

Evidence-Based Practices: Reducing Recidivism to Increase Public Safety

Hon. J. Richard Couzens: Hello, I am Richard Couzens, retired judge from Placer County Superior Court. Welcome to “An Introduction to Evidence-Based Practices.” This is an opportunity for us to discuss a wonderful new sentencing system that will allow you to get good information about a defendant that you’re about to sentence, as well as help your probation office in trying to develop better means to manage offenders to decrease recidivism and to increase public safety.

A word about the materials... you have two things to follow along. First, I have given you a monograph, which is basically a summary of my comments to you today. And then I’ve also provided the PowerPoint presentation for notes, if you’d like to follow along with the slides. Between those two things we should cover the matter quite well.

Let’s talk about the problem—it has been and always will be a lack of money. California is sort of unique among the states. We don’t have any sustainable source of state funding for probation departments. This is unique among the states of the country and it’s not surprising that with the budget crunch we’ve been having, the funds have been just cut unmercifully in many, many jurisdictions. So the probation departments have really been paired down. Notwithstanding that, though, 82% of the people we sentence on felony probation are put on probation. And that means that the case loads are growing, they’re expanding and supervision is becoming difficult. In fact, 310,000 people each year get placed on felony probation. Our success rate is not that wonderful. Nationally, about a third of the people don’t make it on probation for one reason or another. In California, it’s ten percent worse than that. We clearly have to do something because all of this comes with a price. It costs about \$1250 to monitor a person on probation. It costs about \$49,000 to put someone in state prison, so obviously we have to watch the costs and try to improve our commitment rate.

We send about 52,000 people to the state prison every year. What surprised me, though, was that 40% of those people—or 20,000 people—are there because of probation violations. Now, it may be because they’ve committed a new offense and something like that, but that’s still a significant number of people who go to state prison based on simply revocations. The legislative analyst estimates that this costs us about one billion dollars a year, when you take into account the parole supervision and the costs of incarceration. We also know that 70% of the people we send to state prison within three years commit a new crime. And we have to ask ourselves, “Is the system working where 70% of the time it fails—and at a cost that is equivalent to sending your first-born child to a good college or a university?” We need to look at this.

So the challenge is to reduce recidivism wherever possible, lower the state prison and parole costs and increase public protection through the reduction of recidivism. Most importantly, our objective is to try to internalize change rather than simply relying on external forces that will control a person only while those external forces exist. Even if we get the low-hanging fruit—just get the people right on the cusp of violations—the savings will be simply significant and worth our effort.

Yes...

>> What about programs in the state prison system? Wouldn't that also help in terms of recidivism before they come back to the community?

Judge Couzens: There are some programs at CDCR but the programs are limited, they're overcrowded, they're hard to get into, so we can't rely on the state prison system to help with recidivism. Certainly to some extent that it can but a 70% rate is pretty hard to argue with and it's not working, even to the extent that we do have programs in state prison.

We need to have an understanding right up front. There are several legitimate purposes of sentencing—not all of them relate to recidivism. There is punishment. There is no question that if a crime is committed, there is a certain consequence to pay to society—a just proportionate punishment is called for. I call it the “just desserts,” if you will. We also want to focus on public safety, and that can be accomplished through several strategies—rehabilitation, specific deterrents, incapacitation or control. With rehabilitation, obviously these are the traditional kinds of services we give people through counseling and other programs to try to improve their behavior. Specific deterrents would be the specific kind of punishment we impose on someone to make them realize that the cost of doing a crime is simply not worth it. Incapacitation sometimes is called for to protect public safety, where you take someone... you take them off the street for a period of time. And sometimes control is necessary, where you want to nail them down long enough to have a program work with them. All of these things are appropriate. We also have gentle deterrents. I think we're all as judges familiar with gentle deterrents. That's the message we send to people when we sentence. This is the message we send to the community about the price of crime. “This is what will happen to you if you violate the law.” So that's an appropriate purpose. And of course there's restitution to the victim, restoration of the community—these are all important elements of sentencing. They overlap but at different times different purposes will take the lead.

