



Deep Listening. Fostering Trust. Bridging Communities.

Across the Red & Blue Divide Dialogue #4: Reforming Criminal Justice

September 6, 2018

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Executive Summary

The Across the Red & Blue Divide: Reforming Criminal Justice panel and dialogue took place on September 6, 2018 at the Bavarian Bierhaus. During the event, participants were asked to discuss the following questions by Zeidler Center trained facilitators:

1. *"Share a story in your life that you think may have shaped your beliefs or opinions about the criminal justice system. In the greater Milwaukee area (or other places you have lived), what have you seen or personally experienced relating to the criminal justice system that has shaped your beliefs?"*
2. *"What does real criminal justice reform look like to you? What, if anything, do you feel needs to change about the system and why?"*

Participants were also asked to participate in the Connected Conversation, if time allowed. The Connected Conversation encouraged participants to have an open conversation, ask questions of peers, and discuss what was heard in the facilitated listening circles. To encourage discussion, the facilitators used the following prompts:

"What bipartisan efforts regarding criminal justice reform would you like to see?"

"What specific actions might make a difference in reforming criminal justice?"

"What, if anything, can elected officials do to help?"

"What questions or concerns did the panelists bring up for you?"

During the first round, participants shared about their experiences with the criminal justice system. Some people had been arrested before and served time. However, most of the other participants worked or volunteered in the criminal justice system. There were some participants who did not have personal experiences with the criminal justice system, but they remarked on the experiences of people they knew or learned about from the media. Overall, participants thought that the system was failing. Some participants were victims of crimes, but all except for one thought that improvements could be made to make criminal justice better for those who are accused or convicted of crimes.

During the second round, participants offered practical suggestions on how to improve the criminal justice system. Their ideas related to reforming sentences, leniency to first time, youth, and elderly offenders. They also thought that minor drug offenses should be sentenced differently. Participants also thought that inmates should be treated better and be offered help with finding employment and issues related to mental illness, addiction, and other social issues.

During the Connected Conversation, participants continued to brainstorm solutions for reforming the criminal justice system. However, participants also spoke about parental involvement, getting involved in their community, and also the role of politics in criminal justice

reform. In their parting words, participants wanted change and felt hopeful that change could happen.

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Analysis

Round One Question: *"In the greater Milwaukee area (or other places you have lived), what have you seen or personally experienced relating to the criminal justice system that has shaped your beliefs?"*

All of the participant spoke about how their beliefs about the criminal justice system were shaped. Some of the participants had personal experiences with the criminal justice system as victims or were charged with a crime. However, most of the participants experiences with the criminal justice system were based on volunteer or employment related to the criminal justice system. Their beliefs were mostly negative as they described failures of the criminal justice system. There was one person who had a positive view of the criminal justice system because they had been violently victimized and believed that the justice system worked well based on their experience. The predominant themes that emerged from the participant's responses to the first question are elaborated upon below.

1.1 Trauma

Some of the participants described how the trauma people experience in their lives has led them into the criminal justice system. Participants realized that unaddressed trauma may be the underlying reason why some people resort to crime. In the following quote, a participant communicates how trauma has shaped the life of a former friend:

"While I was in college I befriended a 21-year-old person who had just finished serving 5 years in prison because of a drunken driving conviction at 16 years old that killed his girlfriend. I learned how much trauma and abuse shaped his life story; that led to drinking to deal with the pain, and how trauma influences life outcomes that led to the criminal justice system. I learned how time in prison exacerbated his trauma..."

This participant articulated what many of the other participants believed about how trauma can lead someone to crime. Another participant remarked on how pervasive trauma was and reflected on how many people could interface with the criminal justice system as their reaction to their unaddressed trauma.

"I was formerly a nurse in the city and have a professional view and belief in trauma, and in the complexities in a trauma situation. I know that there are millions of people who would score high in trauma on the adverse childhood experience questionnaire. The difference is whether your family moves you into a trauma reaction or away from it. Layered on this is the inequity of how people fit into society."

Overall, participants believed *"the criminal justice system [has] no regard for trauma."* The participant who spoke about their friend in college who was in prison for 5 years, continued to explain how they believed that unresolved trauma was worsened by their friends' interaction with the criminal justice system. As a result the participant believed that the criminal justice system

does not work for people who have experienced trauma and in turn their unresolved trauma can have an effect of the people in their lives. The participant said this when recalling their experience with a friend:

"...I was feeling unsafe at times around this person. The price of safety vs the price of freedom in the world – I personalized this dilemma."

1.2 Incarceration due to Health and Social Issues

Several participants had negative beliefs about the criminal justice system which were shaped by witnessing people who required treatment being incarcerated instead. Participants told stories about people who had dealt with mental illness and committed crimes. Often times, their crimes were related to drug addiction. Instead of being offered treatment because their crime resulted from their mental illness, they were incarcerated. They believed that this was a failure of the criminal justice system and that the system needed to be sensitive to the root causes of crime and offer real solutions.

For instance, one participant spoke about how their friend's mental illness was exacerbated by the criminal justice system:

"Several years later, one of my friends ended up in prison because the police said that he was "acting suspiciously" and they filed charged him for that. My friend has a mental illness and needed to see a psychologist, and get treatment, rather than being put into prison. He was told that there were no psychologists available; instead, my friend was put into isolation. This began a pattern that continued for many years: my friend would cut himself so that he could get emergency medical and mental health treatment, and then he was returned to the prison and placed back to isolation. We need prison reform so that this does not happen to other people and their friends. We also need to learn how to listen to the values of the people currently in prison."

Other participants mentioned how some people end up in jail because of homelessness or domestic issues that place them in a vulnerable position. Many of the participants shared the sentiment that if people were offered help to address the issue that caused their vulnerability, that would better the justice system. As one participant recounted a story where someone was able to become victorious despite unfortunate life circumstances, the participant highlighted the success that could be realized if treatment were provided. The story the participant told is as follows:

"I was on the jury of a criminal case. That person was killed. The parents were the ones who were killed, but the child they had was born prematurely so they put the child in foster care and the foster parents were drug abusers selling the baby for supplies, syringes, and pills. The foster parents went to prison for selling drugs. However, the foster father loved the child but could not separate his behavior from reality. Finally, the child got adopted and the adoptive parents realized that the child had some mental health issues. They helped the child with the problems as he got older, and the child finally got married and had children

of his own. The adoptive parents mentored him and are now always in touch with him to help him and his wife."

1.3 Police Interactions

Several of the participants spoke about how their views were shaped by their personal interactions with the police. Most of them had encounters with the police while driving. While reading one of the participant's testimonies, it is possible to notice a certain distrust of officers:

"Over the years I've lived here, I've seen a lot of families traumatized by police brutality. My mother told me what to do if I got pulled over by the police – use yes ma'am and yes sir."

A few participants mentioned how they felt that encounters with the police, specifically stops while driving or walking, were racially motivated. They mentioned how these stops made them have negative beliefs about the police:

"My experience here has been to see friends who have been pulled over for no reason and seems to be people of color. I also have friends who are police officers where we live and there are tensions. I know both sides of it and I believe in the goodness of people and given our struggles discrimination can be an issue. I believe they are targeted more because of their skin color."

"When I was in high school, I was walking home from a friend's home near the intersection of Washington Boulevard and HiMount Boulevard to my home. A police car drove by and a police officer got out of the car and asked me why I was in the neighborhood. I responded that I was visiting my friend, who lived in the area. Another police car drove by, and that officer and the first officer both put me into a police car; I was driven to a police station and held for several hours, till the officers could reach my parents, who were at work. I was picked up simply for "walking while black" in a mostly white neighborhood. I was 13, and scared."

"I attended MATC for a while, and one time I got stopped for jaywalking. Lots of other students were also jaywalking. I was the only person who was stopped. I was also the only black person jaywalking at that moment, at least as far as I could see. I did not think that this was fair, but the police officer would not listen to me and he gave me a ticket, which I had to pay. I started taking criminal justice classes in order to study how this system works and does not work, especially for people of color."

Several other participants mentioned that they witnessed police brutality and that it has shaped their views of the police. Some quotes from participants spoke about the police brutality that they have experienced personally or saw on reported on the television can be find below:

"As a teenager growing up in Chicago I was out walking with friends past the curfew. Some men followed us and then came up, said they were plain clothed police

and they asked us questions. They took us in; one of my friends talked back and they got rough on him. I realized then about police brutality.”

“I lived in Amsterdam for a time and saw everyone using drugs and living together peacefully and then came back to Milwaukee and saw the brutality towards blacks from the police. I saw police shooting into cars when they could not see who was in them. I remember seeing the Rodney King video and the police brutality.”

1.4 Over Incarceration of People of Color

Many of the participants said their views of the criminal justice system were shaped by witnessing certain groups of people being incarcerated more than other groups. As they told stories about people of people of color who had been charged with crimes they remarked how white people would not have been incriminated under the same circumstances. Their beliefs were shaped by inequities in criminal charges unfairly burdened by people of color. Some stories are detailed below:

“A lot of the experiences draw back to drugs. My great aunt in Mississippi was growing a couple of marijuana plants when she was in her 60s, so she was jailed for three years. Imagine if she were African-American and did the same thing. She would have gotten a lot longer jail time. I have lived in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The place where a person lives does not change how these things happen to people based on race. No matter where they are in this country, African-Americans are treated the same in this country.”

“Police don’t want to bother White addicts. They’d rather go in to the Black communities because it’s easier to arrest and convict African-Americans than those living in White gated communities. We’d better come up with something to help people rather than punish them.”

One participant mentioned how growing up, they were taught that the criminal justice system worked. However, when they were older they realized how people of color were over incarcerated and then they began to question if the system really worked. The following quote is based on the situation that made the participant call into question the fairness of the criminal justice system:

“I was shaped by two sayings, “Police are always my friend,” and “Everybody in jail belongs in jail.” Secondly, I was in my adult life at a meeting where the group of 100 were asked to raise their hand if someone in their family has been in jail. Most people in the room who were black raised their hands. I am white. I did not.”

1.5 Inhumane Treatment of Inmates

Several of the participants spoke about how inmates are treated inhumanely. Their view of the inhumane treatment of inmates was shaped by their work in the criminal justice system. The following quotes detail the positive experiences the officers had with youth:

"I volunteer at the MKE Co. Jail through the library. It is that experience that has influenced my opinion on the criminal justice system. I distribute books to the pods. Nothing happens in the pods and they (the inmates) are SO happy to see us. When I go to the "hole" (solitary confinement for those that have gotten into trouble), I can't believe how bad it is. It smells of urine, they are treated like animals, it's very noisy, and people are yelling and screaming. Lately it has gotten a little better. I believe they should eliminate solitary confinement – if people are treated like animals, they will act like animals. These people want to do better but they need skills."

"When I told my family and friends that I was going to volunteer in the jail, they were appalled because they thought it was too dangerous. I don't know anything about the crimes these people are charged with – I don't ask. They are awaiting trial. I have found them to be very helpful and what bothers me is that some Correction Officers don't treat the inmates humanely – they are swearing and screaming at them. I have a hard time with that – no one needs to be treated that way."

