



**FELMERS O. CHANEY
CORRECTIONAL CENTER
COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD**
2825 N. 30th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53210
December 5, 2011

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Senator Van Wanggaard, Chairman
Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs
Wisconsin State Senate
P.O. Box 7882
Madison, WI 53707-7882

Dear Senator Wanggaard,

Please find the succeeding two-page statement that is being submitted in opposition to SB 207 and AB 286. Please also be advised that, in addition to the names appearing in the membership column to your left, the accompanying statement has been endorsed by the following organizations and individuals:

<i>Atty. James Hall</i>	NAACP, Milwaukee Branch
<i>Christine Neumann Ortiz</i>	Voces de la Frontera Action
<i>Lo Neng Kiataukaysy</i>	Hmong American Friendship Association
<i>Al Holmes</i>	Center for Veterans' Issues
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<i>Dr. Pat McManus</i>	Black Health Coalition of Wisconsin
<i>Al Holmes</i>	My Father's House, Inc. (Formerly the Milw. Fatherhood Collaborative)
<i>Barry Givens</i>	Sherman Park Community Association
<i>Dr. Kenneth Harris, Jr.</i>	100 Black Men of Greater Milwaukee
<i>Clarence Johnson</i>	Wisconsin Community Services, Inc.
<i>Maria Monreal-Cameron</i>	Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Wisconsin (HCCW)
<i>Ruben Hopkins</i>	Wisconsin Black Chamber of Commerce, Inc.
<i>Earl Buford</i>	Wisconsin Regional Training Partnership/Big-Step
<i>Rev. Willie Briscoe</i>	Milwaukee Inner-City Congregations Allied for Hope
<i>Guadalupe Rendon</i>	Hispanic Business and Professionals Association
<i>Lupe Martinez</i>	United Migrant Opportunity Services, Inc. (UMOS)

Selected Signatories

<i>Milwaukee Alderman Joe Davis, Sr.</i>	<i>State Representative Sandy Pasch</i>
<i>State Senator Spencer Coggs</i>	<i>State Representative Christine Sinicki</i>
<i>State Senator Lena Taylor</i>	<i>State Representative Robert Turner</i>
<i>State Representative Beth Coggs</i>	<i>State Representative Leon Young</i>
<i>State Representative Jason Fields</i>	

<i>Peter T. Blewett</i>	<i>Atty. Israel Ramon</i>	<i>Primitivo Torrez</i>
<i>Reuben Harpole</i>	<i>Michael Rosen</i>	<i>Eric Von</i>
<i>Atty. Jackie Boynton</i>	<i>Jesus Salas</i>	<i>Earl Ingram</i>
<i>Atty. Peter G. Earle</i>	<i>Salvador Sanchez</i>	<i>Dr. Cheryl Ajirotutu</i>

Respectfully,
R.L. McNeely
R.L. McNeely, Chair
Chaney Community Advisory Board
Tel: (262) 255-4015; Fax: (262) 255-4019
Email: rlmatty@wi.rr.com

C: Members, Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs

STATEMENT OF R.L. MCNEELY ON BEHALF OF THE FELMERS O. CHANEY
CORRECTIONAL CENTER COMMUNITY ADVISORY BOARD (FCAB)

Position Statement and Call to Action Against Senate Bill 207

Submitted to the Committee on Labor, Public Safety, and Urban Affairs, namely,
Sen. Jessica King (D-Oshkosh); Sen. Robert Wirth (D-Pleasant Prairie); Sen. Mary Lazich (R-New Berlin);
Sen. Glenn Grothman, (R-West Bend); and the Committee Chairman, Sen. Van Wanggaard (R-Racine)

The Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center (FCCC) is a minimum security prison located in Milwaukee that commenced full operations during June of 2000. The Felmers O. Chaney Correctional Center Community Advisory Board (FCAB), in turn, commenced operations during October of 2000. The mission of FCAB may be succinctly stated as follows:

The purpose of the Board is to support effective re-integration of offenders back into the communities from which they came. The Board works in collaboration with the correctional center to address the interests and concerns of the community and facility. It further serves as a contact point between the facility and the community at large to share information and respond to issues that are brought to the board's attention.

FCAB, given its mission, is horrified at prospects for the passage of SB 207 and AB 286. We regard that passage as being tantamount to a de jure decimation of Milwaukee's African American community. That is because SB 207 and AB 286 will surely diminish possibilities for the formation of stable African American families, exacerbate the ongoing disruption of those families and, thereby, promote the destabilization of that community. Simply put, the legislation, as proposed, will remove extant protections offered to ex-offenders against blanket discrimination because, presently, ex-offenders cannot legally be denied employment based on having committed a felony unless that felony relates substantially to the nature of the work for which the felon is being considered. Removing this protection undoubtedly will make it more difficult for ex-offenders to secure the kind of gainful employment that can afford ex-felons opportunities to re-integrate into their communities, successfully, and to establish and maintain stable families. As research focused on Wisconsin has shown, it is already difficult enough for African American males with criminal records to receive a call back in reference to a job search. Such males have only a 5 percent chance of getting a call back compared to a 17 percent chance afforded to European American males with a criminal record. Indeed, European American males with a criminal record fare even better than African American males without a criminal record as African American males without a criminal record only have a 14 percent chance of receiving an employment-related call back in the State of Wisconsin.¹

But it is the relationship of one's prospects to secure sustainable wage employment to one's likelihood to form stable families that is the critical connection. While, for example, the numbers of African American males who are incarcerated has steadily increased in Wisconsin to the point where Wisconsin incarcerates, proportionately, more African American males than any state in the union, except South Dakota,² the percentage of Milwaukee's African American families that are two-parent families has steadily declined, from 64.2 percent of all such families in 1970, to 44.3 percent of all

¹ D. Pager, "The Mark of a Criminal Record," *American Journal of Sociology*, V. 108, (5) March 2003: 937-975.