What's interesting to note is that the risk reduction and management process that we're engaged in with evidence-based practice really focuses on the first three. Those are the things that we can affect by services that we can provide—that we can change—so that there will be an appropriate reduction of recidivism and to improve public safety.

The factor in red—the just desserts aspect—it focuses... to the rear... it focuses on what's happened. It looks at the defendant, his conduct, his involvement in the crime, his criminal record—that all goes into the element of trying to craft a proportionate sentence. The element in green looks forward—these are things that are going to happen in the future. We try to change behavior, try to internalize change, so that we get the positive reduction in recidivism. Fundamentally, though, all of these people are people that you have decided as a sentencing judge to put on probation. These are people that are going to be in your community so we have to ask ourselves, “What can we do as a system to maximize the benefit that they will get from our services so that recidivism reduces, public safety increases?” So we focus on the green. We acknowledge the red, we

acknowledge the other purposes of sentencing, but when we talk about evidence-based practice we're really focusing on things that we can change for the future.

So let's talk about what evidence-based practice is and what it is not. Evidence-based practice is more information about the offender. You certainly will have information about the offender through traditional probation reports and other things of that nature, but this is providing new information about the defendant that should give you more insight into what the defendant's problems are and how best to solve them. It's one tool among many. You are going to use your good judgment. You are going to use probation reports, you are going to use your gut, you are going to use private probation reports—all the things that you have traditionally used. And this is one more tool that will give you valuable information to work with. It's not going to be controlling. It's simply one more thing to consider but it's very good information and so it's very valuable to consider. It will provide a better management tool for probation. It will allow them to segregate their assets, to focus their probation officers on people that will get the most from their services, so it's a valuable management tool. And of course, through all of this we expect it will result in an overall reduction in recidivism.

What evidence-based practice is not is anyone telling you how to sentence. You are still going to decide to send people to state prison for good reasons. You are still going to be expected to exercise your independent judgment and good common sense in sentencing people. So no one is going to tell you how to sentence. It's not going to replace that valuable tool you have which is independent judgment. We want you to use it. You will not always agree with what comes up on an at-risk assessment. You will find that for whatever reason you feel that that should take a secondary role. And that's fine and that's as it should be. This is simply one more thing to consider in the course of your sentencing duties.

In 2009, the Legislature enacted SB 678. SB 678 is a performance-based program to fund probation services through a reduction in commitments to state prison. Basically, the way it works is that a baseline was established for all counties in 2006, 2007 and 2008, and then that baseline is compared against the 2010 rates of commitment to state prison—and so forth each year. And the understanding is that 40-45% of the cost savings to the state by people not going to state prison—that are retained and successfully on probation gets to be shared with the counties. We're talking about significant sums of money. Originally the Legislature provided \$45 million for seed money that was to be spread over three years. This year in the Governor's budget there is \$88 million to be shared essentially in one year, so real money is going to the probation departments if we can successfully maintain people on probation—keep them in the community appropriately.

The money that comes back to the county is to be used for evidence-based programs. It can be data reporting centers. It could be to develop new programs or assessment tools but it's all to be focused on evidence-based work. The Judicial Council is going to be asked to change the rules that they operate under to more focus the judges on evidence-based practice so we can utilize them as legitimate sentencing factors. We're instructed to create a community corrections partnership among all the criminal justice players so

everybody is involved. This is led by probation but it includes the courts, the DAs, the public defenders, other criminal service agencies—all trying to work together to focus the community's efforts on the best way to utilize this money and to increase public safety.

As I've indicated, the current budget from the Governor has about \$88 million and hopefully that will survive this round in the summer. But the money is very real and very valuable for creating new programs where they don't exist previously.