"I am an attorney and I do deals and have had experience with the system. One of my pro bono cases dealt with a health case. He did a crime and was convicted and in jail for many years. He is a person of color and [muslim] and got the short end of the stick. He decided to represent himself and take a stand and self-advocate. He was retaliated against by guards and that helped cement my belief about the criminal justice system. I've lived abroad and seen how other countries treat criminals—it is much more humane and they have a better way; so much different. I've seen mistrust against people of color."

Round Two Question: *“What does real criminal justice reform look like to you? What, if anything, do you feel needs to change about the system and why?”*

2.1 Less Emphasis on Punishment in Criminal Justice System

Participants believed there should be less emphasis on punishment in the criminal justice system because it would help society and those accused of crimes. Participants had ideas about how to handle diversion programs, mandatory sentencing, and rehabilitation services that would help balance out the criminal justice system.

2.1.1 Diversion and Release Programs

Participants believed that first-time offenders should be offered a second chance if their crime was non-violent. They believed this courtesy should be extended especially to juveniles and the elderly.

“I would like to see non-violent criminals released back in the community.”

“We could also reduce the prison population by looking more closely at compassionate release for elders convicted on nonviolent offenses.”

“I think the Judges should work with them and send them back into the community for rehabilitation because prison is not the answer.”

Often, when a participant mentioned non-violent criminals, they referred to those who were charged with minor drug offenses or specifically marijuana related crimes. They believed that minor drug offenders should not be incarcerated or should be given a second chance for initial offenses.

“Decriminalize minor drug offenses. This will keep young people out of the Criminal Justice System.”

Participants believed that people who were convicted of non-violent crimes should be diverted away from prison into alternative programs where they could be held accountable for their actions in accordance with the severity of their crime. This is a quote from an attorney who works with the diversion program and spoke of the benefits of this type of programs:

“I work in the diversion system where you don’t have to go to jail. If you go through the program you didn’t have to go to jail. In these cases, drugs play a great part in this criminal system. One should be able to go back to school and seek employment or further his or her education. The diversion program is mainly or mostly for drug users and small-time drug dealers.”

2.1.2 Mandatory Sentencing

Participants believed that mandatory sentencing should change to allow flexibility in sentencing. Participants believed that mandatory sentences should be removed for non-violent crimes, especially minor drug offenses. One participant remarked that judges should be given more discretion in sentencing.

"There are problems with mandatory sentencing that arrived in the 90's war on drugs. Judges are deprived of their role in making a decision based on each particular case. There are personal factors that could be considered if we did not have mandatory sentencing."

Several participants believe that this would ensure more appropriate sentences for minor and non-violent crimes and reduce the overall amount of people who are incarcerated.

2.1.3 Rehabilitation

Many participants recognized that the root cause of many crimes was mental illnesses related to trauma and addiction. They believed that the criminal justice system focuses on punishment and fails to address the root causes of crimes. Therefore, they believed that the criminal justice system should be more lenient towards criminals who are experiencing such difficulties. Rehabilitating criminals with mental illnesses and addiction would ensure better re-entry into society and lower rates of recidivism. Quotes from participants who shared these sentiments are below:

"We need to decriminalize drugs and non-violent offenses. Offer treatment for addicts. Prepare them for the world."

"Rehabilitation as a focus [is needed] and less incarceration is needed. We need more workers so let's get people out of prison because we need them."

2.2 Re-integration into Society

Participants believed that the criminal justice system could be reformed by helping ex-prisoners to reintegrate into society by providing them with job opportunities and undoing policies that revoke the privileges of ex-prisoners (e.g. driver's license).

2.1.4 Employment Opportunities

Many of the participants pointed out that lack of employment or economic success drove people to crime. However, those who committed felonies will have a hard time getting employment once they are released from prison because participants believed that employers tend to discriminate against ex-felons. They believed that the employment limitations placed on ex-felons should be lifted to prevent people from returning to crime and the criminal justice system. Participants believed that criminal justice reforms could help with changing employer's perspectives on hiring ex-felons.

Some participants believed that while people are imprisoned they should gain job skills that would make them more marketable for jobs. These participants believed that it would be a win-win to build the job force with ex-felons who are skilled workers. As it stands now, "their rights are our loss" in the job market if ex-felons cannot be gainfully employed upon release. This participant continued saying:

"They can't vote or get great jobs without being ostracized by the questions on job applications, "Have you been convicted within the last five years? "Are you a felon?" They are victimized for the rest of their lives."

"Wisconsin recently passed "ban the box" so people leaving the system can find jobs and housing. Easier expungement of background checks is necessary in Wisconsin so that people can find their property and opportunities."

Other participants emphasized the need to provide job training in prisons so that prisoners can be rehabilitated for re-entry to society.

"I think there should be more training and job opportunities for those who are returning to the community and their families."

"We need to train people so when they are released, they can get and keep a job."

2.1.5 Probation, Parole, and Revocation Policies

Participants believed that policies around probation and parole were designed to keep people in prison rather than to help them re-integrate into society. They believed that the rules with probation and parole should be in line with helping people to be successful in the world rather than finding ways to place them back in prison. The following quotes underscore what most of the participants who believed that policies around probation and probation should change thought:

"First, no more parole revocations on technicalities. It's entirely unfair that people can get picked up on something totally trivial, and then end up back in prison, in some cases for years."

"Get rid of crimeless revocation (those that violate parole and it's up to the parole office to decide how they're going to treat them)."

2.3 Racial Bias in the Criminal Justice System

Many of the participants believed that addressing racial bias was critical to criminal justice reforms as the prevalence of black inmates far exceeds the prevalence of white inmates. They believed that this is due do to differential treatment of black people compared to white people for similar crimes. Many of the participants referenced marijuana-related crimes when they explained how racial bias in the criminal justice system works.

2.4 Disincentive's for Criminal Justice and Incentivize Prevention

Several participants also thought that the for-profit criminal justice system needed to be dismantled and that funds needed to be redirected to prevent crime. Participants believed that the for-profit prisons, incentivize laws and policing that focused more on incarceration. The following participant had several ideas on how reform could be achieved and mentioned that for-profit prisons needed to be eliminated:

"For me it's key to increase economic opportunities where crime rates are the worst. Also, divorce profit from prisons, and remove minimum mandatory sentencing, and "3 strikes". The goal should be to reform rather than punish."

Participants believed the for-profit criminal justice system did not encourage police and judges to be creative when dealing with criminals. There was a connection between the lack of discretion afforded to judges in sentences (due to mandatory sentencing) and the business of criminal justice. Participants believed that this was the reason that few prevention and rehabilitation efforts exist. The following quote sums up this perspective.

"Prisons are a budget item; judges and their wishes are overlooked in the rush to penalize offenders rather than put the money and the effort toward rehab."

Some of the prevention programs that the participants thought required more funding were related to education and employment. They believed that if more money was committed to education and employment, then people would not need to resort to crime which would in turn lower the number of people who are imprisoned.

Connected Conversation: *"What bipartisan efforts regarding criminal justice reform would you like to see?; What specific actions might make a difference in reforming criminal justice?; What, if anything, can elected officials do to help?; What questions or concerns did the panelists bring up for you?"*

During this unstructured phase of conversation, participants continued to talk about redirecting funding for the criminal justice system to support prevention and rehabilitation programs and preparing prisoners for success after their sentences with employment opportunities. However, a few other conversations about the relationship between parenting and crime, and ideas for creating change occurred.

3.1 Parenting and Crimes

A few participants recognized the association between parenting and crime and believed that the relationship was cyclical. The following conversation between two participants highlights how they view the relationship between parenting and crime.

"There is no such thing as 'mass incarceration' – it is a dog whistle for the media. I don't believe it. It's the breakdown of the family structure."

"I agree with you that the breakdown of the family structure is a problem – there is a problem for blacks that don't have fathers at home because he is in jail and the child has no adult to aspire to."

In other groups, participants also believed that over incarceration of black people has led to a break down in the family structure that places black people at a higher risk for crime. The following quote sheds some light on the cyclical nature of crime and parenting.

"The 53206 zip code removes Black men from the community. It depletes the community and breaks up the family. I feel that we do a lot of victim blaming."

Although other factors may be at play, another participant believed that parents should be held accountable for correcting the actions of juvenile offenders.

"Parents have to be involved with these juvenile incidents to help solve the problems. The adult also can be held responsible for the child's action and forced to pay restitution if the child fails to comply with the program."

3.2 Making Changes

Many of the final conversations focused on how to make a change in their communities that would prevent people from ever interfacing with the criminal justice system. Several of the participants called on grassroots activism to help change legislation related to the criminal justice system, as can be seen in the following testimony:

"Grass roots groups need to get involved with each other and meet each other in the street. That is how we make change. Until we take that we can expect the political system to be different."

Several participants urged others to be involved in their communities and to lend a helping hand to people who may be struggling:

"People need to be involved and engaged on the ground where they live. Extend engagement with children and neighbors and religious communities. We need to do this and be real with each other. Everyone needs to be seen and heard."

One person spoke about their own efforts to get people involved to make changes, but also mentioned the challenge faced when trying to get people involved. The following quote from the participant expresses the hesitation some people have about helping out within communities in most need of help.

"In the community that I live in, I share with my friends how I am involved in the heart of the inner city. The first question that I was asked was 'Is it safe?'"

Another participant pointed out another approach to helping out the community and preventing crime.

"My grandparents and their community offered the best system, the front porch, watching out for their own and each other's children, setting limits, and reminding children of these limits."

3.3 Elections, Voting, and Politics

Several of the participants mentioned that it was essential to vote in order to affect change in the criminal justice system. The election of judges was commonly mentioned among participants as a way to change how sentencing was done. Also participants mentioned that voting for other elected officials were important to ensure that legislations related to criminal justice reform were enacted.

"There's very little going on with officials; we as citizens need to formulate opinion on the way officials are elected so they have the interests of people. We need to have honest, new discussions and it's just not happening."

Many of the participants expressed frustration with the division on this issue among the republican and democrat parties. Some participants said that there also needed to be some consensus on the issue within parties for a change to be made. Participants also believed that it was important to have a bipartisan approach to this subject but recognized some challenges because how much money from the for-profit criminal justice system influenced politics.

"I'm afraid elected officials have not lived up to their ideology. A friend of mine was elected to assembly in Door County – he is conservative but rational. However, he would not challenge because he would lose his status in the Party."

"Judges are elected and I know judges who are afraid to counter the Police because they don't want to lose the next election. We should change judges and go back to representing society's interests. They do not go back and ask the Police for more information."

"One of the best ways to professional politicians, it's whoever has the biggest voice. They will use the government as a tool for their purposes rather than serving the criminal justice system. It is not realistic and disengaging."

