grant Program was eliminated before the results of an evaluation, which had just begun, were ever reported. Finally, the loss of the Youth Opportunity Grant Program was especially salient for young less-educated black men, because during its short period of operation, this program served 90,000, 14 to 21 year old, mostly minorities in 36 of the nations' urban and rural neighborhoods, where crime, violence, and dropping out of high school are highly concentrated (Harris 2006). These are the same neighborhoods in which many young black men, who are the subjects of this hearing are raised (Mincy, 1994 and Galster et al., 1997). Together, with the elimination of the Welfare-to-Work program, these changes resulted in a dramatic decline in the number of less-educated black males receiving help, because in recent years many community-based youth development, workforce development and responsible fatherhood providers have cut back their services or closed their doors entirely.

MOVING FORWARD

Reversing the employment crises among young less-educated black males will require money, patience, a multigenerational perspective, and policies that are responsible and reasonable. My thinking on how to move forward relies heavily upon the experience of welfare reform. Congress was willing to spend upwards of \$50 billion per year on the EITC, Medicare, child care, and SCHIP to facilitate welfare-to-work. The employment crisis among less-educated black males is no less serious a problem. Also, the welfare-to-work effort was no short-term victory; it began in with the 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act. Patience in this effort, though hopefully for less than 30 years, will also be required.

Reversing the employment crises among less-educated black males is important, because the stakes for future generations are high. Therefore, our perspective must be multi-generational. Clearly, the black males most at risk are those who stop their education before completing high school diploma or some post-secondary schooling. Living with a single mother increases the likelihood of dropping out of school (Astone and McClanahan 1991). The effects of single parenting on dropping out of school are larger, the longer a child is in a single parent home and larger for boys and than girls (Krein and Beller 1988). Most black males who eventually drop out of school are raised by single mothers, who have little time to devote to their child's education, after working long hours at near poverty-level wages. These mothers and

children need the active participation of father. Even nonresident fathers who are involved in the children's education increase their child's chances of getting A's in high school and the chances that their children graduate (Nord et al. 1997). Young children who receive frequent visits from their nonresident fathers are also less likely to exhibit problem behaviors such as anxiety and withdrawal, which are predictors of other negative outcomes of these children become adolescents (Mincy et al. 2005b). Thus, we must be concerned about the 22- to 30-year-old high school dropout, because he can help prevent the same dismal outcome for his son or daughter.

One set of policy changes can reach young black males before they become fathers. These include expansions in funding for the Job Corps, so that more young men can be served. Second, Congress should revive the Youth Opportunity Grant programs, which is still possible, because many of the 36 program sites have maintained some level of operation by seeking other sources of funding.

However, policies that reach black men through their status as fathers are critical, because so many less-educated black males become fathers at a young age. These policies must be responsible and reasonable. Responsible policies will continue to require fathers to support their children financially; reasonable policies will enable those who are unemployed or underemployed to do so. Intermittent employment partially explains why black children are less likely to receive child support payments from their nonresident fathers than white children (Mincy and Nepomnyachy, 2007). Under current law, states may require fathers to participate in employment programs, if these fathers are unable to make child support payments. In the most rigorously evaluated responsible fatherhood demonstration project thus far, this requirement increased child support compliance in two ways. First, by ferreting out fathers who could find jobs on their own, but simply refused to pay (Doolittle, Knox, et al., 1998). Second, by increasing employment and earnings among fathers who could not find their own jobs, because they lacked a high school diploma or previous work experience (Miller and Knox 2001). Without federal subsidies, however, few states actually implement such programs. Therefore, Congress should restore the funding states used, under the Welfare-to-Work program, to enroll fathers in employment and training programs.

However, the Welfare-to-Work program, which was included in the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act, was a very insecure vehicle through which to support such services. Instead, the funding should be more fully integrated into our nation's employment and training programs for disadvantaged workers.