So where do we fit in? Frankly, this is simply a very reasoned, appropriate use of scientific information that has been around for two decades. It's an experiment but it's one based on logic and common sense, and a depth of studies that's very, very impressive. And we're putting this science to work in a new sentencing system—a new approach to sentencing. We're being asked to support probation in its efforts. There are things that judges can do to support probation and, likewise, there are some things that the courts can do that would hurt probation. And we're asked to give support to probation. At the very least, we're being asked to “do no harm,” to borrow a phrase from the medical community.

So what is evidence-based practice? This comes from the statute. It is “supervision, policies, procedures, programs and practices demonstrated by scientific research to reduce recidivism among individuals under probation, parole or post-release supervision.” Where does all this come from? As I've indicated, this has been around for a good long time and it comes up through what we call the “gold standard” kinds of scientific research. It uses a rigorous evaluation process, where there is a control group and then compares it against the program. For example, it's not enough to say, “Does your program reduce recidivism?” What you have to be able to answer is, “Does your program reduce recidivism and where it will not if the program doesn't exist?” So is there a control group that reflects that your program actually makes a difference? That's required by a gold standard method of evaluation. Has it been replicated in multiple studies around the country? And is there a systematic review—a meta-analysis, if you will, so that you compare to study, and does all of this indicate the validity of what you're working with?

So this is where it comes from, and basically the principles of evidence-based practice come down to three major principles. There are some other things but the first is the risk principle—the “who.” Who do we target? The needs principle—what factors do we look at when we're trying to target people? What are the things that are most likely to reduce recidivism? And then the third thing is the treatment principle—what works? What does the science say about the things that are actually effective in reducing recidivism?

First the risk principle—the “who.” Here's a profound statement... “The level of supervision or services should be matched to the risk level of the offender.” That is, the higher-risk offenders generally should receive more intensive supervision and services. Well, as my daughter would say, “Well, duh!” It seems logical, doesn't it? But in fact, we often do just the reverse. I'm sure many of you, just like me, regularly send first-time offenders into various programs and services. And why not? We get great reports back

from the programs. These people work through the programs, they succeed, they graduate, and they go on. Programs love them, it's good for their statistics. But the fact is we will see most of them probably would have improved even without the program. Who wants the difficult offender? Who wants the ones that talk back to the probation officer or the program? These are the people that need the work but we tend not to give them as much service.

We need to understand what risk is. Risk is the risk of re-offense, not the relative seriousness of either the crime committed or the potential re-offense. Let me stress that again. Risk is the risk of re-offense, not in the original committing crime or the crime that might be committed if there is a further violation. That's what we're talking about when we talk about risk. This is an example. It's a meta-analysis of several different studies that show the impact on recidivism and programs. You'll note the green bars. Without services, logically we'd tell you as the risk level increases the recidivism increases and it goes up in a steady geometric fashion. Then take a look at the blue bars. First of all, look at the far left hand and you'll see the low to medium-low offenders. You will be interested to note that those who get services tend to do worse than the ones who got no services at all. There's an explanation for this. We frequently mix high-end offenders and low-end offenders in the same program. Everybody gets sent to the program if they have a certain kind of violation. And it's a fact that, unfortunately, that the good people don't tend to rub off on the ones that commit crime. It's usually the other way around—the offenders tend to rub off on the people who are not so inclined to commit crimes, so that's a problem. Also, some of the people who are sent into these programs really don't need it so they're not committed to it. It makes them angry, it increases costs, they have to leave work in order to do these programs sometimes, so that is part of the consequence of imposing programs on people that don't need it. So they tend to increase more.

At the far end to the right, you'll notice that the high-end offenders also either do about the same as with treatment or a little worse. And these are the sociopaths. These are the people who are going to programs because they just want to learn how to commit crime better and that's all they get out of it.

