

# Memorandum

Health & Medicine, Nursing



MEMORANDUM The Honorable Levon Warner Community Alternatives to Incarceration June 6, Re: Cost-Benefit Analysis of Prison and Probation This memorandum serves as a recommendation on the cost/benefit analysis comparing the expenses incurred for incarcerating of convicted accused Mr. Willie Jones, a bus driver for the MTA, who was charged for the crime of aggravated result and sentenced for five years, versus the cost of sentencing him to five years on probation.

COST BENEFIT ANALYSIS PRISON PROBATION

Annual Operating Cost of Prisoner in NY	\$36, 835
Annual Cost of Probationer in NY	\$4, 000
Construction Expenses for Prison Cell	\$259, 807
Operating Expenses for Prison Cell	\$259, 807
Operating Expenses for Prison Cell	\$577, 702
Salaries of Jail Personnel	\$1, 969, 750
Medical Expense	\$219, 735
Food Expense	\$ 66, 618
Utilities	\$85, 824
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$ 3, 216, 271
TOTAL X NO. OF YEARS (5)	\$16, 081, 355
TOTAL X NO. OF YEARS (5)	\$1, 319, 035
NET COST OF INCARCERATION	\$ 14, 762, 320

In the above given figure, the Net Cost of Incarceration to the Taxpayer for Imprisonment is far more costly than the expenses incurred for probation. Here, the average Annual Operating Cost of Prisoner in New York is \$36, 835 per prisoner per year. “ This is based on the Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report of the U. S. Department of Justice, for 2001 State Prison Expenditures conducted in the year 2004” (Stephan, 2004). On the other hand, the Annual Operating Cost of Prisoner in New York is only \$4, 000 per probationer per year. This figure was derived from Task Force on the Future of Probation in New York State, in the “ Report to the Chief Judge of the State of New York, which was conducted in February 2007” (Human Rights Watch). It has been clearly shown based on accurate computation

that there is an estimate of \$2, 952, 464 or close to almost \$3, 000, 00 savings per year per prisoner, that the government will be able to conserve if probation shall be implemented for less serious crimes or offenses committed by a convicted felon. Probation is the most economical punishment based on the research that has recently been conducted by Stephan. “ Probation is a non-secure method of providing supervision for criminal offenders, while maintaining them in a community”(Carlan, Nored and Downey, 2010). It is more advantageous for the government to resort to probation rather than incarceration. Aside from the fact that it is more practical because of the accumulation of savings for the government, “ probation has the ability to provide services to offenders while they are in the community”(Carlan, Nored and Downey, 2010). In a normal procedure of incarceration or imprisonment, the offenders will have to wait for the long line-up before they can join the rehabilitative programs. In such an instance, an inmate will have to spend years waiting for his turn before he can enter the rehabilitative programs. This is not the case in probation, “ whereas in the community, a greater variety of programs and more alternatives” (Carlan, Nored and Downey, 2010) are available for the offenders. In incarceration, several expenses are incurred per inmate. Some of the costs include Operating Costs of Prison Cells, Construction of Prison Cells, Salaries of Jail Personnel which require maximum supervision for serious crimes committed, medical, food, and other utilities spent on the prisoners. Aside from these basic expenses, there are also social programs costs for each convicted felon. In most cases, these felons are reported to have declared dependents who expect to receive welfare benefits from the government

such as the Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC), Medicaid Programs of Social Security and also the Federal Food Stamp Program. In sum, the ballooning cost of maintaining a prison cell for convicted felons sets a drawback in the government's expenditures. The Cost-Benefit Analysis which has just been conducted only proves that there are more advantages for the government in a long-term basis, aside from economical aspect. The traditional purposes of criminal sanctions which include rehabilitation, retribution, deterrence, and punishment are also accomplished through a probation sentence. An important highlight to help aid in the decrease in crime rate is to implement a proper selection of participants who will avail the program and also by implementing increased supervision. Offenders who are placed in probation require minimal supervision and once they are released on parole, it is predicted that they are less likely to commit crimes any further. " Probation is only granted to felons who are nonviolent offenders and do not carry criminal history" (Carlan, Nored and Downey, 2010). Therefore, " probation is viewed as an opportunity, and not a right to rehabilitate within the community" "(Carlan, Nored and Downey, 2010) because those convicted felons shall be given a second chance at life to correct the mistakes they committed in the past by providing effective and cost-efficient programs to motivate them to become better citizens of the country. Therefore, it is highly recommended that Mr. Jones shall be put in probation based on the cost-benefit analysis. In addition, the offense he committed is only for the crime of aggravated assault, which does not pose a threat to national security. References Brent, R. J. (2008). Applied Cost Benefit Analysis. Massachusetts, USA: Edward Elgar Publishing, Inc. p. 261.

Carlan, P., Nored L. S. Downey, R. A. (2010). An Introduction to Criminal Law. MA, USA: Jones and Bartlett. p. 30. Stephan, J. J. (2004). State Prison Expenditures, 2001. Bureau of Justice Statistics Special Report. U. S. Department of Justice. Office of Justice Programs. Retrieved on June 6, 2011, from < <http://bjs.ojp.usdoj.gov/content/pub/pdf/spe01.pdf>> The Price of Freedom (2007). An Alternative to Pre-Trial Detention: Pre-Trial Supervision. Human Rights Watch. Retrieved on June 6, 2011, from