



## MEDIA ADVISORY

-- Forum to Offer First, In-depth Look Inside Illinois' Largest Women's Prison --

**Top IDOC Officials to Stand with WJI, National Experts & Formerly Incarcerated Women to Support Release of Report on Longstanding Challenges at State's Largest Women's Prison & to Announce Historic Reform Strategy**

***Report Outlines Critical Findings Linked to  
2013 Conversion of Logan Correctional Center from a Male to a Female Facility:***

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
November 18, 2016**

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**WHAT: National Forum entitled: "The Lineup: An In-depth Look at the Pathways & Experiences of Justice-Involved Women from the Inside Out" followed by Media Availability Session**

- The Chicago-based Women's Justice Initiative (WJI) will host a forum to convene top IDOC Officials, national experts and local leaders with formerly incarcerated women and their families to support the release of a groundbreaking report revealing troubling conditions at Logan Correctional Center, and to feature details of an unprecedented IDOC women's corrections reform strategy.
- The report was commissioned by the current IDOC administration, in partnership with the Chicago-based Women's Justice Initiative (WJI) and national experts. It was developed in response to Gov. Bruce Rauner's criminal justice reform mandate and to address longstanding challenges at Logan.
- A USDOJ National Institute of Corrections protocol, called the Gender Informed Practices Assessment (GIPA), served as the basis for the report. It provides corrections systems with a baseline to build gender responsive, evidence-based reforms for the treatment of women in prisons and on parole.
- The forum will focus on critical findings in the report and IDOC's new reform strategies. It will feature national best practices for addressing the unique pathways and challenges of women, which are often more dramatically impacted by histories of sexual/domestic abuse and trauma than men.

**WHEN/WHERE: Friday, November 18, 2016 at Mesirow Financial, James Tyree Auditorium  
353 N Clark Street, Chicago  
Forum & Presentations: 8:30AM-1:30PM (*Agenda attached*)  
Media Availability: 1:45PM (the entire event is open to media as well)**

**WHO: Hosted by the Chicago-based Women's Justice Initiative (WJI) for 150 attendees**

- **Sponsors:** Polk Bros Foundation, Chicago Foundation for Women, Test400K, Chicago Says No More, A Safe Haven and Westcare Foundation
- **Event Partners:** CGLA, CLAIM, Visible Voices, TASC & Nat. Resource Center on Justice Involved Women

### Featured Speakers

IDOC Director John Baldwin  
Alyssa Benedict, Federal Partner, National Resource Center  
on Justice-Involved Women & Executive Director, CORE Associates  
Scot Spencer, Annie E Casey Foundation  
Carmen Rodriguez, Immediate Past President, APPA  
Deanne Benos, The Women's Justice Initiative  
IDOC Chief of Security Carolyn Gurski  
IDOC Acting Warden of Logan Prison, Margaret Burke  
Juliana Stratton, UIC Center for Public Safety & Justice  
Gina Fedock, University of Chicago, SSA  
Colette Payne, Visible Voices  
Mark Mulroe, A Safe Haven

Maureen Buell, USDOJ Nat. Institute of Corrections  
Jennifer Vollen-Katz, The John Howard Association  
Leslie Balonick, Westcare Foundation  
Donna Collins, Rhode Island Dept. of Corrections  
Lonnie Nettles, Multnomah County Probation  
Lisa Hall, Oregon Dept. of Corrections  
Monica Cosby, Mothers Utd Against Violence & Inc  
Toni Tranchita, Member, CLAIM  
Barbara McGee, CGLA Reunification Ride  
Cheyenne Blackorby, Storycatcher's Theater  
Tyteanna Williams, Storycatcher's Theater