Fortunately, the Senate (S. 1021) makes some progress in this direction by resisting proposals for WIA reauthorization (H.R. 27) to consolidate WIA youth, adult, and dislocated worker programs into a single program over which states would have broad discretion. The Administration's WIA Plus proposal would provide such broad state discretion in exchange for a gradual movement to 100 percent employment among workers trained with WIA funds. These proposals would only further reduce training resources available to low-income and disadvantaged workers, including less-educated black and youth. The Senate bill (S. 1021) also resists proposals in the House bill (H.R. 27) to remove the priority given to low-income individuals, which exists in current law, when WIA training funds are limited. Instead, the House bill (H.R. 27) would give priority to unemployed workers, who represent a large population.

Instead, Congress should also include underemployed and unemployed fathers, who are unable to meet their child support obligations, in the group of priority recipients for WIA training funds. Congress should also eliminate requirements that individuals must first participate in job search, intensive, and other services before they can access training funds. In this way, states could draw upon WIA funds to use their authority to require fathers unable to make child support payments to participate in employment programs.

Finally, a more fundamental problem is that the average hourly earnings of adult men in the U.S. have not increased in 25 years (DeNavis-Walt, Proctor, et al., 2005). Moreover, wage inequality has increased, as wages at the top of the distribution have grown more rapidly than those at the bottom of the distribution, though this pattern attenuated somewhat after 1988 (Autor, Katz, et al. 2006). To counter the effects of low wages on single mothers leaving welfare for work, Congress substantially expanded the Earned Income Tax Credit. Another reasonable policy, which would help less-educated black men, would be a similar work incentive intended to help less-educated men support their children as well. Currently New York is the first state to provide a substantial earnings subsidy for non-custodial parents. Legislation pending in the Senate (S. 3267) would provide a similar subsidy to non-custodial parents in other states as well. Both the New York law and the Senate EITC proposal condition receipt of the EITC on payment of current child support; and

therefore, they benefit children by providing fathers with incentives to work and pay.

These efforts move in the right direction, but they may not go far enough. Employment instability reduces the annual earnings of black men and increases the likelihood that they default on their child support orders (Mincy and Nepomnyachy, 2007). Thus, earnings subsidies to non-custodial parents should be provided upon proof of payment of their child support obligations during each month of the last year in which they were employed. This would provide a work incentive while acknowledging that unemployment is a major reason for child support noncompliance. Finally, I am working with New York State to assess the effects of its EITC program for noncustodial parents. Despite the extensive thought that went into the design of the legislation, an unanticipated problem, that will certainly affect black less-educated fathers, is that many noncustodial parents do not know the Social Security numbers of their children. In fact, because of the expansion of in-hospital paternity establishment programs, child support orders may be established for non-marital children long before they get Social Security numbers. Therefore, child support enforcement administrators may be unable to supply this information, even if they wish to do so. The Social Security administration regards this information as extremely sensitive, and therefore, is reluctant to release this information to anyone. Therefore, a review and resolution of these privacy concerns needs to be undertaken to make earnings subsidies to noncustodial parents in more effective strategy.

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PREPARED STATEMENT OF ROBERT CARMONA, PRESIDENT AND CEO, STRIVE

I begin by thanking this committee for both the opportunity and privilege to appear before you today. A lot of what I describe today is not only based on experience through my work but is also of a very personal nature as I am an ex-offender and substance abuser. As one of four siblings, raised by my mother in a NYCHA project, I begin with the following: My mother was certainly able to teach me right from wrong, she could clothe me, feed me, house me. What she could not do was to teach me how to be a man. This phenomena of women serving as back-bone in our communities comes at a price. We've developed generations of young men that seek to define their manhood by what they observe on the street. For me, this became the guy with the biggest car, nicest clothes, and a string of beautiful women. Additionally, the larger society sends messages. Constantly. The messages can be contradictory. Society wants to "talk like me, dress like me, rap like me" but clearly, does not want to be me. The former, I derive from television, movies, the music industry, etc. The latter is the result of my day-to-day existence. I'm followed wherever I go, viewed with suspicion in any interaction below 96 Street, on guard whenever a cop car passes me, no matter what I may be doing. In schools, I'm made to feel dumb or not worthy of educational attention. I'm moved from grade to grade when I know I haven't done the work. And so:

