

BRIDGES of AMERICA

A Life Changing Therapeutic Community

Voices of Smart Justice

January 18, 2013

With the dawn of a new year, people and organizations tend to take a moment to re-assess their situations and identify areas of opportunity. This why gym memberships boom in January of every year!



For me, and for the leadership of Bridges of America, the dawn of this new year brings a continued commitment to the idea of "smart" justice and how the kinds of programs we offer - re-entry, transition, work release, substance abuse treatment - can change the face of criminal justice in Florida.

Last month, the Florida Smart Justice Alliance, a coalition of organizations committed to changes in Florida's criminal justice and corrections system designed to make Florida's communities safer, save taxpayer money and hold offenders accountable while providing the tools for them to live law-abiding lives, presented Justice Summit 2012. The Summit was attended by more than 200 experts, ranging from policy makers and elected officials to leading service providers, and took place December 12-14 in Orlando.

During the Summit, we heard a presentation from the Florida Chamber of Commerce on the results of a survey which indicated overwhelming citizen support for the concepts of smart justice. In fact, more than three-quarters of Floridians believe a person can support such initiatives and still be considered tough on crime.

Like us on **Facebook** 

Follow us on **twitter**

The independent poll, conducted by Fabrizio McLaughlin & Associates, found that 73 percent of the public favors smart justice laws that would reduce the number of non-violent criminals in Florida prisons, a change that would save substantial tax dollars while still protecting the public from the worst criminals. More than four in five respondents favor cost-effective treatment programs to prepare non-violent criminals for their re-entry to society, greatly improving their chances of living law-abiding lives after their release.

Just last week, Barney Bishop, President and CEO of the Florida Smart Justice Alliance, and Jim DeBeaugrine, CEO of RFJ Governmental Consultants who is working with the Smart Justice Alliance to develop cost-saving legislative proposals, testified before the Senate Criminal Justice committee and staff to share these findings and concepts with the team of elected officials charged with vetting legislation furthering these issues. We hope to continue to build these relationships so that real action can take place during the 2013 legislative session.

I will keep you apprised on these and other issues of reform as the year progresses. Hopefully ... as 2013 comes to a close ... we will be able to report success on all our resolutions, goals, and commitments that we make this month.

I send you my very best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

Sincerely,



President and CEO

www.bridgesofamerica.com

Bridges of America is a nonprofit organization founded in 1972 with the mission of changing criminal behavior through a practical, comprehensive approach that includes intensive substance-abuse counseling, parenting classes and work-release programs. Bridges' core value is a belief that people can change.

[Forward this email](#)



This email was sent to kkuehn@bridgesofamerica.org by change@bridgesofamerica.org | [Update Profile/Email Address](#) | Instant removal with [SafeUnsubscribe™](#) | [Privacy Policy](#).

Bridges of America | 2001 Mercy Drive | Orlando | FL | 32808