² Marc Mauer and Ryan S. King, *Uneven Justice: State Rates of Incarceration by Race and Ethnicity* (monograph), The Sentencing Project: Research and Advocacy for Reform, Wash. D.C., July, 2007: 23 pp.; P. 8. For pertinent information, Cf: Commission on Reducing Racial Disparities in the Wisconsin Justice System, *Final Report* (monograph), Office of Justice Assistance, Madison, Wisconsin, (February) 2008: 98 pp.

Statement Submitted to the Committee on Labor, Public Safety and Urban Affairs

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African American families in 1980, to only 28.2 percent in 2000.³ This is not surprising as ample evidence exists to show that African American males (as well as other males) are far more likely to marry when they have sustainable wage employment.⁴ What is not so well known is the effect on communities of high percentages of single-parent households.

Children from single-parent homes, for example, are more likely to engage in juvenile delinquency,⁵ twice as likely to drop out of high school, twice as likely to have a child before age 20, 1½ times more likely to be out of school and out of work in their late teens and early twenties, two to three times more likely than children in two-parent families to have emotional and behavioral problems, and they are at a dramatically greater risk to suffer from drug and alcohol abuse.⁶ Although some studies report attenuated or limited effects of fatherless homes, other studies have found that fatherless boys are more likely than others to engage in violence, that father absence is more significant than poverty in predicting criminal involvement, and that Black family disruption has the strongest effect on Black juvenile criminality and substantially increases the rates of Black murder and robbery.⁷ These conditions wreak havoc in lower-class and working class neighborhoods and, hence, destabilize Black communities.

CALL TO ACTION

As SB 207 and AB 286 undoubtedly will make it more difficult for ex-offenders to secure and maintain sustainable wage and other employment which, in turn, will increase the numbers of single-parent families in Milwaukee's African American community, with all of the attendant adverse neighborhood de-stabilizing consequences, we vigorously beseech you to oppose passage of this legislation. Additionally, please recall that an unemployed ex-offender is four times more likely to return to prison than an ex-offender who is employed.⁸

³ R.L. McNeely, D. Pate and L. Johnson, *Milwaukee Today: An Occasional Report of the NAACP* (monograph), NAACP, Milwaukee Branch, June, 2011: 40 pp. See: p. 16; R.L. McNeely and Melvin R. Kinlow, *Milwaukee Today: A Racial Gap Study* (monograph), a research publication of the Milwaukee Urban League, October, 1987, 72 pp: See p. 56.

⁴ Andrew R. Gatewood, *The Social and Economic Status of Young Black Males and the Impact on the Formation of Detroit Area Black Families* (monograph), United Community Services of Metropolitan Detroit, August, 1989: 34 pp.

⁵ K.W. Griffin, G.J. Botvin, L.M. Scheier, T. Diaz, and N. L. Miller., Parenting Practices as Predictors of Substance Use, Delinquency, and Aggression Among Urban Minority Youth: Moderating Effects of Family Structure and Gender," Psychology of Addictive Behaviors, V. 14 (2) 2000: 174-184.

⁶ Warren R. Stanton, et al., "National Health Interview Survey," U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, Hyattsville, MD, 1988; U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, National Center for Health Statistics, "Survey on Child Health," Washington, D.C: 1993; D.R. Hollist and W.H. McBroom, "Family Structure, Family Tension, and Self-Reported Marijuana Use: A Research Finding of Risky Behavior Among Youths," Journal of Drug Issues, Fall, 2006: 976-998; Jason DeParle, "To Have and to Hold," The New York Times Magazine, 8/22/04: Pp: 27-31, 48-49, 52-54; Cf: Fathers.com (The Consequences of Fatherless).

⁷ Robert J. Sampson, "Urban Black Violence: The Effect of Male Joblessness and Family Disruption," American Journal of Sociology, V. 93, No. 3 (September, 1987): 348-382; W. Mackey, and B. Mackey, "The Presence of Fathers in Attenuating Young Male Violence: Dad as a Social Palliative," Marriage and Family Review, V. 35, 2003: 63-75; Jennifer Morse, "Parents or Prisons," Policy Review, V. 120, 2003: 49-60.

⁸ United States Probation Office, Eastern District of Wisconsin, *Employer Guide to Hiring Ex-Offenders* (undated brochure). For additional information contact: Janice Stricker, United States Probation Officer, 517 E. Wisconsin Ave., Room 001, Milwaukee, Wisconsin, 53202