The specific barriers that black/latino men face relating to employment can be categorized as personal and societal. Many black/latino men develop a set of survival skills on the streets, creating a mindset that protects them and assists with coping with the aforementioned messages, but that can impede effective functioning in the larger community. Day-to-day decisions, relating to what a black/latino man is going to do, and how, does not incorporate thinking beyond the immediate. As a result, the awareness of decision-making requirements, the ability to tolerate the feelings of ambiguity around choice, and the ability to exercise good judgment when making choices may all be impaired to varying degrees. This directly affects the ability to engage in long-term thinking, an orientation that presumes that individual have choices. This short-term orientation is reinforced as black/latino men are consumed with day-to-day survival concerns. These constraints on long-term planning seriously diminish the decision-making ability as it relates to employment. Attaching or re-attaching to the workforce is a slow process for black/latino men, so they find the process particularly difficult to navigate.

Another reaction to the messaging is that black/latino men will tend to function from a defensive posture, closing themselves off emotionally and developing preservation instincts that are guarded and suspicious. This is compounded by the seemingly adversarial relationship they develop with authority figures, be they law enforcement officers, school guidance counselors, teachers, or society at large. Combined, these adaptations almost always result in potentially unproductive, if not volatile, relationships in the work place. If a young black/latino male is able to navigate the hiring process, he may lose a job because of the inability to get along with peers or supervisors.

At the nexus between personal and societal barriers are the family, friends and acquaintances which most black/latino men interact with on a daily basis. Families may have turned their backs on these young men for behaviors deemed self-destructive. Peers encourage them in the more negative aspects of day-to-day survival, including, but not limited to criminal activity. Friends may not understand how to support them to make positive changes in their life choices.

Beyond the communities where black/latino men live, the broader society presents numerous obstacles that they must confront in trying to enter the workplace. Black/latino men live in communities of concentrated poverty. Beyond being affected by the social pressures described above, these communities are isolated from the eco-

conomic mainstream and thus lack networks of employed people, access to the informal avenues most people use to hear about job openings, and working role models.

Society at large tends to further distance black/latino men from the job market. There are long-standing stigmas about minority youth, young adults, and black/latino men in as being poor performers on the job. Additionally, if these men are ex-offenders, there are additional barriers keeping them from being considered for many types of employment. (Jobs or entire industries are out of reach, such as banking, law firms, jobs at airports, etc.) Many employers impose additional restrictions that go far beyond those imposed by law. Many employers will not hire former offenders even if they are legally permitted to do so, fearing problems among co-workers, liability problems, risk to property and image and reputation.

Education and training options are limited for black/latino men as well, cutting off avenues for improving their work prospects over time. Federally funded supports for education and job training, for example, restrict benefits for drug offenders and those who did not participate in the Selective Service registration process. While not all black/latino men will be affected by these policies, many of this group shirked their military registration responsibilities and may have aged out of the time period when they can still enroll. Without interventions, these obstacles block many black/latino men from integrating into society.

PROGRAM MODEL

STRIVE has provided employment services for chronically unemployed adults since 1984. Black/latino men have been participants in the program since the beginning, and in every city where the STRIVE program has been replicated. In October, 2004, STRIVE operated a special initiative to place ex-offenders and individuals at risk of court involvement, using its entire network of programs. STRIVE's core program elements meet many of the needs of black/latino men in general and ex-offenders in particular, and programs have been adapted to target these populations.

Four basic tenets underlie the model that STRIVE developed. The first is that significant numbers of people who have been considered outside the workforce or unemployable want to work and can succeed in employment.

Second, personal development, not just technical skill, is crucial to success in the workplace. The ability to understand one's own identity, envision long-term goals, demonstrate personal responsibility, and manage one's own behavior, are central to creating positive experiences at work.

Third, STRIVE believes that employment offers the best and quickest leverage on the problems of the urban poor. STRIVE recognizes that many (although not all) unemployed people can move quickly into real jobs and can benefit from that experience.

