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Austin/Travis County Reentry Roundtable Newsletter

May 2019

Celebrating Second Chance Month:
Second Annual RAP Speaks Storytelling Event



Left to right: Carl Hunter, Sandra Wolff, Mia Greer, Laurie Pherigo,
Commissioner Jeff Travillion, Darwin Hamilton

On April 16th, the Roundtable and RAP were thrilled to celebrate Second Chance Month by presenting **RAP Speaks**, the second annual storytelling event focused on sharing the voices and perspectives of individuals directly impacted by the criminal justice system.

We would like to thank everyone who attended as well as our amazing speakers: [Mia Greer](#), [Darwin Hamilton](#), [Carl Hunter](#), [Laurie Pherigo](#), and [Sandra Wolff](#). Special thanks are extended to [Travis County Commissioner Jeff Travillion](#) for setting the tone for the evening with his thoughtful opening remarks.

[View Event Photos](#)

Second Chance Month Honored with Texas House Resolution 1268



On Thursday, April 18th, [House Representative Alma Allen](#) filed [HR1268](#) "recogniz[ing] April 2019 as Second Chance Month and commend[ing] those who have made a successful transition to life outside the corrections system as well as those organizations and individuals who have assisted in that process."

This resolution honored many men, women and organizations that have impacted criminal justice policy in Texas, including the following members of RAP and the Planning Council:

Reggie Smith
Darwin Hamilton
Doug Smith
Lauren Johnson
Carl Hunter
Lewis Conway Jr.

[Read the Full Resolution](#)

Reentry Roundtable at Travis County Commissioners Court & CAN Board of Directors Meeting

Throughout the month of April, the Roundtable made multiple public presentations about our work around reentry, fair chance hiring, and the [Texas Criminal Background Screening Guide for Rental Housing Providers](#).



We invite you to watch the Roundtable's presentation to the Travis County Commissioners Court about FY19 goals and accomplishments by [clicking here](#) and advancing to the video's 1:45:07 mark. Alternatively, you can view the relevant portion of the meeting by selecting item 6 under Section VII Justice Planning on the agenda displayed below the video.

To view Laurie Pherigo's comments shared with Travis County Commissioners Court on April 2nd, please [click here](#) and select [Public Communication](#) on the left side of the split screen.



To view Past Chair Helen Gaebler's April 12th presentation to the [CAN \(Community Advancement Network\) Board of Directors](#), please [click here](#) and select Items 9 & 10.

May Planning Council Meeting

Please join us at the upcoming Planning Council meeting for a discussion with Vice Chair Michelle Collins of Integral Care and Debra Orr-Brown, Administrator at the [Austin Transitional Center](#).

When: 12:30-2 p.m. on Monday, May 13, 2019

Where: Goodwill Community Center

[1015 Norwood Park Boulevard](#)

[Austin, Texas 78753](#)



86th Legislative Session Update



During this legislative session, the Roundtable has tracked bills related to the reentry and aimed to keep its membership informed about potential advocacy opportunities.

While the Roundtable did not take a formal position on the bill, many members remain concerned regarding about the potential passage of [Senate Bill 2488](#), which will overturn municipal Ban the Box and Fair Chance Hiring initiatives.

Another bill still up for consideration, [House Bill 373](#), allows people who are justice involved to interact with others in positive situations.

Perhaps the best news is that [so many bills](#) containing the terms “reentry” and “peer support” were filed and became part of mainstream public policy conversations at the Texas Legislature this session.

Reentry Advocacy Project

Who: Are you or is someone you are close to directly impacted by the criminal justice system? If so, please join the [Reentry Advocacy Project](#) (RAP) for a monthly conversation with other folks with lived experience with incarceration and reentry.



What: A project of the Roundtable, RAP engages formerly incarcerated men and women to advocate for the development and implementation of policies and practices that directly and positively impact the reentry population and their families, as well as provide guidance to the Roundtable. RAP is a place where you can get support and advice to address reentry challenges and barriers.

When: RAP generally meets on the first Wednesday of the month from 6–7:30 p.m. with pizza and informal networking starting at 5:30 p.m.

Where: Mt. Zion Baptist Church Zion Action Recovery Center at [2951 E 14th St.](#)

You can stay up-to-date with RAP meeting times and other events by following them on [Facebook](#).

News & Resources

Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Circles at YMCA Austin

The [YMCA of Austin](#) is pleased to partner with the [Austin Health Commons](#) to host the organization's next series of Truth, Racial Healing, and Transformation Circles. When we share our stories, we find common ground with those who we perceive as different and build connections that transcend the perceived hierarchy of human value.

When: 2-5pm on Saturday, May 11

Where: [Town Lake](#), [East Communities](#), [Southwest Family](#), [North Austin](#) YMCA branches

Cost: Free and open to the public

[Click here to RSVP \(registration required\)](#).

2019 City of Austin Fair Chance Job & Resource Fair

Don't let having a criminal history derail your job search. Local employers and service providers will be on hand to talk about job opportunities and resources available to re-entry job seekers in the Austin area.

When: Thursday, May 23rd from 3-7pm

Where: Greater Mount Zion Church (4301 Tannehill Lane)



For more information:

- Learn more at austintexas.gov/fairchancehiring
- Contact [Frankie Torres](#) (512) 974-3478



[View the Flyer](#)

Volunteers Needed for Reentry Job Interview Practice



On Thursday, June 13, 2019, the [Federal Correctional Institution in Bastrop, Texas](#), will hold a mock job fair to provide individuals nearing release with the opportunity to practice their job interviewing skills.

Volunteers are needed from businesses, organizations, and agencies willing to participate as interviewers for the mock job fair.

If you are interested in participating or have any questions, please email [Jaime Rodriguez](#). Once volunteers receive clearance, they will be forwarded the necessary paperwork.

New Report from [Texas Appleseed](#): *How Texas Counties Could Save Millions of Dollars by Safely Diverting People From Jail*

Increasingly, state and local governments are recognizing that in order to maximize public safety, the criminal justice system must use jails wisely, only incarcerating people who pose a threat to public safety. In fact, a growing body of research has shown that the costs of jailing people who are not dangerous vastly outweigh the benefits.



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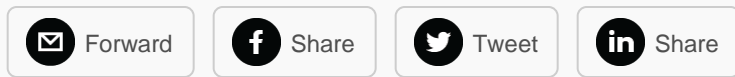
“Third-Class Citizenship” for People with a “Violent” Record

Via the [Collateral Consequences Resource Center](#)

Professor Michael M. O’Hear of Marquette University Law School has an important new article titled “[Third-Class Citizenship: The Escalating Legal Consequences of Committing a ‘Violent’ Crime.](#)”

This marks the first effort to systematically study the full legal consequences of a “violent” criminal charge or conviction, including the collateral consequences that uniquely apply to violent crimes. O’Hear documents the growing network of these consequences, noting that recent criminal justice reforms tend to exclude people with “violent” as well as “sexual” offenses from relief available to other individuals with criminal records.

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