Several participants also mentioned the importance of reinstating voting rights to ex-prisoners because they know best what changes need to be made. Participants thought that revoking the voting rights of ex-prisoners was an extended and unfair punishment. They believed that prisoners should be able to make changes on their own behalf through voting.

"Felons who have served their time need to be allowed participation in our democracy – the vote. They need to become accepted as full citizens with respect."

"The '53206' documentary film looked at the most-incarcerated zip code in the country. - Should felons have the right to vote? - Sure, once they're out, but not while they're inside. It's like no taxation without representation: no voting."

Parting Words

Most participants left the listening circles wanting change, but many people felt hopeful. They were also appreciative of the opportunity to discuss and hear opinions about the topic.

Feedback forms

What was most satisfying, enriching, or valuable about this experience?

- The moderators kept people in group on track and focused. Do we have a productive conversation?
- Learning that other people at my table feel the same way
- Listening to others
- Information
- Hearing the insights of people with different background discussing the issues
- Small group discussions
- It was interesting hearing other people's stories
- We talked about it
- We talk about it
- The talk as a group
- Discussing the various backgrounds but the concept overall people are good was reinforced
- I really appreciated the guidelines for discussion that were outlined ahead of time and enforced (gently)
- Meeting different people who are not in my life
- Panel and table conversation
- Closing discussion to return to points
- Meeting a judge who is involved and interested in reform
- We had a community of Milwaukeeans at our table
- Being encouraged to suggest ...partisan legislation
- It was enriching to meet and talk with people who have worked in the community with this issue
- The space and time to be present with others grapples with this
- Sharing views, experience in a respectful manner
- Listening to members of my group share their opinions and experiences
- Hearing the perspectives of other people who came about similar issues as i do
- Meeting new people and listen to them and how much we all agreed about keeping elected officials accountable
- Hearing the different experiences from people with lived experience with the criminal justice system
- Speaking with members of expo in the group - they brought a lot of passion and information to the dialogue
- The panel/numbers' presentations
- Getting to know life experience of others at our tables
- Sharing of ideas respectfully
- Curled conversation
- Listening and seeing there were similarities

- Hearing others views and experiences
- All people of good will - many good ideas
- Different perspectives
- The diversity of ideas and opinions
- The facilitator did a great job of ensuring everyone was heard. The questions/prompts were thought provoking. The final remarks from other groups inspired forward momentum
- Meeting new people, sharing discussion
- Talking with others and hearing their views. Progress that they have made. Enlightenment
- Good mix of views
- Listening/sharing
- Being able to hear other perspectives on a topic and have little personal experience with
- Blank
- Sharing of ideas
- Listening to others experiences
- Having someone in the group who was very conservative and right way of
- Learning from different views and experiences. Know that people care and are concern to change our communities' problems
- The food and meeting some wonderful elderly ladies
- Stories of each individual life
- Hearing different people's views
- Brilliant insights that were not my own
- The discussion in insight everyone brought from their different experiences
- To hear other people's opinions and experiences on the subject
- The quality of the people and discussion
- Being able to share and listen
- Hearing the perspectives
- Great discussion! On one talked about political parties
- Talking with others who have similar values and goals
- Great table group, thoughtful and engaging respectful and inspiring
- New perspectives to consider
- The variety of people at the table. And how i often make assumptions and then learn i am wrong
- The diversity and having XXXX at our table to share her story
- Hearing different views about this conversation
- Hearing others motivation for thinking about criminal justice system
- The people at my table were great, engaging, open, good listeners
- Vibrant conversation. Strong well-expressed opinions
- Listening to other people's experience

- Hearing from diverse perspectives, and especially XXX and XXX who seemed to have great insights into how the systems operate. It was great group.
- That the forum was being held. What a great opportunity to bring people together
- The ability to be able to connect with people that...
- Listening to panel and discussion group participants
- To be with people from varying walks of life and hearing their thoughts on the matters
- Making some connections even though and didn't agree
- Group sharing - insightful take away
- Open discussion. People from different backgrounds meeting each other good facilitations

What was less than satisfying, frustrating, or disappointing?

- Nothing
- To me it was the level of noise in the background
- Lack of diversity of opinions/left/right
- Hard to achieve a positive outcome with our elected officials
- NA
- Nothing
- Cultural issues
- Not many resolves
- Drinks
- People with progressive (liberal) ideas want to victimize people.....
- Have enough time once good conversations gets going
- Length of time to speak
- Not enough time
- More diversity but then again prob. Reps. WI
- Action?
- Time
- Not enough who lean right participants our whole table was basically blue
- My table was fairly homogeneities
- Some people texting during conversation
- Unwillingness to adhere the rules or even entertain discussion about doing so
- Time always too short
- The topic is so big and complete that it's difficult to arrive at solutions
- How much work needs to be done to rehab our political system
- There were no points that were frustrating/disappointing
- No one at any table... No divide to bridge. Make sure there are different views available in each group (if possible)
- No frustrations of significance most at table where more or less on same logic could have used more time
- The room was very loud. Sometimes hard to hear
- Getting off topics

- Time limited
- No real resolution but how can there be?
- Nothing
- The panel was less discussive and more sound bites that I preferred
- Solutions
- Not being able to set the record straight with a person clearly uninformed about criminal justice, economics, sociology
- Huge issues - no easy answers
- NA
- Blank
- Time table cause topics deserved more discussion as they are more complex than simple and solutions require more of our attention & resources
- Would like views of those trying to rehab
- Nothing
- Everything satisfied
- NA
- NA
- Nothing
- Limited time
- I lie, could use more time
- There wasn't much disagreement
- Knowing we still have a way to go. Little knowledge of race
- Blank
- NA
- Would enjoy appropriate more panel discussion
- Confusing question
- The fact we didn't come to any great conclusions
- No answers to the questions of where is justice
- Very loud, hard to hear conversation
- Nothing. Good start
- Wish there was more disagreement/difference at the table was looking for more provocative discussion
- Nothing
- I don't think there has political diversity at my table all liberal I believe
- Oh, there is never enough time in the world is there?
- This was fine
- None
- Blank
- Having my experiences dismissed by rich white lady because she thinks all white people are rich
- Blank
- Wish there was more time

- Nothing
- Blank

What advice or suggestions can you offer to people designing future Red & Blue conversation?

- Even though I wanted to comment on what was being said. Dinner/drinks/mix of people at table. It did work
- It was very good - but loud!
- Activate conservatives
- Great facilitation at our table
- We were mostly blue. The red person was mostly a listener
- Level playing field
- Listen and with action in mind
- Make the right changes.
- All on people it starts explaining their background and political philosophy
- Perhaps provide a preview of a lot of questions will be discussed with reservation confirmation? Perhaps follow up reading and suggestions?
- Come + Plan a limited time to stay
- The late notice on being accepted can be little off putting
- Space - table over assigned and next table assigned sad "full up"
- Good format
- Issue a specifically for participants from more right leaning groups, who generally feel like the welcome for them is not genuine
- Thank you for the effort to bring people together
- Have better diversity of views at the table
- Great job
- This is a great model - small groups worked very well. Perhaps allowing a little more time for round 2 responses
- Keep up the good work offer this to elected officials and no-elected officials
- I actually really liked the format it would be nice to have a longer panel or a Q & A with the panel
- Climate change, Immigration, economic development in Milwaukee area
- Good job, Keep it up!
- Size of groups was good, more for open discussion
- It was good
- Advertise in media that will get a more broad swath of people
- Keep the conversation going! Keep up your good work!
- Keep it coming
- More time for panel
- Broadening the perspective of how the criminal justice system is influenced by poverty, education, policies, privilege etc...

- Involved people whose life has been affected, for the judicial system, people who has been in jail, families where people had been...
- To advise participants to be open and honest
- Use church on civic groups
- More frequent
- More time
- Engage more minorities - larger place to hold more people
- Keep it coming
- Maybe a way to interact with people as they make their statements
- Be more upfront on handling perspective influenced by race
- Keep it up
- N/A
- Focus on panel, more practical experience. Police Officers precautions, defense council, victim, witness advocates, social services agencies
- Keep up the good work
- I recuse myself
- Was very good
- Less people, better acoustic
- Keep it diversified in thought, color, creed
- You do a great job in the structuring of conversation
- Give more suggestions as to where we go to improve the situations
- Maybe try to get people from Milwaukee to go to a gathering in Brookfield, and get people from Brookfield to come to Milwaukee
- Do exactly what you did today
- None
- Nothing
- Keep this format
- Frankly I didn't like it. Hearing the various opinions doesn't change a thing. I can hear the same

What topic(s) would you like to discuss in future Red & Blue conversation?

- Poverty? Solidarity confinement, revocation, crimeless, education
- Affordable housing in the city
- I would like to have a forum like this for Rep & Dems to talk to each other
- Racism, police brutality in ...
- The war in our city
- Resolving issues
- How the future generations can bring forth change and move from competition to co-opetition and not to be "team" vs "team" "win" vs "loss"
- Police experiences training. Education issues
- Political positions in 900+

- Racism and history of over nation
- Role of local governments
- Personal responsibility towards community
- Transportation
- Reproductive fights
- Redistricting and reappointment - what are the appropriate criteria
- Job training programs, police/community relations, youth programs in Milwaukee
- Education disparities, interfaith dialogue
- Living wages/economy, health care, State budget, Infrastructure
- Use of Public memorials that reflect history honestly/fully
- How to respectfully talk to people i.e. Families friends re: things that matter i.e. The president, climate change
- Healthcare
- Race, education, transportation, public
- White privilege - Racism in general?
- Interfaith dialogues
- Health care
- Action items for progress often discussion
- Future of employment where the jobs will be, truth about Wisconsin, the lack of young people coming to Wisconsin because of the politics, lifestyle preferences, climate!
- Gun reform
- Immigration
- N/A
- School system
- Racism
- Compromise what does it mean to each person
- Same topic
- I am open
- Universal basic ...
- Segregation: Why whole people won't live with black people in Metro Milwaukee
- Discuss the media
- Health Care/Opioid....
- Racial tension/challenges. Expert of/until issues on local problems and successes
- Spending, federal waste a state need
- College affordability
- Government spending policing
- Medicare and social security
- Final: don't be afraid to push this forum
- Housing, eviction. Breakdown criminal justice reform into smaller subjects how we take action afterwards
- Transit and transportation, water use, rights, renewable energy
- Gun laws

- Occupational licensing reform three tier system
- None
- Continue this discussion
- Blank
- Pay inequality
- Opportunities for former inmates to get training and job placement
- Blank
- Education, poverty, environment
- Social safety nets
- Things on TV, Radio or facebook. No relationship and no change. Better to give a presentation on the problems with the system and solutions from people who know. Like Wisdom or Expo

Annexes

Question Round One: *"In the greater Milwaukee area (or other places you have lived), what have you seen or personally experienced relating to the criminal justice system that has shaped your beliefs?"*