The fourth tenet is that ongoing support is essential as people gradually stabilize their circumstances and move ahead. Resources must be available over time to help people work through challenges they encounter adapting to the workplace, integrating a job into the other areas of their lives, and looking toward future advancement. STRIVE recognizes that building a stable attachment to the workforce is a long-term, ongoing process rather than a one-time task.

From these principles, STRIVE developed a focused portfolio of core services:

- Three to 4 weeks of highly interactive and structured training on personal responsibility, attitude, self-esteem, and many of the soft skills that employers expect from all workers, such as professionalism, communication, teamwork, and working with a supervisor.
- Opportunity after training for immediate placement in jobs with a future, but without "guarantees," so that participants earn their newfound positions.
- Two-year follow-up support and tracking for all graduates to help them remain in the workforce and continue moving forward, and lifetime access to services (skill up-grade trainings) for those who want to take advantage of them.

ATTITUDINAL TRAINING

The foundation for STRIVE's employment services is its unique attitudinal training program. Among the many issues that it addresses, STRIVE's attitudinal training helps people set long-term goals, learn to deal with authority, build new networks of supportive relationships, and overcome social alienation. Research on the effectiveness of vocational programs for individuals suggests that in addition to building traditional skills, it is also important to address motivation and lifestyle and to help establish connections with organizations in the community. The attitudinal training addresses these motivational and lifestyle issues.

Attitude shapes and expresses who an individual is; at the same time, attitudes can be early warning signals of future behavior problems. Attitudinal training is a

demanding blend of self-examination, critical thinking, relationship building, affirmation, learning and teaching. The training connects to the most tangible of goals: employment. A training focused on attitude and attitudinal change zeroes in on unwanted behaviors (such as inflexibility, dishonesty, inattentiveness, defensiveness, or impatience) that become barriers to successful job placement and job retention, while refining positive attitudes such as personal initiative, teamwork, and the ability to take constructive criticism. This focus forms the central philosophy of the STRIVE approach.

While academic achievement and work experience are necessary assets, they alone do not guarantee success in negotiating today's job market. Workplace managers and personnel directors filling entry-level jobs look for people who will fit into the workplace, get along with supervisors and co-workers, and display an eagerness to learn and contribute. These same attributes are essential to retaining jobs and career development.

STRIVE's instructional approach and curriculum incorporate five facets that lead to attitudinal change and thus the development of positive workplace attributes: breaking through egos and emotional barriers; building trust; dealing with emotional "baggage"; engaging in critical self-reflection; and building self-esteem for the future. Implemented as a whole, this process peels away the excuses that focus blame on everyone or everything else. "The buck stops here" with the participants and shows how they may have been carrying around baggage of past mistakes into all of their relationships and human interactions. This has not only been reflected in their work lives but may have been an albatross around their necks in their personal lives as well. Once participants begin to expand their self-awareness and personal accountability, they move easily to the aspects of the program that focus on developing strong general workplace skills like following instructions, listening, communicating, problem-solving, getting along with co-workers and working successfully with supervisors.

While many programs have added "soft skill" components to their overall program designs, most do not use instructional approaches that reach below the surface and address this real process of change. Attitudinal change does not occur through traditional, academic instruction. Instead, it must be experiential, using the classroom itself as both a simulated work environment and a "therapeutic community" where members of the group recognize their commonalities and hold each other accountable for change. In the context of employment, trainers maintain a tight structure organized around basic workplace rules such as lateness, lack of professional attire or failure to complete assignments. Infractions have escalating consequences as participants learn to take responsibility for their own actions. Rather than talking intellectually about the requirements of the workplace, participants engage in a highly interactive learning environment where their daily performance provides the teaching and learning material.

As a supportive group learning environment, the classroom becomes a place that encourages participants to talk openly about past inappropriate behaviors, actions, attitudes and habits that have caused unfortunate choices to be made. This communal sharing and non-judgmental seeking of solutions provides participants with a number of experiences that they probably have never had: the notion that they are not alone and that they are accepted into the community regardless of past mistakes. An important aspect of the training period is creation of support networks and accountability mechanisms among the participants, further advancing the notion that the participants are responsible for their own success at work.

