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Governor

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Chair, Nevada Sentencing Commission

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STATE OF NEVADA
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NEVADA SENTENCING COMMISSION
MINUTES DRAFT

Date and Time: March 14, 2025

Location: VIRTUAL ONLY

MEMBERS PRESENT

Dr. Shera Bradley
Suzanne Crawford
Chairman Christopher DeRicco
Deputy Director Aaron Evans
Evelyn Grosenick
D.A. Chris Hicks
D.A. Mark Jackson
Deputy Director Troy Jordan
John McCormick
Julia Murray
Judge Bitu Yeager
Senator Melanie Scheible
Chair Douglas Herndon

MEMBERS EXCUSED

John Arrascada
Director James Dzurenda
Franklin Katschke
Dr. Jennifer Lanterman
Captain Joshua Martinez
Jon Ponder
Stephanie Shuman
Erica Souza-Llamas
Assemblywoman Venicia Considine
Assemblyman Brian Hibbetts
Senator Lisa Krasner
Vice Chair Christine Jones Brady

STAFF

Jorja Powers, Executive Director
Jenna Buonacorsi, Deputy Director
Marie Bledsoe, Management Analyst III
Erasmus Cosio, Management Analyst II
Management Analyst I
Administrative Assistant III

1. Call to Order / Roll Call

[Meeting called to order at 9:00 a.m.]

Chair Douglas Herndon: Perfect. Thank you. Alright, welcome and good morning, everybody. We are going to call to order the March 14, 2025, meeting of the Nevada Sentencing Commission. And welcome to everybody that's on our YouTube channel watching online. This is the twelfth meeting of our 2023-2025 meeting cycle. And I will ask Director Powers if you would please, go ahead and take the roll.

Executive Director Jorja Powers: Thank you Chair.

(ROLL CALL IS CONDUCTED BY DIRECTOR POWERS; QUORUM IS NOT MET AT THIS TIME)

Chair Herndon: Okay, yeah, I feared that was probably going to be the case with the legislative session still going on. Okay we will kind of. How many more do we need to have a quorum, Jorja?

Executive Director Jorja Powers: Just one.

2. Public Comment

Chair Herndon: Okay we'll kinda keep track and see if anybody joins us during the meeting. We'll go ahead and move to agenda item number two, public comment. This is the first period of public comment, there will be two periods of public comment. One now and then one at the end of the meeting. Members of the public have two options for submitting public comment. First, they may do so in writing by emailing the Department of Sentencing Policy at sentencingpolicy@ndsp.nv.gov. Public comment received in writing is provided to all of our members. Members of the public who wish to testify may also do so by telephone. Due to time constraints, public comment is limited to two minutes. Any member of the public who exceeds the two-minute limit may submit further comments in writing. And callers, as a reminder please mute the device on which you are watching the meeting when you are actually talking on the phone that way all the sound will come through your telephone. At this time we'll go ahead and ask staff to manage and direct those who wish to testify by telephone if we have any. So, Jenna?

Deputy Director Jenna Buonacorsi: Thank you Chair. Members of the public who would like to testify by phone, press star nine to raise your hand. When it is your turn to speak, press star 6 to unmute, then please,

slowly state and spell your first and last name. Caller with the last three digits 948 please slowly state and spell your first and last name for the record. You will have two minutes. Caller with the last three digits 948 please slowly state and spell your first and last name for the record, then press star six to unmute. You have two minutes. You may now begin.

Caller 948: Good morning my name is Jodi Hawking. I'm the Founder and Director of Return Strong. We're an organization that represents incarcerated people and their families; all who are stakeholders who are directly impacted by Nevada sentencing laws and policies. We are giving comment today to identify some of the issues that we hope that you'll consider working on this year.

SB-307 implementation and oversight, and NDOC has to be held accountable for transparency in reporting data on solitary confinement and ensuring compliance with timelines for reducing its use. Access to data and transparency, specifically around use of force violence and deaths in custody, families and advocates need a clear and accessible process for obtaining information on these issues. Parole Board and probation reform, the current system under public safety is extremely punitive and not rehabilitative. We need to explore P&P being moved under, well sorry, parole being moved under NDOC and ensure conditions of supervision are fair and not setting people up for failure.

In addition, both the Parole Board and the Pardons Board are rife with problems that are swept under the rug and stay invisible. We need accountability for that. Restorative and alternative sentencing we need real investments and sentencing alternatives that reduce incarceration and prioritize rehabilitation. Nevada needs a second look at to allow sentence reviews after significant portion of time has been served.

People change and our sentencing law should reflect that by giving, having a mechanism to re-evaluate excessive sentences.

Finally, we would like to see more data and work done in the area of conditions of confinement and healthcare and medical neglect. Medical neglect, mental health care failures and discriminatory process inside NDOC facilities are persistent and harmful and they need to be addressed hard on, head on. Beginning with really getting an understanding of where they are.

We're asking these issues be prioritized because they directly impact the people's lives both inside and outside of prison. We appreciate all of your work and look forward to opportunities to engage in these discussions and push for real change.

Deputy Director Buonacorsi: Thank you caller. Chair, we have no more callers who wish to participate at this time.