But look at the middle group—from the medium to high risk offenders, you'll see a dramatic change in recidivism with putting emphasis on programs for these people. That's where you get the most bang for your buck, quite obviously. Another study was done in Travis County, Texas—this is where Austin is located. If you'll look at the column to the left—the pre-evidence-based practice program—you will see the recidivist rates between what they characterize as low, medium and high. And you'll see that there is a fairly substantial recidivist rate. After Travis County instituted evidence-based practice in 2007, the low-end offenders had only a six percent recidivist rate, or a drop of 77%. That's the most dramatic change. And you might guess what they did with respect to those low-end offenders... they did absolutely nothing. They just left them alone. They put them in a bank and they did better. But even across the board, you'll see that they accomplished a 17% reduction in recidivism simply by a proper management of the offenders and the application of evidence-based practice.

So that's the "who." We focus on the medium to medium-high risk offenders to get the most for our efforts.

>> Has there been any... going back to that Travis County... is there... do they take into consideration age of the offender? Is that a factor that, you know, some of the higher offenders are older...

Judge Couzens: Well, the...

>> ... as opposed to the younger offenders? "Maybe it's better to take young offenders and try to get them so that they don't go on" kind of idea.

Judge Couzens: Age does affect recidivism but it's considered a static factor because there's nothing we can do about age. And so we try to focus on things that we can change and so age becomes in that effort more neutral. We focus on the likelihood of recidivism, and it's not just based on age. It's based on other factors as we will see in just a moment what the risk factors are. And you will see age is not among them. Yes, it does affect things but it's not a dynamic factor that we can worry about really because we can't change that.

>> Hmm.

Judge Couzens: Okay, let's talk about the needs principle—that is, what are the factors, what are the things that we should target? Here again is another profound statement... "The targets for intervention should be those offender characteristics that have the most effect on the likelihood of re-offending." Sort of a "duh" moment again. There are static factors—these certainly can predict future criminality. I think most of us are familiar with a static 99 for sex offenders. It is a pretty highly-reliable assessment tool that can assess persons based on things that have happened in the past—the kinds of crimes they've committed and that sort of thing—to predict future criminal behavior. So we know static factors can predict behavior. However, we can't do anything about static factors, as I've indicated. The dynamic factors are things that do things—their participation in treatment and that sort of thing, and risk changes. Those are changeable factors that we do want to focus on. These needs have phraseology—it's called the "criminogenic needs." It sort of sounds like psychobabble. These are the factors that we can focus on that can actually change a person's behavior. I'd like to give you an example in the medical area—heart attacks. These are the causes of heart attacks... elevated LDLs, smoking, diabetes, hypertension, abdominal obesity, stresses, failure to eat fruits and vegetables, and failure to exercise. What's interesting about this list, though, is that the top two account for two-thirds of the cause of the heart attack. Now, if you have all of these I feel very sorry for you because you are 130 times more likely to have a heart attack than a person without them. But note that the top two account for two-thirds of the actual causes of heart attack. Let me ask you this... if you went to a doctor and your doctor said, "You have two problems. You have high LDL and you're not exercising like you should. I've got a great exercise program for you," and he gave it to you and sent you on your way, I think you would think that doctor just committed malpractice because he or she has not addressed

the primary cause. And that's something like how we approach this process. Science has shown that the dynamic risk factors, those things that are most likely to cause criminal behavior, are anti-social attitudes, rationalization, minimization, not accepting responsibility, it's everybody else's fault, the police are just picking on me—that kind of thing. Anti-social friends, people with the same kind of attitudes that you have. Anti-social personality patterns—the risk takers, lack of self-control, impulsive, unreasonable anger and hostility. Those things account for a lot. Family and/or marital factors, substance abuse, education or lack of it, employment, anti-social leisure activities—all of these things contribute to criminal behavior. But the top four account for a vast majority. Now, what's interesting about that list to me is that if you look at that list from the top to the bottom, you notice that most of our court programs are focused on the bottom. We send people to substance abuse, we try to get them jobs, we deal with educational issues, but how many of our programs deal with the top four issues? Not very many. You know, certainly the bottom four are important. They clearly need to be addressed if they exist. But let's take employment, for example. You know, we've had unprecedented employment problems these past few years because of our economy, yet the crime rate has not increased. It's gone down. And that's because most people who lose their job do the pro-social thing—they find another job. So while education and employment are important, they don't control as much as the top four do. We're not suggesting that you don't address the bottom four. It's just that you can't ignore the top four and think that you're doing the right thing. You may need to do both. So you have to ask, in light of what we know now, what's happening in corrections would be grounds for malpractice in medicine. We are the doctor who is not dealing with the high LDL levels. We're the doctor who is not dealing with the causes of crime. We're dealing with things that are more symptomatic. We need to change the focus if we're going to be effective.