To create this classroom experience, the sensitivity, experience, skill and empathy of the trainers is critical. Trainers' abilities to break through "hard core" barriers and fragile egos and to establish an atmosphere of trust, pride and dignity spell the success or failure for participants, and, indeed, the STRIVE Model itself. Trainers must facilitate participants through the often painful and always frightening process of self-discovery first, so that past mistakes will not be repeated. They must strike the proper balance, participant by participant, of challenge and support, and deftly move between the two as circumstances require. STRIVE has shown, through its 20-year history and its replication across the country, that it has the ability to consistently select and develop people to perform these difficult tasks.

SOCIAL SERVICES

Each client has access to a range of social services. The goal is to remove obstacles that could prevent a client from finding or retaining a job. Staff aid participants with issues such as:

- Helping clients attain the necessary documentation to secure employment (i.e. birth certificate, Social Security cards, State-issued ID cards, and Medicaid cards);

- Providing referrals to partner agencies for specific issues, such as substance abuse, mental health services, childcare and parenting resources, educational credentials, legal services, and housing concerns, to name a few, as well as to STRIVE's other programs such as support groups for women and for fathers;
- Providing short-term counseling, oftentimes enabling the client to graduate from the workshop. As the workshop contains an intensive introspective segment, issues often surface that could result in a client's inability to complete the workshop. Case Workers are able to head off such attrition, increasing the retention rates and the overall success of the program.

Some STRIVE affiliates go beyond individual case management and referrals to outside resources. These include running support groups for various target populations, providing mental health counseling, emergency shelter, transitional housing, parenting classes, leadership development programs, and child care.

JOB DEVELOPMENT AND JOB PLACEMENT SERVICES

Each client in the STRIVE workshop is assigned a Job Developer and receives job placement services upon successful completion of the program. It is important to understand that STRIVE does not guarantee its graduates jobs, but it assures that they have access to job openings that they qualify for, and that employers will interview them. Job Developers use wide networks of employers who have appropriate, entry-level and semi-skilled positions. In particular, they look for employers who will hire participants with spotty and criminal backgrounds. Essential to the Job Developers' success is creating and maintaining good relationships with these employers. They meet with them regularly to discuss the advantages of working with STRIVE to fill any job openings they may have, check on the success of prior placements, and identify their new hiring needs.

An important part of making a successful job placement is matching the client to the right opportunity. Parallel to the Case Worker relationship, each graduate of STRIVE's Core Training is assigned a Job Developer. The Job Developers work individually with each client to gather a wide range of employment-related information: education level, prior training, work experience, volunteer service, transferable skills developed at home or in other atypical settings, work preferences and career goals. Once they point clients toward suitable job openings, they follow through with all stages of the hiring process—helping clients research a company, setting up interviews, and following up with the employer and graduate until a decision is made.

GRADUATE SERVICES

Training and placement are followed by long-term support services. STRIVE's Graduate Services staff coordinate these services, and initiate the follow-up with clients for the first 2 years after graduation. After the 2 years when staff actively reach out to clients, STRIVE continues to offer a lifetime commitment to its participants; once individuals complete training, they can access the full spectrum of STRIVE services at any time. This helps to create and sustain a new social and professional network that can counteract negative influences they may encounter elsewhere in their lives. Follow up is most active during the tenuous first 3 months of employment, but continues with a minimum of quarterly contacts. Follow-up services are tailored to each individual and include phone contacts; in-person meetings; individual counseling sessions; referral services, and crisis intervention (referred to in Social Services); evening and weekend events (i.e. alumni forums and career development seminars); employer contact; upgrade/re-placement services; and occasional home visits. After the formal 2-year follow up period, alumni are still invited to participate in group activities and to check in to keep STRIVE abreast of their career advancements and promotions.

