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Presentation to the Joint Subcommittee on Corrections and Public Safety

Annette Carter
State Probation and Parole Officer II

Good morning Mr. Chairman and members of the committee. It is a great privilege for me to be here today to talk with you about my duties within the Department of Corrections. My name is Annette Carter and I am the Probation and Parole Officer II for the Helena Office. There are currently 14 Probation and Parole Officer II's working in Adult Community Corrections across the state of Montana.

With that position I am responsible for maintaining a balance in the following areas:

- Front-line supervision of 8 Probation and Parole Officers and 1.5 administrative support personnel.
- Hearings Officer for three types of administrative hearings processes: Intervention, Disciplinary and Onsite.
- Personnel issues (hiring, termination, complaints, investigations, etc).
- Assessing offender risk and placing offenders committed to the Department of Corrections into appropriate programming.
- Evaluate and audit case files for compliance with the Department and Bureau policies and procedures.
- Liaison to the Helena Pre-Release Center.
- Liaison to the local High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area/Missouri River Drug Task Force.

- Assignment of cases as they come in from Court, the Board of Pardons and Parole and the Department of Corrections (Conditional Release) to officers who are at and above 1.0 FTE and continuing to grow.
- Create a work environment that encourages officers to do more than the norm, to press their creative endeavors in their work and make their work meaningful for themselves, the offender and the public we serve.
- I am a multi-tasker.

Some of these duties sound fairly typical of a supervisor.

However, there is usually nothing typical or routine about my day at probation and parole. We work with offenders, who each come to us with their own unique life story, each with their own sets of challenges and obstacles. As I was preparing this presentation for you I was amazed as I reflected at all that my office does to balance protection of the community, restoration to victims, accountability of the offender and rehabilitation of the offender.

I feel passionate about the work I do. In the past year I conducted 72 Disciplinary hearings; 55 of which were on pre-release center inmates. I returned 37 to the center and placed 5 at Treasure State Correctional Training Center (bootcamp). I work hard to assess and reassess the needs of these offenders and to tailor the best programming options so that we can divert them from Montana State Prison and give them the tools to be successful once they hit the community.

I work in conjunction with the County Attorney and Public Defenders Offices to screen cases for possible placement in programming and ensure that the appropriate conditions will be contained in judgments during the plea agreement phases of cases. Last week I worked with the Helena Pre-Release Center, the County Attorney and Chief Public Defender to dispose of a case within days, saving the time of a lengthy trial, jail bill, etc.. This offender will begin paying restitution in this case prior to his leaving the pre-release although he is not required to until he begins serving the sentence in three years.

I staff with my officers and support them in their efforts to obtain and use any and all community resources that we can to effectively

supervise our offenders. We have diverted offenders from a return to Montana State Prison by using house arrest and random urine analysis testing with Drug Information Systems. As recent as yesterday we found a life skills program that can provide our 17 to 21 year old offenders with money for rent and deposits and furniture for their apartments.

We have specialized caseloads for offenders with mental health needs and a caseload for sex offenders. Our officer's work long and hard with community resources to ensure that these high-risk offenders are receiving the treatment, medications, and counseling they need. They attend groups and treatment teams to ensure compliance and identify trouble areas before they become problems that could lead to revocation or reoffense.

I want to express to you that we take seriously the job we do. We often see repeat offenders. We know that most do well when in a structured environment. We have the task to see that the offenders are using the tools they have learned, to coach and teach them how to apply them now that they have been given the responsibility of freedom.