The actuarial risk needs assessment is the engine that drives all of this. This is the tool—the assessment tool that identifies what people need by way of treatment programs and their ability to succeed on probation. It's the thing that sets up the programs. It guides everything in our efforts. You know, it's a lot of very good information about a defendant. As I indicated previously, you still will have a tendency to use your gut—how you size up a person. But it's been shown that a quality risk assessment tool is going to be about eight times more accurate than your gut. And so you need to really focus on the variables that make a difference, and that is what is identified by the risk needs assessment. You'll be looking at it from the standpoint of both validation and reliability. Is it valid? Is it accurate? Does it measure what it's supposed to measure? Is it reliable in the sense that two probation officers giving the assessment should come up with the same answer? That's all a part of it. Some of these tools are generalized criminal assessment tools, some are specialized like the static 99 for sex offenders or the SAS evaluation for drug offenders. But you have both kinds available. Some are proprietary, some are non-proprietary. Some people make money off the sale of these things. Some are available through the government at no cost. All of these, though, are intended to inform judgment—it is not to take the place of judgment. It's important to understand that these assessment tools are to be used not only with the original assessment but as circumstances change. As offenses occur, as there are breakdowns in probation, it's important to reassess the defendant to see if they are still at an acceptable risk or need

greater services. It's important to realize all the time that risk is dynamic—it changes. So too must probation change and the services must change.

So the use of the risk assessment tool will help you identify appropriate levels of supervision. It will identify these dynamic factors and the appropriate conditions of probation. It will help determine amenability to probation and the kind of treatment they need. But it's not to be used to determine the severity of penalty. We'll talk more about that in a minute. Risk assessment tools have their limits. They will not tell you if a person is going to re-offend. There will be people with high risk factors that will not re-offend. There are people with low risk factors that will re-offend. But evidence-based practice is trying to improve the odds. We are at least... if we can't deal with an individual, we can at least deal with a group of people with similar characteristics. And hopefully through a combined approach to this level of treatment we can improve everybody's lot. But there are no guarantees.

These risk assessment tools will help identify conditions of probation. There are really two factors to address. There are treatment conditions. It will help identify the specific needs or specific treatment conditions. And it will help identify the level of monitoring or control over an individual. Both of these things are subject to negotiation with the probation department. And it will form this framework for the case plan. It's important that these plans be flexible and realistic. Courts have to avoid the tendency to load up conditions on people because loading up unnecessary conditions, as I've indicated earlier, simply makes people resentful, becomes expensive and becomes counterproductive. Here is something that's very important... we need to avoid the practice that all of us have engaged in of plea-bargaining conditions of probation. Generally speaking, when we have sentencing before us we will not have the results of the risk assessment. It's important for us not to structure a condition of probation that is not based on actual need. Otherwise, we are wasting the defendant's time and we are wasting probation's time. So hopefully the courts and the various criminal justice players will be flexible enough to allow later adjustments to the probation process to meet the actual needs and not try to artificially add conditions that are not appropriate for a particular defendant. That just creates its own ills. Again, we try to do no harm.

