

HOW DOES OUR NATION CONFRONT PRISON RAPE:

THE MORAL AND ETHICAL QUESTIONS

THE CHAIRMAN: Thank you, Mr. Richards.

Based upon your own personal experience of being in prison, what were the factors that you would say or at least some the factors that contributed to the individual being subjected to sexual assault?

MR. RICHARDS: I think there's a number of things, some of which were said today. There's an issue with leadership. I would recommend that this commission go to some of the prisons throughout the country, prisons in New York, prisons in California, and just take a look at the environment in which people live on a day-to-day basis and you'll see that it starts from the leadership of the institution, about setting the tone, how people should be treated, how people should be handled and managed and how people need to be held accountable. But it start from leadership institution by institution.

The other thing is about transparency. Many of our institutions are often in far away places

away from public scrutiny, away from political scrutiny, away from services for people to reintegrate. That alone in and of itself creates opportunity for violence, mistrust, mismanagement of the institution to occur, so we need to work on transparency, accountability.

In New York City, Commissioner Martin Horn, a commissioner of the corrections department had a thing about two things -- three things actually, it was leadership, transparency and accountability. And what he said was that his leadership, his people in leadership, were going to be accountable for inmate on inmate violence, jail violence and about culling that down, and that it started from the leadership. And so he set the tone for how his commanders should be acting. His commanders became accountable for the outcomes that was happening on a day-to-day basis and he set up a system to be able to monitor it. So we have to make sure that we have accountable.

Fourthly, we need to acknowledge that there's a problem. Oftentimes we search for numbers and say we haven't heard that this is a problem. I can

tell you it's a problem. People aren't coming forward saying that they've been sexually assaulted for all of the reasons that you heard today about the stigma, about someone's perception of their own manhood or for females for women, about how damaging that could be for them, both institutionally and in the community. And we have to stop searching for sort of the numbers and acknowledge that there's a problem and do something about it.

The other two things I want to talk about is we need to do some training of some of the officers as they come in, training about how you treat people and how you become aware of the environment in which people are being incarcerated and hold officers accountable about how to handle that starts at training. Thank you.