Chair Herndon: All right. Thank you, Jenna. We'll go ahead and close the first period of public comment. I believe Mr. Schein indicated that Senator Scheible. Well, there she is. Hi Melanie. We should now have a quorum. Yes, Director Powers?

Executive Director Powers: Yes, Director, we have a quorum. Chair.

3. Approval of the Minutes of the Meeting of the Nevada Sentencing Commission held on November 1, 2025

Chair Herndon: Great. All right, we'll move on to agenda item number three. Which is the members should have been provided copies of the minutes from our November 1, 2024, meeting. So, wanted to see if anybody has any corrections or edits to those minutes. I am not seeing any hands. Does anybody care to make a motion to entertain the approval of the minutes?

JOHN MCCORMICK MOVED TO APPROVE THE MINUTES OF THE NOVEMBER 1, 2025, MEETING.

JUDGE BITA YEAGER SECONDED THE MOTION

MOTION PASSES

4. Director's Report

Chair Herndon: Okay, we will note the approval of our minutes. Moving on to agenda item number four, this will be a report from our Director at the Department of Sentencing Policy. Our Director is statutorily mandated to update the Commission on sentencing and related issues regarding the functions of the Department. We'll have her provide this report and update us on recent activities and I will turn it over now to Director Powers. So, Director Powers if you would please.

Director Powers: Thank you Chair. Good morning, Commission, let me share my screen. Alright, so in our administrative realm we had two vacant positions. Our AAIII was promoted to another agency and our MAI moved out of state but both vacancies will be filled on Monday, and we look forward to welcoming our new staff.

Regarding our budget, we will be renewing our lease at our current location. We continue to administer and monitor the Nevada Local Justice Reinvestment Coordinating Council Grant funds. Our Management Analyst III, Marie Bledsoe, and I were able to perform site visits to grantee programs in Southern Nevada last week. We visited Las Vegas Municipal Courts, Mental Health Court, the City of North Las Vegas Youth Court, Nevada Outreach Training Organization, which is a victim services organization in Pahrump, and the Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow from whom you will hear shortly. All of these programs are working hard to fulfill their missions.

For the Commission, I would like you to save the date for the 2025 Annual Conference of the National Association of Sentencing Commissions. This year will be a two-day format and will be held August 11th and 12th in Madison, Wisconsin. Please consider attending this event, there is much information on what is happening with sentencing commissions and legislation nationwide. The Department anticipates having funds to assist with travel and or registration.

In our data realm, the NDSP data section remains busy with projects regarding the prison population and other criminal justice topics. You will hear one of the latest, the DOC's youthful population, in agenda item seven. With legislative session in full swing, we have been busy answering ad hoc data and research questions for legislators and stakeholders. And as always in outreach, we are continuing to research ways and meet with others to access a more complete view of the Nevada criminal justice system. In February we presented an overview of the department to both the Assembly and Senate Judiciary Committees. And that is the report. Thank you.

Chair Herndon: I was muted, I'm sorry. Does anybody have any questions for Director Powers? Do we know, Jorja, the meeting that you referenced in Madison, Wisconsin, when they'll have any type of agenda for that? That kind of lets us know exactly when everything starts and finishes up?

Director Powers: They just closed the requests for submissions for the breakout sessions and so it will be probably another month, honestly, until we have an agenda.

5. Misdemeanor Subcommittee Update

Chair Herndon: Okay, thank you. Anybody else? All right, and we will close that agenda item. And I apologize on agenda item number five, should have let everybody know this ahead of time but we've kind of been running Mr. McCormick a little ragged with the legislature being in session. So I'm going to ask to pass this until the July meeting to get us past the end of the legislative session. And then we'll get everything back on track and we can get a report from Mr. McCormick at that time. Okay, Ms. Powers?

Director Powers: Perfect. Thank you.

6. Re-Entry Presentation

Chair Herndon: Thank you, alright we will move to agenda item number six, Re-Entry Presentation. Re-entry programs in the community support justice-involved individuals with training and resources to facilitate successful reintegration into society, reducing recidivism, and improving public safety. We're going to hear a presentation from Michael D. Hollis, COO for the Las Vegas-based Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow. All right, Mr. Hollis, how are you, sir?

Mr. Michael D. Hollis: I'm good, how are you?

Chair Herndon: I'm doing very well, thank you for joining us today. I appreciate it.

Mr. Hollis: Thank you for having me and hello, Marie and Ms. Powers. I enjoyed you all last week for the visit. Just to tell everyone my screen, my camera is here but I have multiple screens doing this but I am here. I'm glad to be with you all today.

So, my name is Michael Hollis, I am the chief operating officer here at Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow. We call it FIT for short down here in Southern Nevada. Workforce Development program I'll get into all of that. I was so excited when Ms. Powers invited me to present to you all today because re-entry has been pretty much been my life, so I have spent fifteen years from the custody side of working for the Department of Corrections to now the social service side and I studied in my master's program now I'm in a

doctoral program focusing on re-entry as well. So, when I tell you I live and breathe it, that is me. And many people ask me do I have the solutions to it and I still say no. I may be in the field but I'm not a complete subject matter expert yet. Can you all see my screen? You see the presentation up?

Chair Herndon: Yes, it's up.