1.1 Trauma

- I work and represent women. I'm here to see what we can do to break generational divides and curses among women. I want to get to the root, like to judge said, and examine trauma - because that's real. And I want to document the experiences of all women with trauma and have these conversations intergenerationally. I was born and raised in Milwaukee, went to Tennessee State, and I've seen a lot and heard a lot. I grew up middle class, but I didn't hear gunshots ringing in my neighborhood. But, I work with kids who do, and working with kids and being an educator humbles me. I want to be able to tell these stories, especially as powerful women.
- I have not had a lot of experience. I am not employed, but I volunteer a lot, and I was a former social worker. I also do a lot of reading, especially Bryan Stevenson, who writes about injustice in criminal justice. I live in the city downtown, coming from the suburbs. I read the paper and am aware of the injustices. I'm just a bleeding heart and I want to get involved. Trauma is huge in schools, UWM says so, Marquette says so, Oprah says so. I am a community volunteer with Janine Geske at Marquette, where she leads healing circles, showing the ripple effect on crime, creating good stuff. This is one way to get things moving, there is a reason and it is not their own fault some people are incarcerated. Sometimes we don't realize it, but white privilege exists.
- I have actually spent a lot of time in Judge Carol's court room in children's court. I remember a thirteen year old boy was in court facing Lincoln hills or a rehab center. His lawyer was convincing him to plead so that his sentence wouldn't be as harsh. Eventually he was sent to St. Charles. It was very emotional and too much adult stuff for a child to deal with. Yes, he made some adult decisions, but doesn't he deserve a second chance and a childhood? I appreciate what Judge Carol said about trauma. I am an educational reporter and am thus limited to observation. I want to find another way I can help. The topic is very complicated and has hard entry points. I want to help, but what opportunities exist?
- I came to Milwaukee from Ireland. What shocked me then and now is the disparity between 20th and North and Pewaukee and other suburbs. I have lived in Dublin, Senegal and Botswana. This problem is unique to the U.S. in the developed world. I came 22 years ago and the problem is still here. I am connected to the criminal justice system through my work with Community Advocates. I am an economist by training. I work with a Reentry Council formed 18 months ago. A quote I remember is that "Hurt people, hurt people." The role of trauma in our community needs attention. Alma Carter has said that we need to heal this trauma: "Pain not transformed is transferred". I grew up with a low level of violence in the

Ireland of my youth. Paul the VI said in 1972 that if “we want peace, we must work for justice”. In Ireland a level of peace was established by people coming together. Here in Milwaukee we have a situation that is economically based with factories closing in the 1980’s. This economic pressure affected interpersonal relationships. How to pay the bills? This hopelessness drives violence. There has been a lack of thought about how to make our community more just. We need to increase economic opportunity. We need to provide a better reentry path. We need preventive intervention in trauma. We need to create Martin Luther King’s “Beloved Community”.

- A problem not yet mentioned is the War on Drugs in the 80’s. This swept away a generation of men that were big brothers and Uncles, mentors. I was one of those swept away. Part of that was the trauma that children experienced as police knocked down doors and commanded the children to lay on the floor as their men were taken away. In these violent drug raids the children were witnesses. Today this trauma is perpetuated. Our kids are left to themselves with TV violence and violent video games. We have a “naturalized violence”. We need helpers, mentors in our community; someone who looks like them to project what success looks like. I have the lived experience of the criminal justice system so I can be a voice that says you can still be successful. We need more voices like mine. We need peer support. I have a friend who did eight years and is now a professional in Hawaii. I work in Reentry programs.
- I’m basing this on 25 years as a parole officer. The last 10 years has convinced me that the system is out of control. We are bringing young vulnerable people into a system. Maybe we should imprison those who are violent offenders. Opiate abusers are being imprisoned and they should instead be getting treatment to help them get over their addiction. Instead they end up with a 1-2 year void in their lives from imprisonment, but nothing to help them rebuild. We have to outcry and change it.
- Back in the 60s I went to serve a parish. I grew up poor and went to serve an affluent community. The civil rights initiative didn’t make any changes. Two nights ago I was called to the 6th precinct to deal with a mother who turned in her son. I go out and deal with shootings and trauma.
- I know about Wisconsin Correctional Services. They interview people before going to court. My volunteer work with this organization is to help people who don’t have the resources to see how they can be helped.
- I was not personally involved with anything with the police, but I sure see it happen. Heading out of bars in downtown Milwaukee, I’d often see drunk people fighting with cops. Going back to my young childhood, growing up, I once saw 2 people get handcuffed outside my house. That night I was so terrified, I couldn’t fall asleep. I was victimized, beaten unconscious by 3 individuals. They were caught and one is currently in prison because I filled out the forms to get him there. He had a history of trouble since he was 9 years old and now he’s not on the street. I believe we need more people in prisons, believe Sheriff Clark did a good job. The news media uses crime to promote business. There are too many bleeding hearts. I know people in corrections. We need to have a national death penalty – we should follow the lead of Texas who put 100 people a year to death. (I may have misquoted the statistic he shared).

- I have worked for 31 years in the criminal justice system, first as a prosecutor and then, for the last four years, as a judge. I worked for three years in the Juvenile Court, and am now assigned to Family Court. I believe that untreated and/or life-long trauma is the underlying contributor to criminal justice behavior. I also believe that people in our community have the potential to solve problems; we know that treatment programs work; we know that family treatment court works; The District Attorney, the Defense Attorneys, the Police Chiefs, Social Workers, and Mental Health Workers all know that these programs work, as do some legislators. We really do need to change the way legislators think and legislate.
- I'm from a small-town with only small crimes. Once I move to UW Madison I started taking political science classes and I heard about the political justice system. I learned about health consequences of trauma. People are experiencing trauma and added into the criminal justice system and they cycle in and out and they're not getting help. I read Just Mercy by Brian Stevenson and that shaped my views. It is the big read at UW Madison and it follows one man it talks about the impacts on children and women...there needs to be something done. In college I've looked at the root causes and broad systems of crime. Small solutions are not lasting. My views and opinions are based on the education I received and being more informed and by books.
- In Milwaukee I have been a victim of a crime. Someone robbed my home while I was sleeping. My question for them is, was it worth \$17 dollars and my cell phone to know you had the possibility of going to jail? I have also had the privilege to serve on Jury Duty and you could see the trauma between the women who were mugged and the person who might have done it. Reading the police reports helped me ask different questions about criminal justice reform.
- I taught first grade and remember a foster child who thought his mother didn't love him and I remember thinking that, should have been figured out – he should have been loved already. Another child was selling drugs in first grade – how is that love? The school I worked at had no regard for trauma and didn't understand how trauma is expressed at such a young age in a family. The criminal justice system had no regard for trauma and these kind of people either.
- I'm from Jamaica and for me it was a culture shock when I encountered racism in this country. Over the years I've lived here, I've seen a lot of families traumatized by police brutality. Something triggered in me to realize that this was the norm here. My mother told me what to do if I got pulled over by the police – use yes ma'am and yes sir. Racism is a heart-breaking fact of life here in Milwaukee. My grandma once said living here in the city of Milwaukee will bring the devil out, meaning that racism exists.
- I receive so many phone calls and letters from and about young people who are victimized, then turn around and victimize others.
- I have a nephew who appeared and acted ok in private but with trauma not dealt with he soon lost his ability to function in public. This trauma is real and must be identified and dealt with.
- I'm a teacher of grade school kids. I don't like to disclose family problems but some of the kids who act out have both parents in jail. This is certainly an issue and it's influenced my perspective on the criminal justice system – the legacy of family in steering children one way or another.

- While I was in college I befriended a 21-year-old person who had just finished serving 5 years in prison because of a drunken driving conviction at 16 years old that killed his girlfriend. I learned how much trauma and abuse shaped his life story; that led to drinking to deal with the pain, and how trauma influences life outcomes that led to the criminal justice system. I learned how time in prison exacerbated his trauma. I was feeling unsafe at times around this person. The price of safety vs the price of freedom in the world – I personalized this dilemma.
- I was formerly a nurse in the city and have a professional view and belief in trauma, and in the complexities in a trauma situation. I know that there are millions of people who would score high in trauma on the adverse childhood experience questionnaire. The difference is whether your family moves you into a trauma reaction or away from it. Layered on this is the inequity of how people fit into society. This complicates the trauma situation. My second experience was as a volunteer at a domestic violence organization. I was the volunteer receptionist at the offender's meetings. I learned that offenders come in all sizes and stripes. I'd see it week after week.

1.2 Incarceration due to Health and Social Issues

- I saw a 25 year-old man pushing a stroller with a lady by him. He was walking towards me and then he came to shake my hand and hug me. He was like 'How you doing? You don't remember me?' Then he turned around to his wife and said 'he's the officer I talked to you about, he's the reason why I am here today!' Turns out that I had arrested him when he was 16 and I talked to him. I made the choice to write him a ticket instead of formally arrest him and that moment held him move... he graduated from university, got married and had a baby...It was really positive for me because I didn't realize at the time that my action were gonna have such a big influence on him.
- I am a part of the School Officer Resource Program...One student graduated and came back to the school 3, 4 or 5 years later to thank me for helping him get on track. That was 5 years ago and I still carry his thank you note with me [showed it to the group].
- I (police aide) speak with youths throughout the city as part of our Ambassador program.
- I was assigned to Madison H.S. for a couple of years and I interacted with youths daily.
- An adult niece had drug issues—she had been sober a long time. Her and her partner (an abuser) were arguing and someone called the police on her and she ended up in jail. The abuser cut himself and took pictures. She was taken 40 miles away and couldn't get in touch with family for a long time. Finally, my nephew had to come and bail her out and was told that the bailman would be there between the hours of 5-9 pm. He didn't get there until 8:45 pm and she didn't get released until 11 pm. She was treated like a criminal before being tried. She lost her apartment because the abuser convinced the judge that he was a victim. He stole everything from her apartment and got away with everything until he finally got in front of a judge who knew him. They were white. I have another story where the victim was supported because of the kind of neighborhood; it made a difference in the way the police treated them.
- I do not think that mental health issues are handled very well. People belong in treatment programs, not in prison. People who are paranoid get worse in prison, not better. I do not

want to say more about this because the experience I am referring to is too recent and too painful.

