



THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 11, 2002

I am pleased to send warm greetings to those taking part in Re-Entry Sunday events sponsored by the District of Columbia's Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) and by local faith communities.

Too often, inmates leave prison unprepared to take on responsible roles in their communities and they frequently lack the support needed to do so. Fortunately, many faith communities are working to meet this important social need by playing a key role in rehabilitating former prisoners. If we want ex-offenders to stay out of prison, we must support those programs that have succeeded in transforming the lives of former inmates. Recognizing the power and hope of faith, government leaders in the District of Columbia have begun the process of working on a promising new partnership with the local faith community to provide support and guidance to offenders leaving prison.

I commend the leaders of the District's religious institutions for your commitment to reach out selflessly to your neighbors in need. On the observance of Re-Entry Sunday, I also encourage members of these organizations to consider becoming involved as a mentor to those seeking to reform their lives. By providing a listening heart, consistent encouragement, and sound guidance, you can help change a person's life.

The indispensable and transforming work of faith-based and other charitable service groups must be encouraged. Government cannot be replaced by charities, but it can and should welcome them as partners. My Administration is strongly committed to lending greater support to the helpers and healers of our land by encouraging increased private charitable giving, steering more Federal resources to successful service groups, both sacred and secular, and identifying and eliminating unreasonable Federal barriers that hinder the efforts of community-serving programs. By working together, we can extend the hope, promise, and opportunity that is the heart of the American dream to the heart of every American.

Laura joins me in sending our best wishes for a memorable event and for future success.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "George W. Bush".