**Background: Logan Correctional Center Conversion**

- Logan Correctional Center became Illinois' largest and most complex women's prison in 2013 after the IDOC closed the state's two largest women's prisons and consolidated them there in order to address a prison overcrowding and budget crisis. The transition was widely reported by The John Howard Association of Illinois (JHA) as "*under-resourced and ill-conceived*," and tremendous challenges have intensified since then that have created an untenable environment at the prison.
- At the time of the conversion, Logan had housed a 1500 male medium-security population, but would now house as many as 2,100 women of all security levels, including 770 were diagnosed as Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI), as well as the statewide Reception, Assessment & Classification Center (R&C) for every woman admitted to prison statewide. The facility was not designed to safely house such a complex population of varying risk levels, and surveys of both staff and women inmates indicate a lack of safety throughout the prison.
- Research demonstrates that women have vastly different pathways into prison that are more often paved by histories of abuse and trauma; and studies have shown that as many as 99% of incarcerated women in Illinois have histories of abuse that are often linked to pervasive substance abuse and mental health challenges. There are widely accepted, "gender responsive," evidence-based standards for operating women's prisons and parole systems in a manner that has been proven to improve the safety of prisons for both staff and inmates, while also reducing recidivism and improving outcomes among women in the community. Yet, IDOC staff only receive a one-hour powerpoint presentation on working with women in prison. Furthermore, Logan staff have not received proper training or support to manage such a large clinical population in a facility that was not designed to house them.

**Overview: IDOC and WJI Partnership on Assessment & Reform Strategy**

- In 2015, Governor Bruce Rauner made Logan the first prison he toured after taking office, and later announced his statewide criminal justice reform mandate to address the state's skyrocketing prison population and instill reforms throughout the prison system.
- As part of the IDOC's mandate to institute reforms and address the longstanding challenges at Logan, a partnership was established with the Chicago-based Women's Justice Initiative (WJI) and the National Resource Center for Justice-Involved Women (NRCJIW) to conduct the state's first ever Gender Responsive Practices Assessment (GIPA) at Logan.
- Led by national expert, Alyssa Benedict, a team of 18 assessors (*consisting of current and former corrections staff, academics, advocates and individuals whose lives have been impacted by the prison system*) conducted the GIPA at Logan, which included a four-day intensive site visit in October 2015. Since then, a report detailing findings and recommendations has been developed concurrently with a corrective action and strategic planning process.

**Key Findings**

The WJI Forum on Nov 18<sup>th</sup> will feature a presentation of the report findings and recommendations, as well an announcement by IDOC of a historic reform strategy agenda that is closely linked to Governor Rauner's criminal justice reform mandate. In addition, justice-involved women and their families will speak about the pathways that all-too-often lead women and girls into the justice system, as well as a discussion of their experiences while incarcerated at Logan and other state prisons and juvenile facilities.

**The lack of gender responsive, evidence-based policies, practices and programs throughout Logan will be linked to several report findings:**

- Ongoing challenges that have evolved since the conversion of the facility, particularly as they relate to crowded conditions and difficulty housing inmates according to security risk and needs;
- Disproportionately higher distribution of disciplinary tickets among incarcerated women than men, particularly for "insolence;"
- High uses of segregation to address the behaviors of many women, notably those diagnosed as Seriously Mentally Ill (SMI) at Logan, and increased suicide attempts and crisis calls;
- Costly, extended prison stays (in the thousands of days) for women linked to disciplinary practices;
- Data revealing the number of children impacted by having an incarcerated mother at Logan, and diminishing family friendly protocols;
- Highly charged, divisive staff culture that often pits staff supporting more security-oriented approaches against those embracing more programmatic or clinical approaches with the women;
- Limited accountability among staff or inmates for bigoted, de-humanizing language and behaviors that contribute to troubling, high risk climate for all;
- Lack of culturally responsive practices, particularly impacting African American women;
- Increasing waitlists for programs and support services; and
- Lack of validated, gender responsive risk, strengths and needs tools that are supported by high quality case management systems and services;
- Highly limited access to quality, gender responsive services in the community – particularly for women with children and in need of housing and employment.