Job re-placement and upgrade services are an important part of the follow-up work. Since many clients possess serious barriers to employment, they often are unable to secure any kind of employment before coming to STRIVE. For these individuals, their first job placement is often a position that allows them to establish a work history. STRIVE works with clients to help them see that this first job is only the beginning. Once they have established a work history, they can transition into more demanding jobs, and STRIVE serves as a continuing resource, helping graduates at all stages of their careers move to better opportunities. Approximately 30 percent of the job placements that STRIVE assists with each year are job changes that help clients stabilize or move ahead.

CAREER ADVANCEMENT

Once clients have begun working, STRIVE's CareerPath programs offer a selection of advanced, sector-based training opportunities for STRIVE graduates with sustained work experience (6 months to 1 year of steady employment) to further their careers. Black/Latino men in particular can benefit from opportunities to acquire industry-specific technical skills because enhanced skills can help compensate for the stigma they carry. The skill-training programs that STRIVE graduates participate in are typically 9 to 24 weeks in length, and are generally conducted in the evenings, to allow the participants to maintain employment while studying. Careful analysis of the job market is needed before referring clients to training programs, to ensure that these clients do not waste time in training programs only to learn that they are excluded from employment because of legal constraints or pervasive employer practices. Training has been offered in fields such as computer assembly and repair, computer programming, construction trades, commercial driving instruction, and hospitality services. Many of the programs are provided by other agencies. In those cases, STRIVE's graduate services staff provide the coordination between programs.

PROGRAM INNOVATIONS

Incorporation of a fatherhood training component can help men discover that they can successfully connect with their children. For many, this is a major motivating force. STRIVE programs in New York and Baltimore include fatherhood activities. An issue of particular concern to black/latino men is the issue of arrearages accrued while unemployed or imprisoned. The financial burdens of unpaid child support often discourage fathers from having any relationship with their children. After-hours support groups help fathers who seek to improve their relationships with their children and become more responsible and capable fathers. The programs address emotional needs, parenting techniques, practical issues of financial planning and mediation with the children's mothers, and provide access to legal assistance. The programs integrate offenders and non-offenders.

Females face a different set of issues. The STRIVE New York affiliate has offered an 8-week, after-hours support group for women, to help them deal with the many issues that may hinder their success at home and in the workplace. The program is facilitated by a professional life-skills coach and aided by the STRIVE Social Services staff, and addresses such issues as single parenting, lack of childcare, emotional and physical abuse, presentation for the workplace, and public assistance/legal aid issues. Once clients graduate from the program, they are invited to join a mentoring program, where they are matched with successful career women in a relationship beneficial to both.

Several STRIVE programs are exploring the use of non-profit temporary staffing agencies to provide work experience for people who have difficulties finding placements in the traditional job market. These include ex-offenders, who are excluded from many mainstream employment opportunities. Temporary staffing can offer a number of benefits. Temporary work may be an appropriate transition phase for individuals who are dealing with multiple barriers to employment, and, if the jobs are under the control of the service provider, they can create the chance for intensive supervision and guidance. Also, temporary jobs can give workers exposure to a variety of fields before committing to training in a particular industry. As an added benefit to the service provider, they can generate revenue that covers some or all of the cost of running the service. STRIVE affiliates in Flint, New York, Baltimore and San Diego are exploring the use of this strategy, with the Flint program already 12 months into operating such a program.

POLICY BARRIERS FOR EX-OFFENDERS

STRIVE's services make a difference for many of the people who participate. However, the broad environment of policies and practices that exists impedes success for others in the program, and is even more detrimental to individuals who cannot avail themselves of programs. STRIVE's work around the country raises a number of questions about policies and practices that should be examined to more widely improve the life-chances for black/latino men in general and ex-offenders in particular.

Extending limitations on individuals who have been convicted of felonies beyond their prison sentences serves several purposes. On the one hand, barring people from working in fields related to a former offense addresses security needs of employers and customers who fear repeat criminal behavior. On the other hand, it appears that many post-incarceration restrictions of ex-offenders are the result of a de-

sire to reinforce retribution against criminals and serve as a more powerful deterrent to potential future offenders.

Have legal restrictions on hiring ex-offenders gone too far?