The treatment principle deals with what works and the science has shown that the most effective services in reducing recidivism are cognitive behavioral interventions based on social learning principles. Again, it sounds like psychobabble to me but the fact is we have all learned in a social way. We have responded to carrots and sticks—you know, awards and punishments. These are the things that shape us and the criminal offender is no different. Again, we are trying to internalize change, not simply use external forces to control it. There are both positive and negative approaches to punishment or to consequences. We have seen, though, through the science that rewards are better than the negative. Rewards are most effectively administered at a four-to-one ratio—four positive to one negative. Criminal defendants often respond to what they get out of it, and if they get something positive out of it they are going to be more attuned to change than simply a negative consequence—which they often consider simply as the price of doing business.

So we want to try to emphasize whenever possible their rewards. And I don't mean that you have to hug a thug every time you come to court.
(laughing).

But you can give rewards through compliments, through changing custody levels, through changing monitoring levels. There are lots of ways of telegraphing to an individual that they're doing the right thing—they're on the right path, to reward good things. By the same token, there has to be consequences but a swift, certain and proportionate response is what's important. The severity of the sanction doesn't necessarily make a better result in the end of it. Long sentences do incapacitate and if that's the objective, then that has merit on its own, but it's not for the purpose of recidivism. People who have worked the drug court calendar know that a short, quick burst of custody time over a weekend—promptly given as a direct consequence for a dirty test—has far more effect than a three- or four-month sentence. This is what we're talking about. An appropriate level of sanction where necessary but, again, hopefully trying to keep a balance between both positive and negative. That's the social learning principle that we need to try to put in play.

There are a variety of things that work—role modeling. Judges can role model in the demeanor they have on the bench and in dealing with people—trying to build respect. Demonstration works well. A lot of these people simply don't know how to make a decision under stress. Sometimes they do that through their probation office. Role playing, feedback—judges can do that, giving people both positive and negative feedback. When things are going well, you tell the defendant that's something positive. An opportunity to practice skill, motivational interviewing—judges can do that. As you have a dialog with a defendant you draw them out. You don't become an inquisitor, you bring out factors. You deflect challenges, you don't argue but you draw the person out and try to develop their sense of value. That is motivational interviewing and has very positive effects.

Things that don't work are shaming programs, just drug education programs, awareness programs have been shown not to work. Classes based on fear or emotion—"Scared Straight" for example, has a wonderful momentary effect but it doesn't have the long-lasting internalized change that we're looking for. Non-action-oriented group counseling doesn't work. Intensive supervision without the component of treatment does not work. Non-skill-based education programs—when you're not working on something to improve talent in something, it's not effective. Freudian approaches may make the offender feel better but it does nothing about the long-term benefit.

Up to this point we've been sort of talking about some of the initial sentencing and management on probation, but what if things go wrong? How do we handle probation violations? One size does not fit all—everybody is different and their violations are different, and in our approach we have to account for that. We look at basically three variables—the nature and severity of the violation, the extent of prior compliance so is this the first violation after months of maintaining a proper track, and then what is really the risk of reassessment? As I indicated, risk is dynamic—it changes. And so it's important to have a reassessment of their status on probation through the administration

of another risk assessment. It may be an abbreviated one, but at least kind of a check-up to see where they are and are they really offending to a point where we need to do something at a higher level than we might otherwise? Again, swift, certain, proportionate sanctions may be appropriate. Not everyone needs to go to the state prison. Hopefully there are graduated sanctions and services with again an emphasis on incentives and reinforcement to try to avoid probation violations.

Progress in treatment is subject to relapse—it's natural, it happens. Whether you are trying to lose weight or whether you're trying to kick drugs, relapse is natural. So with criminal behavior there are going to be problems and we have to address them as problems, not necessarily violations to the extent that are going to require people to go to state prison—at least certainly to a lesser extent than we have in the past.