- I have lived with a judge, a prosecutor, and police officers, and our friendship group consists of many of these same types of people. I am also a priest and my parishioners have been working for criminal justice reform for many years. We share concerns about the challenges we face by the lack of progress in achieving real criminal justice reform. Further, by the time people get into the criminal justice system, we have already failed them: lack of access to healthy food and water, decent shelter, quality education, family-supporting jobs, plus issues of race, gender, and religion, all contribute to the trauma that underlies some criminal behavior. We could better use our resources on the front end, providing care and social services to support individuals and their families. We as church people can help affect public policy, and we as church people can also provide an atmosphere that supports both justice and reconciliation, including forgiveness.
- I worked at my husband's law firm as an office manager for 30 years and observed certain areas of law for certain members of the community. They helped establish the Legal Aid Society in Door County. There were called by local community to do free pro bono work. This segued into public defender work. We saw a strong connection between poverty, the generators of poverty and the criminal justice system. There were behaviors that lead to crime and insecurity. Recidivism was high. There was little training in court processes and the social systems. The Legal Aid did pro bono for families. Families suffer when they have a member of their family incarcerated. That is my basis of exposure to the criminal justice system. From my 20s to the present day there's been a reduction in funding for people in the criminal justice system and there is no educational funding that's not loan based, no aid to dependent children, or mental or physical health support. It is not broad-based or applied, as it had been. They are cutting taxes. The number of incarcerated people continues to go up. Tommy Thompson was quoted this morning that he apologized for any harm he participated in and will devote his time to improve the situation. For example increasing vocational training.
- I have no personal experience and I will pass (facilitator state they could offer opinion). Some things are easier and harder to do. The right thing is harder to do. It is easier to treat criminals with adverse childhood events and provide assistance, it's hard to address cultural and family liberalization of thought. Changing the working wage is harder to do. Some tasks are impossible. I am a physician. There is the opioid issue, it's not easy but we need to look at the bigger picture. I grew up in India I came here when I was 23, became a citizen at 29, and I'm 69 now. I was pro-life, raised vegetarian and didn't kill animals. I looked at the parties and I chose republican. But the principles are not what that party is now. How can you be pro-life but for capital punishment? It did not make sense. I would ask Republicans and they would say it's for heinous crime but not all. I am a rehabilitation physician and believe everyone can improve with the right support systems
- [Quan Kittler, Americans for Prosperity, requested that his name be connected to his comments] I grew up in areas that were impoverished. I've been robbed twice and shot at. My best friend is serving a year in jail for armed robbery with a bb gun. I've seen people conditioned who grew up with no role models. The system might not treat them as citizens. My experience taught me that we need to better connect with individuals. Job applications

ask if you're a felon. They make people not want to apply. For example, I know a supervisor who was told, "If you see someone's application check that felon box, throw it out." My friend's opportunities are limited. He's going to have a hard time back in the community. We need to more emotionally attach to prisoners. Build empathy with prisoners and their experiences. Maybe we should also ban the box.

1.3 Police Interactions

- I came to America from Nigeria. I did not understand these racial issues in the beginning. I have not experienced negativity even when pulled over for speeding. I was polite and the police were polite. In Nigeria they would have hassled me more. Now my children are getting older and when we go to Milwaukee they ask me why there are beggars and homeless people. It is a lack of opportunity. It breaks my heart that this exists.
- I grew up in Wisconsin and later got in trouble and got arrested. I found out that you don't have rights. No rights to your wallet. No rights to your phone, so you can't even access the numbers to call someone to come and get you out of jail. If you talk to a lawyer and tell the truth you think you're doing the right thing by telling the truth. In reality you are hurting yourself and digging yourself deeper into a hole. The State of Wisconsin can use a lie detector test to send you back to jail even though a lie detector is illegal in a court of law. I saw tremendous discrepancies while in jail. The people closest to the problems are closest to the solutions.
- My uncle committed a major crime in CA and it was very sad situation. My experience here has been to see friends who have been pulled over for no reason and seems to be people of color. I also have friends who are police officers where we live and there are tensions. I know both sides of it and I believe in the goodness of people and given our struggles discrimination can be an issue. I believe they are targeted more because of their skin color.
- It wasn't helpful when police became able to live outside of their own community. They don't belong to the community and don't have the connections. There aren't afterschool programs. There aren't factory jobs; they've all moved out of the City.
- I am from a small town. There was one police officer who was the father of one of my friends. But then his job was contracted out to the county. I don't have much experience with the criminal justice system but am reading a book by Michelle Alexander and have discussions with my friends to know more about the issue.
- I have no connections with the police, convicts or victims. I have been a victim of identity theft. The officer was empathetic and talked about why someone would do that. My friend was robbed and showed compassion and empathy for the person who stole from me. As a psychologist I had the opportunity to talk with people who have done bad things, and I try to understand them and their motives. She suggested to another participant that he might want to read Brian Stephenson. One thing she is sure of is punishment doesn't change behavior.
- I always lived with drug dealers in college, somehow. The legal consequences are unjust. One friend got into serious trouble. At the time, I lived in a house with seven other guys. And one day on my way to class I was stopped by the DEA in front. They asked a lot of questions.

He was being a real jerk about my chosen major, and likely career, asking me why would I go to school just to become a truck driver.

- I grew up in a very white neighborhood in Long Island. The police never bothered us. But then going to school in Queens, I saw police in a very different light, as they interacted with people at the train station or on the street. I would ask myself often in the morning, is this the day I have to record someone's life ending?"
- I come from a northwest suburb of Chicago, where I never thought about criminal justice and police. Then when I went to college, I became curious, hearing things from friends. In one memorable conversation, my friend described the cops in Chicago as the biggest gang on the street. That's when I began to notice my privilege.
- When I was in high school, I was walking home from a friend's home near the intersection of Washington Boulevard and HiMount Boulevard to my home a few blocks away. A police car drove by and a police officer got out of the car and asked me why I was in the neighborhood. I responded that I was visiting my friend, who lived in the area. Another police car drove by, and that officer and the first officer both put me into a police car; I was driven to a police station and held for several hours, till the officers could reach my parents, who were at work. I was picked up simply for "walking while black" in a mostly white neighborhood. I was 13, and scared. Several years later, one of my friends ended up in prison because the police said that he was "acting suspiciously" and they filed charged him for that. My friend has a mental illness and needed to see a psychologist, and get treatment, rather than being put into prison. He was told that there were no psychologists available; instead, my friend was put into isolation. This began a pattern that continued for many years: my friend would cut himself so that he could get emergency medical and mental health treatment, and then he was returned to the prison and placed back to isolation. We need prison reform so that this does not happen to other people and their friends. We also need to learn how to listen to the values of the people currently in prison.
- I come from a family of eight. During my early teen years my older brother began experimenting with alcohol and one night, my brother and his friends got into a car and then into an accident when the driver, who was drunk, got into an accident that killed my brother and one other person. I was very upset when I was standing at the gravesite and saw the driver who had killed my brother standing nearby, to pay his respects. My parents got very involved in the group "Mother's Against Drunk Driving", MADD. I did not think that incarceration would solve the problem. My brother would still be dead. I also do not like the way that the criminal justice system works. Prosecutors and judges need guidelines and flexibility in sentencing. Most judges and prosecutors have too many cases. This needs to change, too.
- I attended MATC for awhile, and one time I got stopped for jaywalking. Lots of other students were also jaywalking. I was the only person who was stopped. I was also the only black person jaywalking at that moment, at least as far as I could see. I did not think that this was fair, but the police officer would not listen to me and he gave me a ticket, which I had to pay. I started taking criminal justice classes in order to study how this system works and does not work, especially for people of color. I discovered, much to my dismay, that the people who plan to build prisons plan them based on the test scores of third grade boys. I also learned that

judges base their sentencing on whether a particular person charged with a crime had a trade; if the person did not have a specific trade, the judge imposed a longer sentence because it was assumed that they would be a repeat offender, rather than decide that this person would benefit from training in prison in order to obtain a trade.

- The Criminal Justice system has its inequities. A black student of mine got stopped by the police and got pretty ruffed up for doing nothing wrong. I know about “the talk” that black people have with their family and children about what to do when confronted by the police. I’m beginning to study and read books about how we ever got to this bug racial divide.
- I’m an avid newspaper reader and have seen a lot of changes from when I grew up in Chicago to now living in Milwaukee. My mother was involved in the race riots in Chicago. I lived in Amsterdam for a time and saw everyone using drugs and living together peacefully and then came back to Milwaukee and saw the brutality towards blacks from the police. I saw police shooting into cars when they could not see who was in them. I remember seeing the Rodney King video and the police brutality. The criminal justice system is getting worse, not better.
- As a teenager growing up in Chicago I was out walking with friends past the curfew. Some men followed us and then came up, said they were plain clothed police and they asked us questions. They took us in; one of my friends talked back and they got rough on him. I realized then about police brutality. My mother had warned me about this; she’d grown up in Europe in a police state. I had friends who were in gangs. Later, as a teacher, half of the people around me were former inmates—as contractors. It’s [this group of former inmates] is integrated as a part of our society. I hadn’t thought much about it and how we might reform the criminal justice system. I want to learn more.
- I’ve had no personal experience with the criminal justice system. I care about people in under-served communities. To see the injustice offends my soul: unfair police practices with youth; reading Just Mercy, Trevon Martin’s killer walked away, unjust treatment in civil rights disputes. I wish I could do something on behalf of families who didn’t get the benefits I had. I was a middle school teacher and a security guard harassing middle school kids and being told “go away lady”. I get all riled up when I see this.

1. 4 Over Incarceration of People of Color

- It was in June when I realized about neighborhood businesses and how they are very upset about police and security, and they yell at me to get out of my face. People call me rednaco. So many people don’t want us, they want to kick us off. Muslims have respect, but I have to do my job, which might offend them. They are upset because I have a uniform.
- I have to experience other than I’d like to. I’m recently retired and I read a lot and I am really passionate about politics. I am really passionate about over incarceration especially in minorities, and it is something I want to be more involved in now that I am retired. ‘We were eight years in power’ by Ta-Nehisi Coates from The Atlantic really impacted me. It’s just heartbreaking. I am originally from the East Coast, and after living in the Midwest, the vibe between the races is just so different and it contributes to the rate of incarceration.
- I grew up in NYC and experienced American racism from that viewpoint. My grandfather was an immigrant. His Jewish nose was especially prominent in that he had it broken many

times in fights with rival ethnicities. While we were not poor we were lower middle class. Now I am a professor at the Medical College. I see children who are in chronic pain. Some children are from the poorest parts of the area and some are from Mequon. This is real physical pain but often psychological in origin. I see the poor who are too busy dealing with basic needs of life. That is one half of the population. The other half are from less disadvantaged. I talk and listen. What I see is that a minimum drug offense sends youth into a system that locks them up. We need to decriminalize marijuana. We also need money allocated for young adults to acquaint them with positive avenues that are open to them. Why am I at the medical college? How did I make it? Many peers that I had growing up in NYC are dead from drugs. The answer is a complex social issue. The answer is not Lincoln Hills. We need a system that helps those with mental health issues. Otherwise we have recidivism. There are challenges in life. How can we help youth respond in positive ways rather than with violence.