While some research questions the impact of vocational training programs, there is much less doubt about the correlation between reduced recidivism and participating in legitimate employment that provides income to live on. Yet a variety of laws limit ex-offenders' options in entering the workforce. The rationale for these limitations is often clear, but the growing number of restrictions has not been reviewed for true relevance to performance of the affected jobs or protection of the public at large. Some laws prohibit people with specified offenses from working in particular occupations or industries. For example, banks are prohibited from hiring people with a range of breach of trust offenses, schools and other institutions that work with children are prohibited from hiring offenders with records of violent assaults, and so forth. With increased concerns about "homeland security" and terrorist attacks, however, new jobs have been placed off limits to ex-offenders, with much less correlation between the desired improvement in safety and the potential worker's criminal record. For example, no one with any felony convictions can work as either a security screener at airports, or in any job that has access to the runways. The connection between a drug abuse conviction and terrorism seems limited at best, and appears to create little value for security while creating a significant restriction on individuals who have supposedly completed the punishment for past offenses.

Should there be time limits for how far back employers can check criminal records?

There are no Federal limitations on how far back employers can check job applicants' criminal records, and very few state limitations. Employers can use convictions far in the past—10, 15 years, or even older—to exclude people from employment. In effect, this means that an offender has never completed paying his or her debt to society. Further, the effect of the ability of employers to impose a virtually permanent ban on employment means the elimination of many avenues for rehabilitation or reform. Former offenders are never offered a second chance. With increased computerization of records and networking among agencies, this can mean life-time constraints on employment. Questions should be raised about the relative value to society of allowing ex-offenders to work after a certain number of years versus the risks created by keeping them from viable, legitimate employment.

Should employers have access to arrest records?

Currently, employers can access arrest records, not only records of convictions, as part of their background checks on job applicants. They can use this information in making their hiring decisions, and there are no legal limitations against their doing so. This raises significant questions about the presumption of innocence until proven guilty. In particular, with disproportionate arrest rates of black/latino males, and consistent evidence of racial profiling, the access to arrest records seems to pose a highly inappropriate restriction based on race. State policies or legal test cases might be necessary to make changes in this area.

Most employers STRIVE works with are not interested in the Federal bonding program. Should it be revamped? Or abandoned entirely, with the funds put to better use on behalf of the same population?

The Federal Government offers a bonding program for certain ex-offenders who obtain employment, protecting against damages for people who would not be covered by employers' regular insurance programs. However, with more than 20 years of experience, in 17 cities, working with more than 400 employers annually, STRIVE has found few companies who will agree to hire a former offender because of this bonding program. This lack of interest raises a number of questions about the efficacy of the program and why employers do not take advantage of it. There appears to be little administrative burden on the employers. The bonding is limited to 6 months in length, so the limited time may be of concern. The low level of insurance coverage might also be of concern. And, it may be that the perceived risk and stigma of hiring former offenders goes well beyond a question of insurance. In any event, it seems certain that usage of this program should be examined, and based on employers' reactions, the program should be revamped or funds reallocated for more effective interventions.

What effect has the elimination of education programs in prisons had? What effect has limiting student loans and grants to drug offenders had in restricting educational advancement for former offenders? How does this diminish their chances for successful re-entry?

Most evidence shows a direct correlation between educational achievement and lowered recidivism. Unfortunately, in decisions that were the result of efforts by

states to reduce deficits, combined with policies to "get tough" on crime, many states have eliminated their education programs in prisons. Programs that have been eliminated include opportunities to study for the GED exam, vocational training programs, and college-level studies. Research on reintegration has begun to stress the value of services provided before prisoners are released, but the reduction of educational programs seemingly ignores the value of such services in reducing recidivism.

Similarly, limitations on access to education after release are likely to cause the same problems for those ex-offenders who want to make a change and pursue legitimate work. Restrictions on receipt of student aid by drug offenders, and exclusion of those who did not sign up for the Selective Service from job training programs, are likely to cause undesired consequences that increase crime and recidivism rather than reduce them.

This concludes my testimony and again I thank this body for the opportunity.