This should be a wonderful opportunity to develop administrative sanctions—things that can be developed with the probation department with the input and guidance of the court so that as much as possible can be handled by the probation department, allowing them to make some calls as to what should happen to an offender without necessarily involving the court. Not everything needs to come back to court. For example, penal code section 1203.2 is a perfect opportunity for people to work with the probation department to modify without court appearance. It saves a huge amount of time for the court, allows the probation department to be quick and responsive in dealing with the offender, and moves things along without the need of a court appearance. And it allows probation and the court to work together to develop an understanding of how much risk we should be willing to accept before we do have to respond.

It's important to understand the proper use of assessments and what the science and policy has developed so far in terms of the information that's generated by these risk assessments. I want to emphasize two points—what are the scores that are generated... there will be a number score... as opposed to the risk factors, the criminogenic needs that are developed. This is the two basic kinds of information that are going to come out of the assessment, and the use of them varies greatly and should be watched very carefully. For example, you may use the score itself if it's low as one of the reasons you would use to grant probation. A person has demonstrated to be low risk, it's appropriate to give them that benefit and to grant probation. However, it's not appropriate to use a high risk score—the number—to deny probation. And there are a number of reasons for that. In your materials I cite you to the [Mallencheck] case which comes out of Indiana. [Mallencheck] was a case involving a judge who set a prison term on a triad using the risk score information. The court held that that was improper. However, the risk factors could be considered. Further, these assessment tools were not developed for this purpose and we know that risk changes. And if you use a score we are punishing someone for what may happen in the future rather than what has happened. And so far, our system doesn't countenance punishment with that kind of approach. So it is appropriate to use the risk factors—looking at what the person needs and deciding whether to grant or deny probation. It may be their needs are so great that the local county is not in a position to help. And for public safety at that point, you need to commit someone to state prison. It's appropriate for that, you can consider for that. But again, this is information to be

received in context. It's important that it be only one thing among many that you will consider in making the decision whether to send somebody to state prison or not.

But there's still no money. So why should we engage in this evidence-based practice? I think it will still provide judges with good, reliable and relevant information for sentencing. The information you're going to get is not going to come from any other source—it's still going to be valuable, even if there wasn't a single dollar available for programs. And remember, initially there was a \$45 million grant over three years and now we're up to \$88 million in one year? The money is obviously beginning to flow in the right direction so I think there will be money available. We have seen that only minimum change can have dramatic impact. For example, the data shows that a probation officer spending 20-40 minutes with an offender—face-to-face contact—once a month can reduce that person's chances of recidivism by 26%, a really dramatic change just by spending a little bit of time with someone. It allows us to leverage SB 678 funds to get the most we can out of the dollars. It's a principle way to make management decisions by probation and the system to focus on people that really need the services. It builds a database for our needs. It helps us identify programs and strategies that don't work. For example, this process will allow you ask a program, does your program really make a difference? Do you have nationally validated results of assessments that show that with your program you have this recidivist rate but without your program you have a different recidivist rate? You can really challenge programs to give you proper information. It allows probation to shift services to people who most need it. I think it's important to remember also that evidence-based practice or sentencing issues did not create these problems— it only has offered a way to identify them, to expose them and for us to manage them. And finally, and probably the most compelling thing to me, is that it's the right thing to do. For those of you who know my work, I've been dealing with sentencing issues for many years. I love state prison sentences. I obsess over state prison sentences. I'm in therapy for state prison sentences, but if all that we did were to send people to state prison, it would be a pretty hollow job. I think this is a vehicle by which we can appropriately sentence people, appropriately keep them in the community, support them in the community, and through all that obtain benefits to probationers in our counties that we have not seen before, and to fund a badly under-funded program—which is your probation department. We need to work together, and that's why I'm here talking to you today about this issue and why I commit it to you for your consideration.

Thank you all for your attendance in this class today. And thank you for participating in the video presentation. If you would like more information about this subject, please consult the website that is noted on your screen, and may you have good luck with all your sentencings.