- A lot of the experiences draw back to drugs. My great aunt in Mississippi was growing a couple of marijuana plants when she was in her 60s, so she was jailed for three years. Imagine if she were African-American and did the same thing. She would have gotten a lot longer jail time. I have lived in Mississippi, Tennessee, and Wisconsin. The place where a person lives does not change how these things happen to people based on race. No matter where they are in this country, African-Americans are treated the same in this country.
- I've had no personal experience beyond [the fact that] I am a big reader. The last book I read was *THE NEW JIM CROW* by Michelle Allison. I learned a lot. The biggest problem is the profit system and how much people are making on the system. Police don't want to bother White addicts. They'd rather go in to the Black communities because it's easier to arrest and convict African-Americans than those living in White gated communities. We'd better come up with something to help people rather than punish them.
- I grew up in working class family. We were poor street kids who could've gotten in a lot of trouble if the laws had been enforced. I worked in the Office of Justice Administration. My job was to secure block grants and to promote justice in MS. The grant was intended to enforce street laws put in place by Nixon. He scared people with stories of street crime but never spent money for intervention. After awhile I worked for public defender, child correction; a lot of experience in observing criminal justice system. I've seen a lot of failures and when I moved away I continued to practice criminal law privately. I have strong views concerning the criminal justice system; it is poorly funded and driven towards punishment not rehabilitation. We incarcerate many more people than we need to. One of the most significant changes of the system needed is financial. If people have work, then maybe less crime, more self-respect and live in different way.
- My wife and I discussed this problem for years, but the fundamental problem has infected our society. I read an interesting book, "Perceived Black" which describes racism as part of Constitution; it is well-documented. This is the fundamental problem of the criminal justice system. Judges are elected and I know judges who are afraid to counter the Police because they don't want to lose the next election. We should change judges and go back to representing society's interests. They do not go back and ask the Police for more information.

- I grew up in Milwaukee and had 12 brothers and sisters. We are a Spanish speaking. The police would come to the door wanting to talk to one of my brothers. In broken English Mom would say no, you need a warrant. If someone stole a bike, they went to Wales because they couldn't afford a lawyer. If a family had money they had been saving to improve their lives, they would have to use it to get lawyers. My daughter is in law enforcement. Justice should be for everyone, not just those who have money.
- I have been a prosecuting attorney and am now a defense attorney. Through this experience, I have been trying to come to some understanding on how to improve the criminal justice system so that there are fewer entering and they can be more productive people. My beliefs have been shaped by my first experience as a prosecutor - it was my first felony case. A young man was charged with sexually assaulting his brother's girlfriend's daughter. I believed that the young man was innocent but there was a great deal of pressure on me to prosecute - I was new and it was my first felony case. He was in jail before the trial and I didn't think he would make it if he was left alone in the cell because he was young, of small build and it was a sex crime. So I stayed with him before he went to court. After the hearing, it was found that there was no probable cause. What I learned is that the system works but until it works, the people that are innocent are treated as if they have been convicted. And for those that are convicted, it's as if they have been tattooed. There is no quick answer and I continue to wonder how to improve the system.
- I was shaped by two sayings, "Police are always my friend," and "Everybody in jail belongs in jail.". Secondly, I was in my adult life at a meeting where the group of 100 were asked to raise their hand if someone in their family has been in jail. Most people in the room who were black raised their hands. I am white. I did not.
- I learned from playing basketball with kids in prison where I visited, mostly black, that I couldn't play. I have been confronted with being white and suburban with little experience and understanding of the neighborhoods where many prisoners are from.

1.5 Inhumane Treatment of Inmates

- I am an attorney and I do deals and have had experience with the system. One of my pro bono cases dealt with a health case. He did a crime and was convicted and in jail for many years. He is a person of color and Islam and got short end of the stick. He decided to represent himself and take a stand and self-advocate. He was retaliated against by guards and that helped cement my belief in the criminal justice system. I've lived abroad and seen how other countries treat criminals—it is much more humane and they have a better way; so much different. I've seen mistrust against people of color.
- When I told my family and friends that I was going to volunteer in the jail, my friends and family were appalled because they thought it was too dangerous. I don't know anything about the crimes these people are charged with - I don't ask. They are awaiting trial. I have found them to be very helpful and what bothers me is that some Correction Officers don't treat the inmates humanely - they are swearing and screaming at them. I have a hard time with that - no one needs to be treated that way.

- I volunteer at the MKE Co. Jail through the library. It is that experience that has influenced my opinion on the criminal justice system. I distribute books to the pods. Nothing happens in the pods and they (the inmates) are SO happy to see us. When I go to the "hole" (solitary confinement for those that have gotten into trouble), I can't believe how bad it is. It smells of urine, they are treated like animals, it's very noisy, people are yelling and screaming. Lately it has gotten a little better. I believe they should eliminate solitary confinement – if people are treated like animals, they will act like animals. These people want to do better but they need skills.
 - I'm from Bloomington Minnesota which is like Brookfield. I was taught, folks who are incarcerated or in the criminal justice system, fear them. I started to have independent relationships when I went to college. I took a trip to a halfway house and I met a man. He got into dealing drugs and was in jail for 12 months then in rehab for 18 months. Building a relationship with him was helpful I was able to help him apply for school. He got into school eventually ended up getting his Masters at DePaul. Then I met a man named Reggie in Milwaukee through the Big Brothers Big Sisters. He was in and out of jail at 17 years old. I had a lot of frustrations with Sheriff David Clark. And in the winter I got suited up, and I work in the for-profit sector, when you make promises you keep them. When I went to get Reggie they said it would be two hours it ended up being 7 to 8 hours over three days that I waited and I had to pound fists and speak to administrators. Reggie came out and he had no voice. What also shaped my mentality of the criminal justice system has to be The World Economic Forum. I looked abroad at country systems and happiness. The Scandinavian system is built to rehabilitate, not giving up on people versus using it as a platform to rehab for skills. But they are homogeneous country it's hard to apply that system to a multifaceted country
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Round Two Question: *"What does real criminal justice reform look like to you? What, if anything, do you feel needs to change about the system and why?"*

2.1 Less Emphasis on Punishment in the Criminal Justice System

2.1.1 *Diversion and Release Programs*

- Decriminalize minor drug offenses. This will keep young people out of the CJ System. Felons who have served their time need to be allowed participation in our democracy – the vote. They need to become accepted as full citizens with respect. Policing need to change. I am upset that every time I drive in my community of Mequon I see POC pulled over but no POW! We need to strengthen the public defender system so all have equal legal representation. My two children were charged with underage drinking and because I had the resources their records were expunged. Human trafficking in Milwaukee needs to be stopped.
- I'd like to see that we stop incarcerating for petty low-level crimes and petty drug offenses. A large percentage of people are in jail for nonviolent crimes. It's ruining peoples lives. Mental health is an issue that isn't being addressed. They don't get help in prison.

- Correctional philosophy needs to change. 2. We need to legalize medicinal and recreational marijuana. We need to get things legalized so UW and Harvard Medical can do the research and help get this thing right.
- All people in jail for marijuana use should be out and the law should be changed. We need to train people so when they are released, they can get and keep a job.
- My nephew is in jail now. He makes \$17 a day and \$10 goes back to the prison to pay for his keep. We need to decriminalize drugs and non-violent offenses. Offer treatment for addicts. Prepare them for the world. Ban the box, and remove all barriers. Remove mandatory minimums. Invest in communities and schools. Make the neighborhoods better.
- Our systems should be more victim-based. Drugs and prostitution should be de-criminalized. We need to define our society's morals. Define right and wrong. Emphasize justice and rehabilitation over punishment.
- "This discussion reminds me of an episode of a Jim Jeffries show, which looked at the law enforcement practices in the UK, where police don't carry guns. Instead they're trained to de-escalate situations. Swedish prisons are so comfortable they look like hotels. Why not decriminalize marijuana?"
- Marijuana should be decriminalized. There are serious health and economic benefits and that is a proven fact. I think the prison population would go down if this took place. Also, the "tough on crime" slogan has to go. We should focus on rehab rather than incarceration.

2.1.2 Mandatory Sentencing

- There are problems with mandatory sentencing that arrived in the 90's war on drugs. Judges are deprived of their role in making a decision based on each particular case. There are personal factors that could be considered if we did not have mandatory sentencing. This would focus on rehabilitation rather than punishment. Treatment plans for drug users should be used. There was a case of a person who had a felony from 15 years past, had been clean since prison, but had a gun – not used in crime but just possession and was sent back to prison. Truth in Sentencing is another thing that needs to change. Paroles are no longer being used. People cannot earn back time for education, job training and treatment so there is no incentive to heal trauma. "If I get better I will get out sooner". There is the TAD program - Treatment Alternative and Diversion (?) We need these treatment and training centers more than prisons. Criminal behavior costs us more than treatment.
- 1. Correctional philosophy needs to change. 2. We need to legalize medicinal and recreational marijuana. We need to get things legalized so UW and Harvard Medical can do the research and help get this thing right.
- Reform sentencing for Young Adults, who are getting records that stay with them for the rest of their lives.
- Get rid of mandatory prison terms for drug related crimes. For small amounts of drugs people shouldn't go to prison. It's like...If someone can't afford an attorney they go to prison! And if somebody can afford one they get off! It's not fair. While people are incarcerated they should be treated with dignity and given soft skills training for reentry.
- Get rid of mandatory sentences – judges should be able to use their discretion
- No death penalty

- We should have a nationwide death penalty – 3 felonies and you're executed.
- When I watch the news on the television and hear a sentence, the criminal looks so young these days and I wonder how a person can so young do such an awful thing. Judges don't think about how they are sentencing people – they don't think about the impact it will have on that person's life. I think change looks like this: judges should spend some time in jail so they understand the experience they are sentencing a person to.
- There needs to be a change in within the criminal justice system – it seems to not make sense sometimes. I knew a woman who spent 5 years in prison for not paying child support – she couldn't afford to live, and she had to pay child support. Then she went to jail for not paying and the little money her family sent her to spend in jail got taken away from her and put toward her child support, but not until the jail took out \$20.00 for the daily fee to stay in jail. This doesn't make sense. We have to stop penalizing poor people and find a way to support them. Take bail off the table. Stop the corruption in the Police Department.

2.1.3 Rehabilitation

- Incarceration is the wrong approach to what is really an economic problem. The reason it has been used is because of fear of POC. Now we see not a war on drugs fueling this but a war on immigration. The tell tale sign is that when drugs of crack, cocaine earlier, and now opioids come to the community of the People in Power the response is treatment not prison.
- I don't understand why people who are addicted are considered criminals. We need a major shift in the way people look at what crime is. What are they doing to help people with that major adjustment they have to make when they're done with the system? There ought to be ways to enrich the lives of people when they are in prison.
- Radical change. Too much is spent incarcerating people instead of rehabilitating and having real opportunities so that people aren't triggered to take the easy way out. Driving while Black is an example; it's not healthy. We need a change our approach of the criminal justice system. The governor should not be an enabler. I would like to see non-violent criminals released back in the community. MSD has four times the capacity because people are there for parole violations.
- Work with the workable. I don't know what to do with violent criminals.
- Prison is a waste of time that could be used to help people make their lives better. Decriminalize trauma. By putting traumatized people in jail, we are hurting them more than they already are. We need to protect people on the front line as well. If we want our police force to be empathetic, we need to see that they aren't demoralized.
- We need to commit to reform. These ideas come from our own representatives; still, it seems that most legislators are not committed to this process. They seem more committed to locking people up rather than toward rehab and treatment. Prisons are a budget item; judges and their wishes are overlooked in the rush to penalize offenders rather than put the money and the effort toward rehab.
- Making time spent in prison useful. We should focus on rehabilitation. What are their interests? How can we employ them when they get out? There're horror stories of treatment. People should be treated with dignity in prison. They deserve a second chance.

