

# Great Wardens Project

## Knowing Your Why: How Wardens Can Remove Barriers to Change

April 18, 2024

# Mission

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The Great Wardens Project provides mentorship and training to develop bold prison leaders and build a corrections culture based on safety and dignity.

# Core Beliefs

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- Wardens and Superintendents have a responsibility to promote safe, secure, and healthy corrections facilities.
- Advocates and prison leaders can work together to reimagine how corrections facilities operate and shape a new generation of committed corrections professionals.

# Today's Speakers

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**Joe Page III**

Superintendent-Pine Bluff Complex Division of Correction, Arkansas Department of Corrections



**Michael Capra**

Supervising Superintendent of the New York City Hub (ret.), New York Department of Corrections and Community Supervision

# Today's Speakers

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**Deborah Wofford**

Gender Responsive Administrator  
Washington Department of Corrections



**Jessica Serrano Seipel**

Senior Program Director  
Just Detention International

# Meet Our Task Force

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# Tech Check

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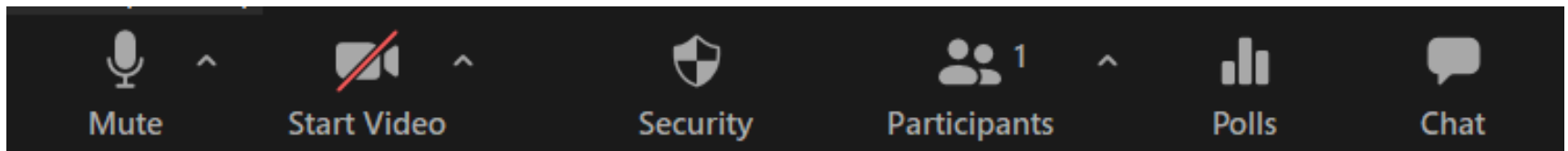
Mute



Video

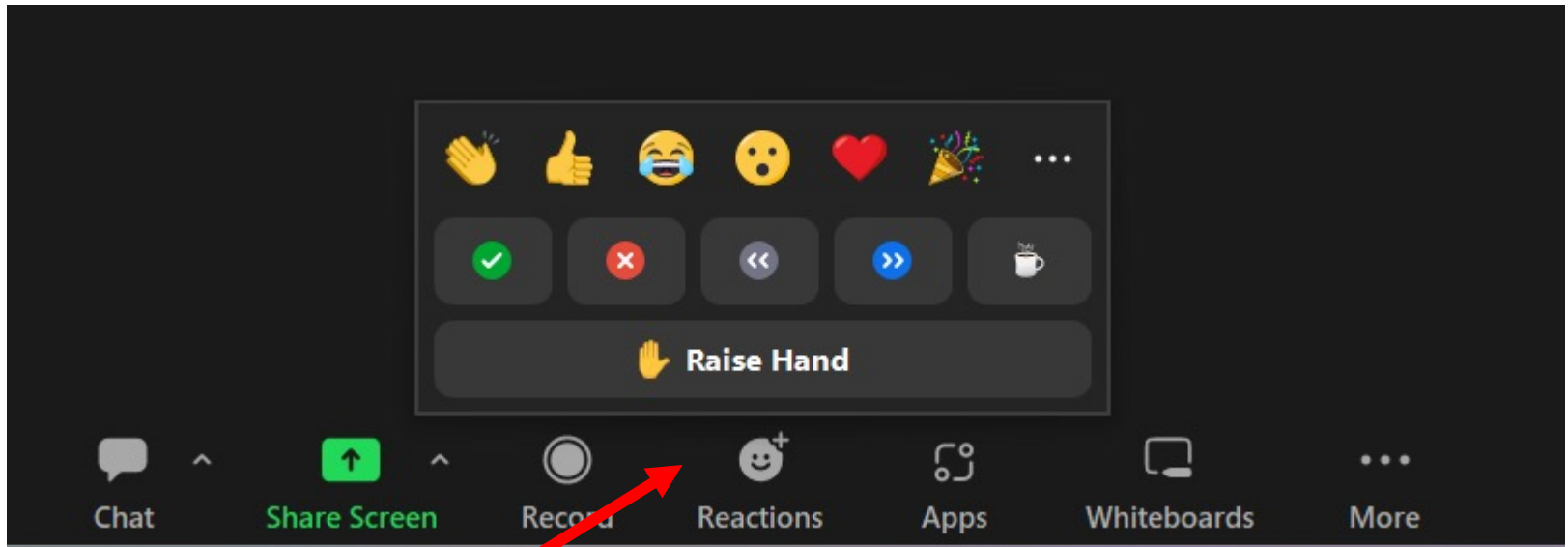


Chat



# Join the Conversation

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# Quote of the Day

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“Strong leaders are defined by their ability to see beyond what is and towards what’s possible.”



# Knowing Your Why

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**Why are you a corrections leader?**

# The Lightbulb Moment

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# Why so many corrections jobs go unfilled: prison culture needs changing

Public welfare (police, corrections, and courts) is a state and local government budget category that exceeds those of both education and healthcare. But the leadership development resources available to wardens of correctional facilities are meager in comparison. As a result, prison culture and its environment have changed very little over the years.