Mr. Hollis: Okay. All right, so I'm going to move through this so when I think of re-entry, you know, it's a complex issue, and just being in a space of policy and working for a nonprofit that focuses on re-entry solutions, you know it's never ending. Pretty much so it's a cycle of mass incarceration so, pretty much in this presentation, I'm using a lot of national data and then towards the end of the presentation I'm going to get more into what we do here at FIT.

So, I think that the key part in re-entry is addressing the barriers. A lot of the individuals come to us and they have barriers for being incarcerated so we have to work through that, navigate through that area to make sure that they're pretty much successful. Can you all see the second slide, The Reality of Re-entry? Okay. I'm not good at technology, I may look young but technology not my friends. When we speak about the reality of re-entry so these numbers are maybe a little outdated, I think the number is a little bit higher but nationally 650,000 individuals are released from US prisons every year. And it is shown that two-thirds are rearrested within three years. We have some clients that get our recidivism, they go right back, but I truly believe just from my area just from my area of studying policy from me being actually in the field, that employment is the antidote to recidivism. That is a key factor to allowing individuals to live a self-sufficient life and not return back to the prison walls.

So, I always think to myself what can be done to help people who are released from prison from keeping them from being rearrested. They have no jobs, no money and no place to live so they often find themselves facing the same pressures and temptations that landed them in prison in the first place because they go back to those same environments or they have the same mindset. So, assisting ex-offenders and finding and keeping employment, identifying transitional housing, receiving mentoring, those are three key elements to successful reentry reintegration in our community. So a key thing to this is there are a lot of barriers. So individuals come to us and they are not successful and sometimes they go back into custody because they have barriers to

them being employed or they have barriers to housing and they don't know how to navigate those areas, so that's why it's important to have agencies like FIT to assist these individuals. So employment barriers is a key factor. Criminal justice backgrounds, they reduce job opportunities; there are a lot of employers that are not second chance friendly.

So I know here, what FIT focuses on is second chance friendly employers, employers that are able to give the individuals a second chance, of say, "hey we know that you messed up and were able to give you a shot".

I always tell the clients that come in house here, "you know even myself even though I run this program, I messed up myself. I did some things in life that I wasn't proud of I didn't get caught". So, I just truly believe everyone does deserve a second chance, you know, and they need to be given that opportunity to start fresh.

Housing barriers, we know that many landlords, specially here in Southern Nevada they refuse to rent to individuals with backgrounds. Clients, they come here with educational skill gaps so they lack credentials and training and that hinders jobs success. That makes them less marketable in the field. I'm going to get to it in a few slides, but I always tell the clients that there's a difference between a job and a career. You know, there's a complete difference once you get a career, once you get training you could receive more money, you could get off public assistance, things like that. And then a lot of them come to us with legal and financial barriers, unpaid fines, restrictions on license, so them trying to get into career fields that they want they have to handle all of that. Sometimes the barriers can discourage individuals, a lot of times they do, I'm not going to say sometimes, a lot of times the barriers do discourage the re-entry population from being successful. So that's why we see a lot of them returning as well. And this life is scary, it's scary for a lot of us, I know I'm not incarcerated, and I have to think of different things every day, navigate different complex situations as well.

So, the role of training in overcoming barriers, so as I was stating in the last slide, training; it provides marketable skills in growing industries. We know Vegas is booming down here, we have a lot of different trades, construction that's going on and it increases employability and reduces job application discrimination. A lot of times individuals get discouraged because they have put in sixty different job applications and they have been told no by all sixty, so they're like "what's the use in keep trying you know they're just going to tell me no". So, they have that mindset in their, they have that mindset already coming out. And it helps the individuals gain financial and independence and stability.

Workforce development, a lot of the workforce development programming the long-term goal is self-sufficiency, we want them to be self-sufficient, live a better life and able to provide for themselves and also, it builds self-confidence and restores dignity. I always tell people that our career is who we are, it is our identity, and that's a huge part of us. And then I always tell the clients too, a job versus a career, clients come here saying "Mr. Hollis I just need a job" and I'm like "I get it. We can give you a job, but FIT is focused on careers". A job is a specific position a role you hold to earn money often temporarily or focus on a single task, while a career is a long-term pathway within a particular field encompassing multiple jobs and experiences built with intention and focus on professional development and growth overtime. So, I always tell the clients that job and career, I say "job is maybe 7-Eleven, you're going to be working at 7-Eleven, but your bills are going to exceed your paycheck, now you're going to be borrowing from loan companies and you're going to get yourself into a cycle instead of getting a trade, a training, get into a career field, advance in that and be happy with what you are doing".

So the data on training and employment; FIT, we are huge on data. I'm a huge data person too because I always look at what works, what does evidence state, what does study show, things like that because sometimes we have things in our own minds and is not proven to be fact, it's not proven to be tried and true. So, formerly incarcerated individuals who gain employment within a year are 50% less likely to reoffend. I could just take the numbers from FIT which I will get to later in the presentation but that is very true. I always say that employment is antidote and work force development and employment is not going to solve the problem of mass incarceration and it's not going to solve the problem of recidivism. But, it can help when we have a mass problem as incarceration, we need to find little things that can solve those problems to change the systems and structures. Workforce training programs have shown to increase employment rates by 35%, so that's giving back to the economy, helping the economy out as well and for every one dollar invested in job training, communities see three dollars to five dollars in return of economic benefits. So, I think that is a wonderful thing. It's helping both part, it's helping the offender and it's helping the economy.