2.2 Re-integration into Society

2.2.1 Employment Opportunities

- The economics tell the story. The drop from an 85% employment rate in 1970 to 2010 low rates tells the story of no opportunity. Now we need to work for transitional jobs for those coming back to society. We need a CCC or WPA for today's needs. We need to offer a way to the legal economy to keep people out of the illegal economy. We need policy and legislation that allows a community that sends fewer people to the CJS to have three benefits: 1/3 of that saved money is to go to services for mental health and trauma and job training; 1/3 to tax reduction for taxpayers; and 1/3 to the rural communities where the prisons have been sited for re-training of prison workers. We need to create social support for those returning to the community. There is a program in Vermont that does this. Churches and Non profits can form Circles of Support. We need to emphasize restorative justice practices over adversarial and punitive practices.
- Wisconsin recently passed "ban the box" so people leaving the system can find jobs and housing. Easier expungement of background checks is necessary in Wisconsin so that people can find their property and opportunities. Inner cities get it harder than anyone else. That has to stop.
- [Quan Kittler, Americans for Prosperity, requested that his name be connected to his comments] Citizens are truly free after they serve their time. They can vote and get good jobs. They can cross borders without being harassed. People should be able to live life without borders. They should be able to live without a stamp on their forehead saying they're a felon. They should have a fair second chance.
- Peer-to-peer support for prisoners may help. Veterans do this. It helps them get back into the community. A better person makes a better worker.
- For me it's key to increase economic opportunities where crime rates are the worst. Also, divorce profit from prisons, and remove minimum mandatory sentencing, and "3 strikes". The goal should be to reform rather than punish."
- Living Wage
- Skill training while in jail/prison
- We need to change both attitudes and actions: there is no need to cage people; we can help people develop skills useful for a decent, family-supporting job when released from prison; we can develop more community-based programs, such as the UWM Community Board;
- I am against not paying prison workers a better wage. I believe they should make minimum wage. I also believe we need improvements post-incarceration. When you get out and have no savings, it is a big impact on your ability to have success. Also trauma needs attention.

2.2.2 Probation, Parole, and Revocation Policies

- Put fairness in place to make change. The people doing the jailing are not held accountable. They are not providing any help. They are just putting a band-aid on it. Get a flat tire on your way to a meeting [with a parole officer], you get arrested [because you were late for the meeting]. They don't care. They are putting more officers on the streets, which only adds more tension. Turn the heat off and show some compassion.

- First, no more parole revocations on technicalities. It's entirely unfair that people can get picked up on something totally trivial, and then end up back in prison, in some cases for years."
- 3 things: Prevention, Incarceration and Parole. Instead of school, kids are going to prison. We need to change that. Judges need more discretion not cookie cutter punishments for the sake of a punishment. We have a failing system. I heard an ex-prisoner had to make a decision to see parole officer or go to work. Community advocacy is a must. Along with policy we need to put more money into it.

2.3 Racial Bias in the Criminal Justice System

- It's called a concentrated disadvantaged neighborhood. Corrections is a terrible evil, I didn't know how terrible they were, they were horrible and fearful and did stanky stupid stuff. A prisoner's rights are already taken away, so when they have a cracked bowl they are afraid to speak up because they will be yelled at with the "F" word, even though it's not their fault. Corrections needs intelligent improvement. They are called "Red Meat Men". Police is an "applied science" - it shouldn't be blatant force. Walker just made a piece of equipment that ties up a prisoner when they act out. Once, a physician in Pennsylvania was asked to show his hands, and when he put them up, he had his doctor ID in his hand, and since the police didn't know what it was, they shot him. He was a physician. We need to teach community policing. I asked my professor if a policeman is not sure, can he hide? He said yes.
- We need to recognize the humanity, the value of a human life, and understand the individual's situation. We need hope, to believe in change, because everyone deserves a second chance. If not, trauma affects a person's life. Justice cannot be greater than the crime committed - it needs to be just. It is so prejudice and full of racial profiling. It starts with basic human rights. If that is the way corrections treat prisoners, I personally would want to act out in revenge too. People do change and if people serve a just sentence they go back into society and should be able to vote and have respect.
- I grew up in an era when POC were considered uncivilized. This was all done in a very subtle way with the entertainment media. It was a subtle projection. Now racism is more overt. "Thug" now brings up a racial connotation as does "gangbanger". This makes people more insecure and fosters punishment for crime rather than restorative justice. I also recommend the Justice Reinvestment policy mentioned earlier where a community that sends fewer individuals to prison receives a three part economic benefit.
- I was a case manager for families. I went to households where I saw a need for role models for parents who had had no role models for themselves. We need to do prevention by helping children when they are young. There needs to be housing and education so they don't go astray. Families need support.
- Other than my friends and uncle experience I shared I think overall, we need to look at real issue—treating people equally and not poke at specific backgrounds or people. For change; I'd like to see and hop that whatever acts happen people are treated fairly.
- There is no race bias in our system

- Racial bias from the system (e.g. the arrest rate for blacks is much higher than for whites for marijuana even though their use rates are the same. Whites smoke at home and get a pass from white police officers. Blacks smoke on the street and don't get a break. When marijuana is legalized, the whites will be the ones to sell it, blacks won't be able to because of prior convictions.
- When one zip code (53206) has the highest incarceration rate in the country, there is bias – but how to address it?
- The criminal justice system reflects the racism that exist in our country. Educate the incarcerated and provide life skills for when they are released. Find a way to stop the people in the criminal justice positions abuse their power. It's not right that often it's their word (the people in power) against yours. I agree that judges and police should go to jail to understand what it's like because people in jail beg to be taken to prison because they are treated better there. We have to get to know people who are different from us so that we are not afraid or fearful.

2.4 Disincentives for Criminal Justice and Incentivize Prevention

- I am very concerned about or profit prisons. Some things should not have a profit motive and it just creates a system of financial reward for incarceration. I'm kind of angry that Texas is doing better than Wisconsin, I would like to learn from those models. I am surprised and delighted to hear the Brookfield Rep wants to work together. It is an issue that people who want to get out and have changed and learned can't vote. That's bad because their can't use their experience to create change. We also need to work on getting jobs for ex-prisoners because it is so hard for them and remains on their record forever. The unemployment rate is so low, so they will have to figure out how to provide on their own. They need training and the knowledge of benefits and how live a supported life.
- We need to continue to have conversations like these. We need to center on the problem, which is that people who commit crimes are mistreated at facilities instead of learning to be contributing members of society. Milwaukee is the second most segregated city in this nation, a physical divide that directly affects incarceration. If someone makes one mistake their whole life is ruined. It's unfair. You don't truly know someone until you have a conversation with them and you can see beyond what they have done. As an African American woman I am fearful of the world, and I think white people need to understand that - everyone is afraid. We need to get together and talk about our fears and struggles.
- The Milwaukee I left eight years ago was very different than the one I returned to recently. People in the suburbs live in a bubble. Incarceration for profit has to stop. This is all a new form of slavery. We have incarceration of children for life, solitary confinement – the ACLU does a lot to change this.
- I have three buckets. First bucket is money—get rid of privatization; no jails for profit or for bail. Secondly is punishment orientation—fixing it because it is bad. Thirdly, stop incarcerating non-criminal crimes.
- My wife and I discussed this problem for years, but the fundamental problem has infected our society. I read an interesting book, "Perceived Black" which describes racism as part of Constitution; it is well-documented. This is the fundamental problem of the criminal justice

system. Judges are elected and I know judges who are afraid to counter the Police because they don't want to lose the next election. We should change judges and go back to representing society's interests. They do not go back and ask the Police for more information.

- By putting money into prevention would save on greater costs later on. Support from our families in the community more. Pay people, especially women, what they're worth. My kids were fair-colored Latinos. Darker friends were treated worse than lighter-skinned friends.
- Three thoughts. 1st, un-privatize the system (the prisons are just like the military-industrial complex). 2nd, we need better reintegration (it's a similar problem to veterans reentering society). 3rd, we need tracking, to record improvement & success.
- By the way, I loved what Hutton had to say the most (despite his being a Republican!) about the importance of a peer-mentor system.
- Education: We need to put more money into schools and education and less into prisons. We are paying at the back end instead of the front end.
- Education is key to everything. High number of non-readers in jail.
- Homeless or have mental health problems – they should never be in prison.
- There is a need to direct resources toward prevention and to work to reduce the prison population in this way. We also need to reduce the numbers of people caught up in policies related to recidivism; we also need to look at the backlog of people awaiting parole hearings; we could also reduce the prison population by looking more closely at compassionate release for elders convicted on nonviolent offenses; there is also more that the media can do, too, such as bringing all of these issues to the attention of the public, placing more focus, too, on the benefits of treatment and rehabilitation and reentry programs.
- Our juvenile justice system needs massive reform. Lincoln Hills for Boys has had many investigations, yet it is still open, and staff are still mistreating youth. We need to stop warehousing our children. We also need to care about children of color by providing community support, directing resources toward prevention and treatment and not just toward incarceration.
- Reform looks like addressing the problem before it starts. What are contributing to the issues. Is there a background of desperation, look at why people commit crimes to inform what to do to reform. Raise the minimum wage, it's better to not offer people things they don't want to do, better housing support after jail, support for their children too, more resources for mental health, for low income access to insurance. There are not a lot of mental health services, which is a huge burden we need to invest in prevention and deal with mandatory sentences.
- I haven't thought about it much I guess I'm idealistic. We should structure the criminal justice system like upper education, socialized environments that ask what do you want to do? What skills do you want and what would you enjoy and do that. If we had a clean slate that is what it would look, like some people hit a block and then they get help. Tons of money will be needed for incentives. What do we as a society value? Do we value the person?
- I have a few notes but as I listen to all of you we are not far apart at all on how to improve the criminal justice system. I thought your idea was brilliant the current cost of warehousing is appalling. If we dedicate a large fraction of cost to ask people who have never been asked

what they want to do what does that look like? They've never been asked their opinions. It is genius. We need more who listen and approached how we structure and pull people back from the brink. That is what crime is. We need to look at family education, mentorship and make connections to the world around them.

