**From:** Santura Pegram
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Greetings ~

I'm sending you a short article that was done on Georgia Governor Nathan Deal at the recent "Summit on Reentry" held in Atlanta. It's becoming crystal clear why the economies of cities and states like Seattle, Washington; New York City, New York; Houston, Texas and Atlanta, Georgia are increasingly successful. It's because of their city leaders' ability to think outside of the box & put all of the right components into place. Their willingness to abandon *old* ideologies and stigmas towards people with past convictions, and instead, help their own communities by empowering such residents to help themselves while they are still young enough (and healthy enough) to do so before we're stuck taking care of them in the future is imperative. This is a national time bomb that is *definitely* going to explode one day unless city/state leaders decide to address it now before it continues to cause worse problems.

As my late mentor (Florida's political matriarch Mrs. M. Athalie Range) used to say, "*building more jails and prisons or hiring more police officers is **not** the answer to reducing crime or helping to strengthen communities*." Sadly, many city/state leaders of today continue to think otherwise and their communities continue to suffer as a result. Being someone who lost my one and only son tragically to gun violence, unlike most people, I thoroughly understand the precipitating factors which will likely lead to desperate and unexpected behavior if ignored. And, that is why I am a firm believer of advocating to help people to help themselves *now* so we can avoid problems *later*.

Although Georgia's "Summit on Reentry" is new territory and in need of improvement, and despite the out-of-touch-with-reality stance on this topic by the mayor of Atlanta and several other so-called leaders across the country, this event did stumble across variables that cities benefit from by assisting those with past convictions to secure gainful employment and having their full civil/fundamental rights restored. The benefits of such decisions include: a decrease in crime/recidivism; greater sales in home ownership & increased property value; a rise in the number of taxpayers; a new untapped source of voters, and more. Despite acts most oftentimes committed during a person's naïve youthful years (between ages 16-30), criminal convictions for those people have many life-long consequences. Court-imposed sentences, such as fines and incarceration, are the *direct consequences* familiar to many people.

Not so familiar are the *indirect*, or "collateral," *side-effects* of a criminal conviction. These are laws that impose extra burdens and restrictions on people with criminal records, often long after the court-imposed sentence is over. For someone with even a criminal record involving a nonviolent charge, laws unfairly restrict access to jobs, housing, education, and other aspects of daily life that most people take for granted. They function as legal barriers, excluding people with criminal records from full participation in their communities. In legal terms, these side-effects are called ***collateral consequences of conviction***, or sometimes ***collateral sanctions***.

Supporters of such laws evidently have not grown tired yet of taking care of people who are fully capable of taking care of themselves if we would only empower them with the realistic means to do so. After all, most people *are* going to age one day and need assistance to some degree. The question is will we, as taxpayers, be the ones *continually* responsible for taking care of them or will we help enable them to re-build their lives while they're still capable of doing so?

Please share the attached article with other people in your circle. Maybe it will spark

similar conversations among your constituents.

http://theatlantavoice.com/news/2014/feb/07/gov-deal-stresses-hiring-former-prisoners/

Best Regards,

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**"*Equal access to education and economic opportunities stand at the apex of EVERYTHING*!"**
*** (M. Athalie Range)**