So, the question is, why re-entry is a good solution? Re-entry is a, I sit in a lot of meetings and it always burns my soul because I sit in a ton of meetings and they're like "we need to, we need to stop incarceration, we need to stop incarceration" and I'm like "what are we doing to stop it?" You know it sounds good but what are

we doing to stop it. So re-entry reduces recidivism, and it lowers crime rates if individuals have a different path to go on, so it is incorporates mentoring classes, helps out with substance abuse, transitional housing, to just change their mindset and get them on a different path; we won't see them return back to the institution. Not everyone because you know some people are going to return based on different circumstances, but it can help a lot of people. It strengthens families and communities by providing and improving financial stability, again that's the term, self-sufficiency. Saves the taxpayer dollars on incarceration cost, it's crazy how much, I looked up the numbers I think last year of how much we pay to house individuals in and the different institutions throughout the state. And, it helps fill the labor shortages and key industries, you know when we look at the labor market, and we identify second change employers we can help fill a lot of those gaps that's open right now.

And as I stated earlier I truly believe in my heart that everyone deserves a second chance. As I tell the clients, "Mr. Hollis, even though I'm COO here, I messed up, I just didn't get caught for the things that I did." And the question is are second chance even possible? Absolutely. I always say, as long as individuals are still breathing, there is still hope. I never give up on the clients coming in this building, and we see thousands of thousands every year. And rehabilitation is a key thing, I know something I struggle with and I love all my individuals from the Department of Corrections, but when I worked there it was not rehabilitation going on, so we seen a lot of people just getting out and they didn't have any resources or options so I think rehabilitation is a key part in this and providing opportunities that promote equity and justice and people with lived experience can contribute valuable skills to the workforce. I could just tell you that individuals that get released, those are some of the hardest working individuals. The clients here at FIT are some of the hardest working individuals with our employer partners because they want that second chance and they are willing to try, they are going to show up on time. So, it's just giving them that second chance again to just get back into the workforce and the field. So, a major part in this, I always say, "you know government is wonderful, government is nice", but when we look at the non-profits are really doing the work, they are boots on the ground. And in order for nonprofits to continue the funding, funding, funding, funding, and expanding reentry programs is necessary. I know down here southern Nevada we have Hope for Prisoners I was working for the Department of Corrections, when Jon Ponder first started Hope for Prisoners and I was working with FIT at the same time.

So we are really like the only two organization I know down here they're really focused on re-entry, and we have a large population coming to us. So, the increased funding will allow for more vocational training programs, I know that FIT particularly received, last year, we received AB-525 money and ARP money from the county; we were able to assist fifteen hundred more individuals than we would normally would. So again, funding can help us reach the masses pretty much. Supportive of services like child care which is important, transportation assistance, and housing assistance with the role of funding that can go to organizations that specialize in that to help these individuals.

I know FIT is just focused on training and employment, but we have partner agencies that we partner with so it's not, it's a lot of different nonprofit agencies that are geared towards the area of social services and greater case management and mentorship opportunities. This one is one of the case managers here at FIT her name is Taylor, she allowed me to take that wonderful picture of her, but the case managers are boots on the ground, they are mentoring the clients, they are making sure the clients are on track, that client has that lifeline to where if they do get off track, they're able to call that person for support, for guidance, for counseling, things like that. And expanded partnerships with employers and apprenticeship programs; with more funding we can reach out to employers we could get more individuals employed. We could start necessary apprenticeships or programs here based on the key areas in the industry that it's needed in. And then how training reduces public assistance, so here at FIT we have welfare on site two days a week, all day and my goal to them is I want the clients when they are halfway done with the program, I want them to be off of public assistance; they may come in the door on public assistance, but I want them off. If we are doing what were supposed to be doing here, I want a lot of clients to be self-sufficient. So, training reduces public assistance. It allows stable employment, means that fewer individuals will rely on food stamps, housing vouchers, Medicaid. It reduces the burden on social services and the criminal justice system as well; and it generates tax revenue for, from increased employment. So that is a big thing. Public assistance is great, it is great but we don't want clients on it forever.

And I always tell people, there needs to be a call to action, to support funding for re-entry and workforce training programs that is a key thing for the institutions to partner with programs and I know that we do have a great partnership with NDOC and all the local jails. I know Jon Ponder does as well. And then advocate for

fair hiring practices for returning citizens. People sometimes they refer to me as pit bull because I would go before workforce connections, I would go to this, to the Senate and Assembly and I will advocate for these individuals. I believe in fairness all across the board. So I do not mind getting up in front of people and being the bad guy to advocate for someone less fortunate.

And encourage businesses to participate in second chance hiring. We do a lunch and learn here, quarterly with about 42 employer partners of ours and that has been wonderful, but just educating the employers to get out of the mindset that "hey Johnny may have a theft charge, but Johnny is probably gonna be your best employee, that was his past life, people can change". You know as I stated earlier, as long as they're breathing there is still hope. And, then join the movement to break the cycle of incarceration. Find what works; it's a very complex issue. This is not just a problem in Nevada but it's a national problem. So, what things can help break this cycle?