Connected Conversation: *"What bipartisan efforts regarding criminal justice reform would you like to see?; What specific actions might make a difference in reforming criminal justice?; What, if anything, can elected officials do to help?; What questions or concerns did the panelists bring up for you?"*

3.1 Parenting and Crimes

- It's the same way as the judge said, if a program is successful, only the bad participation out of the thousand of good ones will be used against the program in an election. How do we change this? I find that I can relate to everything everyone is saying. We also just want to fix this. I need to stop being so immediately judgemental. "R" or "D", the Zeidler Center is great.
- Therapy for family! All they know is a life of crime. The CJS should focus on therapy in families if you alter the family you can alter the kids.
- We lost the way when we lost a generation to the prisons. We need mentors, help for addiction. We need support for the civil rights of prisoners and released prisoners. They need stable housing and expungement.
- Admitting that some things aren't working. Like bussing for integration. They didn't realize the consequences but didn't want to admit when it wasn't working. Did all communities have an equal voice in making decisions. Re-investing in community would have been better.
- Involve families in the criminal justice system to support the kids
- Think of the family unit and give support when kids are incarcerated

3.2 Making Changes

- SWIM at Marquette with Mike Lovell. A great program!
- There is a difference between theory and the real world. Now they are finally pushing towards educating the police better. Juveniles are just being sprayed for having an attitude.
- We need people in business, like myself, to talk to others in business that previously incarcerated individuals are not bad and can easily learn skills. This can help stop the perpetual cycle.
- Is there a way to work kids into the military after prison? I think it would be helpful because the discipline. It's extremely expensive, St. John's military Academy, but it's a good environment to learn discipline. Just compare the cost of Lincoln Hills to St. John's.
- But we're having this discussion and that's change. Everyone had really good points about money, people—in my life it has to do with equality and people being pulled over because of color of their skin. Given where we live this is the real deal. We're here to address it.

There's work to be done still and we need to spread the word. We have the same needs. What are we doing to make change? Life is short, and we need to help each other out.

- I think you're absolutely right why grass roots groups need to get involved with each other and meet each other in the street. That is how we make change. Until we take that we can expect the political system to be different.
- There is no quick way of doing this. There needs to be small behavioral change. Like people in pain look for small incremental change. You can change politicians behavior by going to their open houses, vote them out. Big money is involved and get some doing what big-money says.
- If people could talk with each other and communicate without all the hostility and frustration
- For-profit prisons add to the problem no prisons should before profit. Follow the money.

3.3 Elections, Voting, and Politics

- Elected officials need to talk to those affected before making decisions. They should talk two to residents to know what they think. Good how are you
- Listening to Rep. Hutton and the expo leader talk about going to see prisons in Texas, seeing that they were working together. It was perfect!
- Judges have mandatory protocol. It binds their hands
- Elected officials need to leave their ivory towers and get into the community.
- The law is the law. Judges cannot be advocates. Each piece of the criminal justice system does what it is asked to do by the legislature. They apply the law. They try to do the right thing.
- I agree part of the problem is politics and campaign system in the U.S. We saw Feingold try to do bipartisan, but it didn't work. There's very little going on with officials; we as citizens need to formulate opinion on the way officials are elected so they have the interests of people. We need to have honest, new discussions and its just not happening. We need to be involved in organizations where there is change. We treat immigrants as the enemy versus 1 century ago when we used to welcome people.
- Provide sufficient funding from childhood through college so people can have skills and get a job with a living wage. Fundamental social changes and prison reform has led us to a different place of underfunded education. I'm afraid elected officials have not lived up to their ideology. A friend of mine was elected to assembly in Door County is conservative but rational. However, he would not challenge because he would lose his status in the Party.
- Is it that we're underfunding the criminal justice system of spending money stupidly? People always talk in money and in this area, it seems like a ripe time to talk red and blue. Stop putting money in pockets of people to keep privatization of prisons and turn the money around to enable early childhood, community-based, life skills. All we need to do is apply rational economic principles like other states like Texas are doing this. We need to take their ideas and use it. We waste too much money.
- Janine Geske holds a conference every year on political discourse. Anyone can get involved in the healing circles. They bring the victim and the family together to understand how

trauma affects someone. This fall, the topic is about police officers and public perception, and maybe we will honor her, because she has done so much.

- Getting politicians to get voters over the fear. Humanizing people in the criminal justice system. Without being soft on crime.
- President is paying off sex workers. With this kind of leadership, how can you hold anyone accountable. We are excusing one person but not another.
- Politics is understanding and not fearing.
- Prevention is difficult because it's hard to think long-term in our political system. Politicians may not get credit for the work they would do.
- Politicians in rural areas who don't see many of the issues, especially how racism fits in the picture.
- Don't be so afraid to raise taxes. They are just concerned about votes.
- Across the political spectrum, more people are willing to raise taxes for education.
- It was interesting to learn that Grover Norquist supports many of the goals of prison reform because they save tax dollars, and it was surprising to learn that legislators have refused to listen to his recommendations, which all have budgetary considerations, simply because they are intent on incarceration and punishment rather than rehabilitation and treatment.
- I am curious that you chose to be a Republican and chose differently than your parents. Many people choose their parents party.
- I studied both parties and the Republican Party has four principles; pull yourself up by your bootstraps, take care of neighbors, the government is not there to help, and free enterprise. Democracy is the hardest but the best in qualities. But you have to work hard and the republic will help you. I chose that party but the party is no longer the same.
- I think there has to be. One of the best ways to professional politicians, it's whoever has the biggest voice. They will use the government as a tool for their purposes rather than serving the criminal justice system. It is not realistic and disengaging. Voting is not enough. I can't live my life and not worry about it. People need to be involved and engaged on the ground where they live. Extend engagement with children and neighbors and religious communities. We need to do this and be real with each other. Everyone needs to be seen and heard. The more recognized then the Supreme Court will be influenced by communities. We are way overdue to deal with racism.
- Segregation and there is this denial of opportunity to the white people. That is what people think. This current administration thinks that. There are tremendous numbers of whites in the heartland since the 1960s who feel left out as minorities haven't been given more opportunity. They need to reestablish that and don't believe we are as racist. That's what this administration shows.
- We have team oriented politics. Politics is religion. Religion as a tool. I'm not Catholic my wife is. The point is the politics is like religion. It's about the beliefs, there's not much rationale.
- We need a precedent to build on. It is a generational thing. I think your generation is strong enough to do what my generation could not do. I am sick that we allowed the funding for education to be funneled to financial institutions. It should've never have happened. It happened on our watch.

- What's being done in Madison. Response: A 'one size fits all' still dominates. White fear feeds the decisions made by legislators. No consensus as to what will work.
- What would be useful for legislators to change? Response: Visiting prisons, conversations with those incarcerated.
- Media has a lot of power to level the playing field, re:stories that show real situation and share what's working and what's not.
- Legislature needs bi-partisan approach through seeing common ground as base for moving forward.
- I think there are just too many layers of government involved.

Parting Words

- Hope
- Hope!
- Huge problems and building structure
- Bridging divides
- Hope
- Hopeful
- Liberalizing
- Radical reform, engagement, empowerment, and enablement of the people; working collectively with the people.
- It can be discouraging when you look at the big picture. If we all work within our own community and treat people with kindness—everyone wants the same thing. Then we will eventually make change.
- Keep the dialog open in your life, work, interactions. When you see something wrong call it out and advocate for change from the heart.
- Within the U.S. we are all human beings; keeping that in mind and just speaking up for people whose voices are not heard. Treat people with love and respect.
- Appreciation for grappling with this issue.
- As a young person without the life experience of others in the group, I appreciated hearing other people's perspectives, wisdom and thoughts.
- Good idea to have such a variety of people around the table to discuss the topic.
- Having an opportunity to share my thoughts and listening to others on the subject of criminal justice was very valuable and encourages me to continue to make a difference in making the system more fair for us all.
- "Thanks to everyone, this was wonderful. I really appreciated what each one had to say."
- "It's so important to shift the focus or purpose of prisons from punitive to rehabilitative."
- "Drug decriminalization could really be key."
- "Community engagement is so needed."
- "I'm a pragmatist, and I'd like to see compromise across party lines, in order to move forward."
- "Despite the protests of the prison workers union, the Milwaukee Secure Detention Facility (MSDF) should be closed down, due to all the horrible abuses its inmates suffer there. We have to do better than that."

- "Lack of communication within and among healthcare professions allows addicts to abuse pharmaceutical prescriptions, and fuels the ongoing opioids crisis. Criminal justice reform cannot be complete without addressing some underlying causes for all the criminality, which include drug crime."
- I want to thank you because you are not on the same page as the rest of us and I appreciate hearing a different viewpoint.
- I'm reminded that literacy is SO important. If someone drops out of high school, they are probably going to end up in the criminal system so we need to address literacy.
- I realize that I surround myself with people who think the same way as me. This was a good night – it showed me that I can be close minded about this issue and my heart goes out to you for what you have experienced.
- My take away is that we're on the road to hell. I'm glad that I enlightened all of you – I like to take people on that think different than me.
- ok
- the Joseph Project gives me great hope;
- I feel hopeful, because of bipartisan conversations like these, hearing that others, too, support fairness and justice, and do so in a gathering of respectful listening;
- I sometimes feel as if the wheels are falling off of the bus and no one is paying attention; it seems at times that we flit from sexy topic of the day to the next sexy topic of the day; we need to stay focused, to keep in mind what is important; we need to demand accountability from our elected officials; and we need to constantly address the issues of providing basic care to vulnerable populations, thus helping to reduce the prison population.
- I enjoyed the process. I am reminded of something else that my grandfather taught me. He asked me to look out into the farm field and tell him what I saw. I said "a cow". He then told me that children see cows; farmers see dairy cows or beef cattle, and butchers see the slices of meat that they can sell. He told me that this is true in all things. How we see cows and how we see people, too.
- passed
- Respectful dialogue helps so much; we have so much potential in our community; there are so many problems that need our attention and so little change, seemingly a malaise that keeps people inactive; I am hopeful after this evening's conversations.
- It is only one piece of the puzzle. What do we define as quality-of-life? Cheap materials? Houses that last less than 20 years? Cheap cars? Make life last as long as possible in the best way possible I see that in your path.
- Thank you
- I'll conclude by saying any issue look for small incremental change and be happy with that. Your generation is less competitive and more cooperative. My son has a much more inclusive attitude than me. I could not understand sexual orientation with how I grew up. Now I am more understanding. Like a Mormon said, I can have tolerance but I don't have to tolerate it in my home or my life.
- I take it none of your children are homosexual or lesbian?
- Who knows. The point is that homosexuals have been around for 6000 years, there's just a difference in permissiveness.

- It was good to listen to different thoughts.
- I don't think democrats are unified in this topic. A lot of work to be done. We need to be smart on crime not tough on crime.
- This rejuvenated me to get involved
- I am left with the word "Bi Partisanship" both sides agree something needs to be done.
- I feel engaged in a high level now. An I am left with the idea of peer network support being important.
- I feel hopeful.
- I feel we have our work cut out for us.
- I feel confused and I think we need change and reform.
- I feel encouraged to learn more.
- I feel we need to listen to those with wisdom more often in this type of setting.
- Breaking barriers
- Facing the issues face to face
- Stop saying what works versus what doesn't work.
- Casting the blame
- Media has played a crucial role in impoverished communities.
- The impact on the inner city versus the suburban areas
- Crime is everywhere. How do we fix it?