## COMPLETE FORUM AGENDA

### KICKOFF

- 8:30AM Welcome: Deanne Benos, Founder, The Women's Justice Initiative  
8:35AM Kickoff: John Baldwin, Director, Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC)  
8:40AM *Visible Voices Presentation* by Colette Payne

### REPORT PRESENTATION

- 8:50AM *Background on Logan Challenges & the GIPA Process* Maggie Burke, IDOC Women & Family Services Coordinator & Acting Warden, Logan Women's Prison  
9AM *The Gender Informed Practices Assessment (GIPA) in Illinois: Process, Findings & Recommendations*  
Alyssa Benedict, Federal Partner, National Resource Center for Justice-Involved Women & Executive Director, Core Associates

### RESPONSE PANEL I: Logan GIPA Assessment Team

- 9:25AM *Special Presentation: The Logan Conversion & Community Advocacy*  
Jennifer Vollen-Katz, Executive Director, The John Howard Association (JHA)  
9:30AM ***GIPA Assessment Team Panel Dialogue***
  - Juliana Stratton, UIC Center for Public Safety & Justice
  - Mark Mulroe, Executive Vice President, A Safe Haven
  - Colette Payne, Founder, Visible Voices
  - Theresa Dronet, Associate Director of Mental Health Programs, Ph.D.

### IDOC REFORM PLAN PRESENTATION

- 9:50AM *The IDOC Women's Corrections Reform Plan & WJI Partnership*  
Carolyn Gurksi, IDOC Chief of Public Safety

### INTERMISSION

- 10:25AM **Intermission & Coffee**

### RESPONSE PANEL II: NATIONAL EXPERTS & PROMISING INTERVENTIONS

- 10:40AM Maureen Buell, USDOJ National Institute of Corrections (NIC)  
10:45AM Gina Fedock, University of Chicago, School of Social Services Administration  
10:50AM Panelist Presentations & Dialogue
  - ***Implementing Gender Responsive Disciplinary Reform: The Rhode Island Experience***  
Donna Collins, Rhode Island Department of Corrections
  - ***A Shared Sentence: The Devastating Toll of Parental Inc on Kids, Families & Communities***  
Scot Spencer, Associate Director for Advocacy & Influence, Annie E. Casey Foundation
  - ***A Statewide Approach: Gender Responsive Assessment & Community Supervision***  
Lonnie Nettles, Community Justice Manager, Multnomah County Dept. of Community Justice, Oregon  
Lisa Hall, Case Management Administrator, Oregon Dept. of Corrections
  - ***Model Gender Responsive Substance Abuse Programs: Systems Change & the Continuum of Care***  
Leslie Balonick, Executive Vice President, Westcare Foundation

### INTERMISSION

- 12PM **Intermission & Coffee**

### RESPONDENT PANEL III: Pathways & Experiences of Justice Involved Women & Their Families

- 12:20PM ***Kickoff: Special Performance from the Young Women of Storycatcher's Theatre***

**12:30PM Panel III Dialogue**

**Monica Cosby, Activist, Mothers United Against Violence & Incarceration**

- *Will discuss experiences of long-term women prisoners, the transformative impact of prison-based programs, and a firsthand perspective of the Logan prison conversion*

**Toni Tranchita, Member, CLAIM**

- *Will discuss the experience of both giving birth in an Illinois prison, motherhood while incarcerated and reentry challenges for women in Illinois*

**Barbara McGee, Participant, CGLA/CLAIM Reunification Ride**

- *Will discuss experiences of inter-generational family incarceration among mothers and daughters, and caring for the children of an incarcerated mother (Barbara is a formerly incarcerated women who is now caring for her two teenage grandchildren, while her daughter is incarcerated at Logan.)*

**Cheyenne Blackorby, Member, Storycatcher's Theater "Changing Voices" Program**

- *Will discuss the link between pathways of trauma and incarceration among girls and young women, as well as the impact of positive interventions based on her experiences in the Storycatcher's "Fabulous Females" program while incarcerated as a juvenile at IYC Warrenville two years ago.*

**Tyteanna Williams, Member, Storycatcher's Theater "Changing Voices" Program**

- *Will discuss childhood trauma and community violence, experiences as an incarcerated mother and a firsthand perspective on the Logan prison conversion*

**CONCLUSION & CALL TO ACTION**

**1:20PM Call to Support Incarcerated Women & their Children This Holiday**  
**Alexis Mansfield, Executive Director, CLAIM**

**1:25PM Conclusion & Call to Action IDOC Asst. Director Gladys Taylor & Deanne Benos, WJI**

**MEDIA AVAILABILITY**

**1:45PM MEDIA AVAILABILITY (Select Speakers and Panelists on Site for Q&A)**