And then moving on to the greatest organization that you all have ever heard of, and it's located in Southern Nevada which is Foundational for Independent Tomorrow, FIT, for short. So, I have been at FIT as I stated to you all earlier, I was working at the Department of Corrections, as a correctional officer and I was working with Hope for Prisoners and FIT, and then I noticed I was telling clients to do these programs. I didn't really know about Jon Ponder, I didn't really know about FIT but I explored both programs and I fell in love, I love both programs, I fell in love with FIT. I came on board when I left the prison system, started out as a case manager and pretty much worked my way up from case manager, program specialist, assistant director, several positions but I'm glad to be the Chief Operating Officer now; have been at FIT for going on ten years now.

So, a little bit of history about FIT we are celebrating 28 years this October, we are 501(c)(3). Our scope is workforce development, so we serve the unemployed and underemployed individuals right here in Southern Nevada, we provide vocational training, workforce support, and other major services and resources. I know Ms. Powers and Marie, they had the opportunity to come down here and see all the magic that we had that day. So, I am pretty sure that they could tell you all the wonderful things as well, that they experienced that day. FIT, I know we're speaking on reentry but FIT, we also serve individuals that don't have a background, so we do both, but 71% of our population coming to us, they have a background that's creating a barrier to

them getting employed. And this is our building, and we are located in a very interesting area, it's the historic Westside, it has a high poverty rate.

So, this will be on Monday, we have orientation on Monday, individuals are going to get here tonight when the staff is leaving around 4:30, to line up, so they stay outside all weekend so when I say the need, and when I say that there needs to be more funding for workforce development programs around re-entry, so these are all, this is our re-entry population. Come Monday it's going to be 80 to 100 people outside. We only take the first 50 in line. So, every Monday, and as you see the line right here goes all the way down the street into other businesses. We have to turn away at least 45 to 50 people. It breaks my heart, I know that we can't service everyone but that's why I'm always telling everyone I come across that we need more funding in order for us to service these individuals, and like I just stated they are outside waiting, when we get off tonight they bring their lawn chairs and stuff and they are camping over the weekend. I'm here over the weekend doing work and they are out there waiting until Monday morning when doors open at 8 a.m. So, there is definitely a need here in southern Nevada. As I stated earlier there's two work, there's two re-entry programs, Hope for Prisoners and FIT and this is how many people that are coming to us. So I'm pretty sure Jon Ponder is having the same issue.

So services provided; these are two of our amazing clients, who allow their picture to be on here, so FIT provides funding for vocational training, tuition, books, school supplies, licensing fees, CPR class and certification test, application fees. We also do on-the-job training as well, so we pay a percentage to the employer to allow the participant to work at their organization. We help out with Workforce pre-reqs, we all know, well down here in southern Nevada sometimes in order to work you need certain items you need, a health card, non-slip shoes, things like that. If the client is not employed it's hard for them to get those items, so we have a letter of intent service that we do in-house that we could do same-day service for those items. Drug testing, background checks, health cards, work tools, we also give hygiene supplies, gas cards, bus passes, vouchers, anything to help the individuals get back into the workforce is what were geared towards.

Interesting story about this individual, he was late to work a lot, and the employer called me and said, "Mr. Hollis I am going to, you know, he's going to get fired because he showed up late and I just can't have this".

So, I brought the client down, I was very hard on the client, like "why are you showing up late this is one of

our employee partners”, come to find out he had to walk like a mile to work. So, FIT went out, I will get to the other slide about diversified funding, we went out and bought him a bike; he has not been late since. So, its things like that, we could assist to help the client with, to make sure that they are successful. Both are re-entry clients both have been doing successful, and have not returned.

So services continue, right now in the building we have about 80 people in our building doing different workshops, classes, case management. We do job readiness workshop, resume, digital literacy courses, financial, job search assistance, it's a lot of other service, whatever the client needs we are geared towards. Something that I did incorporate in the FIT program is, I am focused on asking the ex-offender, “what does a program need? What would you have liked fit to do or help you with?” And they give us a lot of feedback and I'm able to incorporate that in our program. I shared when Marie and Ms. Powers were down here that we recently incorporated a computer basics course. Maybe like four months ago, clients were coming to us just being released and they did not know anything about computers and a client shared with me, “Mr. Hollis, I don't know your world, I don't know your life, but this is the way I am.” So, I had to meet that client right where he was at. So, we incorporated computer basics to where we help them depending on their level, they may need to know this is a mouse, this is how you turn it on. The way of the world is, you're not filling out paper applications anymore you're going to a kiosk or submitting stuff online so that computer basics class, has been full since the day we started it. So I have realized that it's the old proverb, “It takes an entire village to raise a child”, I always say it takes effective partnerships to change a community. I noticed FIT, we are great at re-entry and we do it well but we are not great at everything, so we are community connected and resource driven. I am blessed that half of our case management team, they are licensed social workers, we have 14 case managers. They are all licensed social workers. I applaud them and I love them and respect them in such a way. My background is all policy, so I don't have a degree in social work but they're able to triage those clients, assess them, and get them connected to whatever resources or services that they need. As I was stating, we try to make ourselves a one-stop-shop, so we have a lot of services on site. So everything that the client pretty much needs or have told me, we have brought them on site. So, we have different partners on site they're able to triage and do same day services and that eliminates all excuses from clients saying I can't get over to this area, well go right across the hall, if you made it to FIT, you could go meet with this

partner right now. So that's welfare, that's DA Family service, CCSD Adult Ed. Nevada Legal Services, Ask a Lawyer, NA/AA classes. And case management, this is some of the individuals from our case management team, our wonderful staff.