While leadership does have access to new learning programs, they focus primarily on management strategies — such as how to count 1,000 people in 15 minutes, or options for intervention if there's a hunger strike. But opportunities to learn about shifting prison culture in ways significant enough to solve understaffing problems, are few and far between.

Source: The Hill, 3/31/2024

# Poll Question

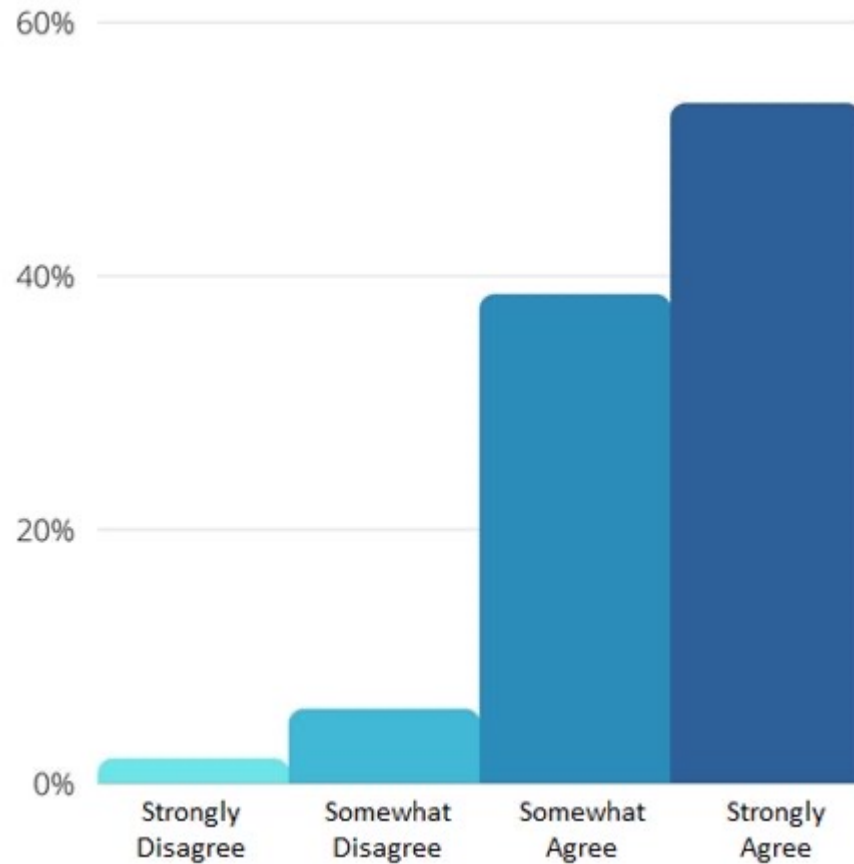
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**“As a corrections leader, I feel empowered to make changes necessary to improve my facility culture”**

# Results from Spring 2021 Survey

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**“As a corrections leader, I feel empowered to make changes necessary to improve my facility culture”**



# In the Middle

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# Internal Resistance

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- **Cynicism** - "That will never work"
- **Fear** - "What if it gets worse?"
- **Peer pressure** - "No one else will get behind this, why should I?"
- **Complacency** - "We've always done things this way"



# Sources of CO Stress

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<b>Occupational Stressors</b>	<b>Organizational Stressors</b>	<b>Psycho-social Stressors</b>
Exposure to violence	Lack of training and support	Fear and aggression
Role ambiguity	No input in decision-making	Public perceptions
Code of silence	Lack of trust in management	Work/life balance

Source: Correctional Officer Wellness and Safety Literature Review, DOJ

# Poll Question

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“Correctional officers may find that their professional responsibilities are ambiguous or, at times, even contradictory”

Source: Correctional Officer Wellness and Safety Literature Review, DOJ

# Rallying Around a Clear Vision

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Who We Are	What We Do	What We Hope For
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What do we believe in?</li><li>• What is important to us?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What actions are we taking?</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• What does success look like?</li><li>• What changes because of our actions?</li></ul>

# Discussion Question

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**How have you navigated  
internal barriers?**

# External Resistance

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- Resource limitations
- Political pressures
- Public perception and evolving expectations
- Differing visions and priorities



# Discussion Question


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**How have you navigated  
external barriers?**

# Knowing Your Why

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 = PURPOSE

# Resources

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[Correctional Officer Wellness and Safety Literature Review, US Department of Justice](#)

[“Why so many corrections jobs go unfilled: prison culture needs changing” The Hill, 3/31/24](#)

# Get Involved

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For additional information, please visit our website at: [greatwardens.org](http://greatwardens.org)

**Direct questions**

**to:** [greatwardens@justdetention.org](mailto:greatwardens@justdetention.org)

**Connect with JDI:**



[www.facebook.com/JDIonFB](http://www.facebook.com/JDIonFB)



[www.twitter.com/justdetention](http://www.twitter.com/justdetention)



# Next Summit

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**SAVE THE DATE!**

Join us for our next Leadership Summit on June 20!

# Join us!

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## North American Association of Wardens & Superintendents





# EVALUATION

Please take a moment to share your thoughts before logging off

Thank you!