So, the case managers, what everyone asks me, how is FIT successful, if we leave the data out of it, it's the staff. It's individuals that come here with the heart to serve the population that's coming through our doors. So, the case managers, they complete a whole biopsychosocial assessment. Even though we're focused on training and employment we're addressing the whole person. So, it's Maslow's hierarchy of needs. We're going to address the base first and work our way up. We do all different assessments. We do labor market information, drug and alcohol use, criminal history, we do individualized case plans, there's no cohort models here at FIT at all. We tailor the case plans specifically to that client and they stay with the same case manager from the time they enter this.. employ...this program until the time they finish. We stay with the clients a year and about four months. Career counseling, individualized employment plans, vocational goal planning, one-on-one financial coaching, mock interviews. We pretty much do it all, anything to make sure that they're successful. The different programs we have in-house, we have the Reentry Initiative Program, its actually called Pathways Forward Reentry program, that is for post-release individuals, just getting out of incarceration. We also have Department of Labor funding which is a pre-released grant to where we are operating in all the local jails right now. And we have the Employment Empowerment Project and that's for individuals that don't have a background, as I stated earlier we help both, with background, without background.

A blessing, and that's why this is so key, diversified funding. FIT has diversified funding so we just don't rely on one funding stream. We received WIOA funds, Department of Labor funds, we just wrapped up the county ARP Funds, State Assembly funds, DETR. Located inside the FIT building, this is our donor wall so, these are all of our private donations, so individuals that don't have a background, our private donors give money every year. So if one of you are sitting on this commission and you want to give some money, have your name on the wall, feel free to do so, just contact me after, okay. We also have what makes FIT unique is, we have a school upstairs. So on the second floor we have the Standards of Excellence Academy, which they offer the programs: CNA, CDL, automotive technician, forklift, warehouse, phlebotomy, CPR, and AED classes, and OSHA certification. So if the client does want to stay onsite and do training they have that option as well,

again trying to make it a one-stop-shop to eliminate all excuses. So the first step in getting started with the FIT program, is orientation, so as I was stating this is how many are going to be in the building on Monday, we take the first 50. I'm projected to take the first 55 in line, but those lines will start when we're leaving here today at 4:30. And the success of FIT, measures, we measure our success off three measures so, the number of people employed, the amount for which their income increases from them getting employed, and we're talking about employment with them receiving their training and getting employed in that field that they were trained in, and then also the amount by which their dependence on public assistance decreases, so last year we were able to assist 1,243 individuals.

So, we are all about data, we track our data inhouse, we are data, data, data, if you come in my office I have a whole whiteboard full of data. It would probably drive you crazy but I love it. So, impacting generations, and this is an actual story from one of our clients, so, I'm just going to read it to you:

After spending eight years incarcerated, Chris was determined to rebuild his life. Upon his release, he sought support from Foundation for an Independent Tomorrow (FIT), eager to create a stable future for himself and his daughter. Chris began his journey by attending orientation, where he learned about the resources available to him. He actively participated in FIT's Stages to Employment job readiness classes staying in contact with his case manager to develop a case plan tailored to his short-and long-term goals. With guidance, Chris identified a career path that would provide stability and independence earning his Class A CDL License through vocational training. Through dedication and perseverance, Chris completed his training and secured employment as a professional driver. This achievement was a major milestone, but for Chris, success became real in a much smaller, yet deeply meaningful moment. One day, his daughter came home from school and asked for four dollars to buy a snack from the student store. For many, it could be a simple request, but for Chris it was everything. For the first time in a long time, he could provide for her without worry or hesitation. That four-dollar moment symbolized his hard work paying off not just in financial stability but in the pride and confidence that came with being a father who could meet his child's needs. Today, Chris's daughter goes to school every day with money in her pocket because her father is self-sufficient, stable, and thriving. His journey is a testament to the power of dedication, opportunity, and the unwavering love of a parent striving for

a better future. Chris's story is just one example of how FIT empowers individuals to overcome barriers and create new beginnings.

That story touched my heart, and I share that everywhere that I go, because you don't realize snack-shack is a big thing in elementary school, and now she's able to go and get those corn-nuts or popsicles, whatever she buys every day. And that wraps up everything that I have to say, so I'll yield it back to the Chair, I don't know the structure of this, I don't know if anyone has any questions but if they do I could definitely answer any questions.

Chair Herndon: Mr. Hollis, that was terrific. Thank you very much for your presentation. Do any of our commission members have some questions for the gentleman?

Judge Bitá Yeager: I have a quick question and it may be, um...

Chair Herndon: Let me, hey let me interrupt you real quick, Judge Yeager. I'm sorry can we release the screen back so that we get all the people back, on the, that, so I can make sure I can see hands, if anybody wants to jump in. Perfect. Thank you, all right, go ahead.

Judge Yeager: Okay, so I know that there's a great need, so you know, people go four in the morning, whatever to line up. Have you ever considered or tried making appointments, has that been successful, unsuccessful? Could you tell me a little bit about that?

Mr. Hollis: Yes. Years ago we did. So right now currently we do a referral line and we do a general population line. So we have a lot of our specialty courts to where they refer individuals, so we take individuals from parole and probation, as well, in a separate line. We used to do appointments, a lot of people weren't showing up for the appointments, so now we just do first-come-first-serve and the general population line. We thought about bringing backup appointments and those individuals that don't show up, we can just take from the general population line. So we're working on a system right now to get that started.

Judge Yeager: Thanks so much.

Mr. Hollis: Absolutely.

Chair Herndon: Anybody else?

Director Powers: May I just make a comment Chair?

Chair Herndon: Sure.

Director Powers: You saw the picture of the line and he's talked about that a lot. That was very striking to me when I was there. And we interview three of the participants and they told us their whole stories and each of them had gone there more than one week because they didn't realize that the line existed and so they told the story of being there and realizing, "Oh I have to be here earlier and oh I'm still not going to be seen I have to be here much easier". And two of them told me, "We brought our lawn chairs we stayed the night". It was just very striking.

Chair Herndon: Anybody else have any other questions? Trying to scroll through all of our membership, here. All right, I don't see any other questions. Mr. Hollis, thank you again very much. I tend to think when we don't have a lot of questions is because the presentation was pretty all-encompassing. So again, very well done. It's a great organization that you're involved in. I know years ago, and Judge Yeager knows this as well, we used to have this program called, Going Home Prepared, in the court system, which was probably a microcosm of a little bit about what FIT does with reentry help with people. And unfortunately, they just kept putting more and more people in it and it kind of cannibalized all of its resources and lost its effectiveness, so I get it where you've got that line of people and you've got a finite amount that you know you can provide assistance to and not cannibalize all your resources and lose the effectiveness for what you're doing. And you're right that is heartbreaking but it sounds like you guys are doing a terrific job, so thank you.

Mr. Hollis: Thank you, so much.

7. Data Reports

Chair Herndon: All right, we will go ahead and close agenda item number six and we will move on to agenda item number seven. Which is our data reports, from Deputy Director Buonacorsi and Jenna, I think it was in the, was it in the sec-..., well I'll let you handle the presentation and just kind of bring up where it is you wanted to defer the homicide discussion.

Deputy Director Buonacorsi: Thank you, Chair. Getting it all set up here really quick. I only have two screens and so there's a lot of different screens I'm monitoring this morning. So its always a little bit of a search to find where my next screen is. For the record my name is Jenna Buonacorsi, and I'm the Deputy Director for the Department of Sentencing Policy and today we are going to be continuing our conversation on the Nevada Department of Corrections Young Adult Population. We're going to be doing a quick review since it has been a few months of the age group and kind of how they fit in the general population as well as looking at their bookings maximum length. The top 15 offenses, these young adult offenders are serving, the number of offenses on their entire booking and looking into their prior criminal history. If you were not at our last meeting or had not been able to see yet our presentation, we should be having a report come out once we fully concluded the young adult but in the last presentation where we discussed more of the offense groups and felony categories, was in that presentation.

So, this one was kind of just answering a couple of the questions and that had to been brought up from there as well. Like I said, this is going to start with a review of all ages before we continue our conversation for the young adult offenders, so most of you have probably seen this slide quite a few times now, but just to recap from 2017 to 2023 the Nevada Department of Correction's Population overall dropped by 23.44% or 3 215 offenders. When we look just at the young adult population over those last seven years, we see the young adult population is described as being offenders less than 24-years old. We also have a few offenders who were adjudicated as adults who were juvenile offenders, so they are also included here they are very very small portion of this population. Here we are looking at the bookings maximum term length for the young adult offenders.

So, in 2017, 831 or 59% of the young adult offenders had maximum sentences of less than nine years. By 2024, that reduced to 387 offenders or 45% of the population with an over 50% reduction in that group. Meaning that over the last eight years the young adult population has been comprised of a larger percentage of long-term offenders. Looking just at 2024, we see there are no offenders serving life without the possibility of parole sentences and historically there is only one or two offenders who were serving booking maximums without the possibility of parole. 5.26% of young adult offenders in 2024 are serving life with the possibility of parole sentence, and you'll see here that maximum group carries with 2024 of the five to nine years is the

largest category. The top 15 offenses on the bookings for young adult offenders in the Nevada Department of Corrections as of December 2024, represent 59% of all of the different offenses. The other category that you'll see here, which is that large dark blue section, that represents over 100 unique offenses totaling up to 41% of all offenses being served. When I was going through that data there was a lot of instances that made only one or two offenders were serving that specific offense. The most common offense being served by that population is robbery which comprises 16% of the total offenses followed by the use of deadly weapon enhancement at 13%.

All other percents that you see here, so starting with conspiracy to commit robbery and down through the rest and including that other category, when broken out individually, each offense only represents at maximum 4% of the population. So, it's a really diverse population in terms of what offenses they are serving. As of December 2024, 35% of young adult offenders only had one offense on their booking, 36% had two offense and the remaining 39% had three or more offenses on their booking. The offender with the largest number of offenses had 19 on their booking. For the young adult populations prior jail incarceration, we see here that 655 offenders had zero prior in prison incarcerations representing about 77%, 14% had one, and 10% had two or more. For the number prior terms of probation 70% had none, 26% had one and 4% had two or more. For the number of prior terms of prison incarcerations, 24% had none, 71% had one, and 5% had two or more. That wrapped up our conclusion on the young adult offenders population given the data that we have at this time. If the Commission has further questions into the young adult population, we are more than happy to continue looking into that population group. For looking forward our department has been asked to look into the female population because there has been some interesting trends happening with them, as well as a deeper dive into habitual offenders, as well as felony murder, and of course continued 2025 Legislative support. With that, does the Commission have any questions for this part of the presentation today?

Chair Herndon: Anybody have any questions for the Deputy Director? Dr. Bradley.

Dr. Shera Bradley: Thank you. So the last graph or bar-chart that you had, it said that, okay 655 had no prior jail incarcerations but 607 had prior prison incarcerations? Not sure that I totally, does that mean sentences, because the people that would have been in prison prior would have had some jail time.

Deputy Director Buonacorsi: Yes, the prison incarcerations number the one that is pulling off of, jail incarcerations on the way that is calculated in DOC, is just, if I'm correct, Jorja will be able to probably provide better on that, but to my understanding that's just jail incarceration. So their whole time that they served was in jail, where prison incarcerations they might have had credits of time served being in jail, prior to being sentenced, but their sentencing was not a misdemeanor, it was a felony sentence, if that makes, Jorja will be able to explain that a little bit clearer, I'm sure.

Executive Director Powers: Yeah, Dr. Bradley, you are correct. It's conviction. So, when it talks about jail incarcerations it's if they were convicted of a misdemeanor and spent time in jail. Not as Jenna said, the credit for time served. So the people who had the prior prison incarcerations may have been in jail but were not convicted of a misdemeanor and then went to serve their felony.

Dr. Bradley: That is specific to misdemeanor, or just any jail sentence at all?

Executive Director Powers: Any jail sentence, yes.

Dr. Bradley: Okay.

Chair Herndon: Anybody else have any questions? Now, I don't see any other hands on the screen. Okay, thank you for that part of the presentation, Jenna.

Deputy Director Buonacorsi: Thank you, and like we had mentioned at the slightly earlier in the beginning of this. We have decided to postpone the second part of agenda item seven which was going to be the NRS #178.50 Report, and we plan to have that ready for presentation at our May 16th meeting. And so with that we have no more data reports to present today, Chair.

Chair Herndon: Okay, thank you. I appreciate it.

Deputy Director Buonacorsi: Thank you.

Chair Herndon: All right then, that will close agenda number seven.

8. Future Meetings

Chair Herndon: And we'll move to agenda number eight, our future meetings. We had listed on the agenda the upcoming meetings. Which are May 16th and then July 18th both of those are virtual meetings. And then currently we have September 19th, November 14th, those will be determined a little bit down the road in terms of the nature of those meetings. But just kind of keep those on your calendar if you would please so that everybody is aware. Additionally, staff's already working on topics for those as Ms. Buonacorsi just said we're going to move that homicide report under Chapter 178, over to the May meeting.

As I mentioned earlier the Misdemeanor Subcommittee update we're not going to have that in May either, we're going to have that come back in July. But if anybody has any other topics that you want to communicate to staff we can get those on the agenda for those future meetings as well. Anybody have anything right now that they're thinking of that they want to bring up to get on the calendar for one of the future meetings? No? Ok. Like I said, just reach out to myself and Director Powers and the Deputy Director, if you have any ideas for things and we'll put those on the agenda for future meetings. And with that we will go ahead and close agenda item number eight.

9. Public Comment

Chair Herndon: And we will move back, Ms. Buonacorsi to our second time of public comment. So just as we did during the first period of public comment. If there's anybody on the phone who wishes to testify, you may do so. Those are limited to two minutes and again if you want to provide anything in writing it'll go to all the Commissioners and you can submit testimony in writing to the Department of Sentencing Policy with the email address of SentencingPolicy@ndsp.nv.gov. For those of you that may be on the phone that want to testify, please remember to mute the device upon which you're watching the meeting, so that all sound comes through your phone. And we will ask Ms. Buonacorsi to navigate through if we have anybody on the phone who wishes to testify.

Deputy Director Buonacorsi: We have no callers who wish to testify, Chair.

Chair Herndon: Okay, I should have asked you that before I went through that whole spiel, huh.

Deputy Director Buonacorsi: It's all good, it was a nice spiel.

Chair Herndon: Thank you, all right then we will close our second period of public comment.

10. Adjournment

Chair Herndon: Which brings us to item number ten the adjournment of our meeting today. It's good to see everybody; I appreciate your time today and your participation. And I look forward to seeing everybody in May at our next meeting. So, thank you again. All right guys, have a great weekend. Director Powers, Deputy Director, thank you both very much for your time.

Executive Director Powers: Thank you, Chair.

Chair Herndon: All right take care.

DRAFT