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Community Attitudes Toward Early-Release Offenders Under AB 109

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COMMUNITY ATTITUDES TOWARD EARLY-RELEASE
OFFENDERS UNDER AB 109

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Mari Lily Herrera
Matthew Erik McGiffen
June 2015

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to examine community attitudes towards ex-offenders released in San Bernardino under AB 109 on subjects that would likely impact the ex-offender reintegration process. Past research has shown that a community's willingness to employ and offer social support to ex-offenders has a substantial impact on their probability of re-offense. This study focused on individuals whose roles in the community give them greater influence over ex-offenders. A total of 11 community members participated in this qualitative study. Of the 11 respondents, 4 were employers, 4 were social service workers, and 3 were community center workers. Respondents participated in verbal interviews that explored their prior knowledge of AB 109, past interactions with ex-offenders, and their views related to ex-offenders on community safety, reform, employment, social support, and the severity of an offender's crime.

Unanimous agreement that ex-offenders should be able to compete for employment provided they have job skills, but varying levels of willingness to hire or work alongside ex-offenders was the study's most substantial finding. All respondents also reported having at least 1 prior relationship with an ex-offender. Community members also expressed varying opinions on the impact ex-offenders have on safety, but unanimously agreed that they need social support after release. These findings indicate that San Bernardino community members have high levels of familiarity with ex-offenders and believe they

should have a chance to become productive members of society, but that many community members want to avoid personally interacting with ex-offenders due to safety concerns.

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We would like to thank each individual who assisted us in our research by sitting down with us for an interview. Thank you for your participation in this project. Most importantly, we would like to thank Dr. Tom Davis for giving us a chance and believing in us. Thank you for continued support and guidance in our research project. Lastly, we would like to thank the School of Social Work for the great learning experiences encountered throughout our undergraduate and graduate programs.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my hardworking parents who came to this country to be able to provide better opportunities for me and my siblings. Thank you mom and dad for all your sacrifices and support throughout this journey. Thanks to you both, I have become the woman you see in front of you today. Thanks to my extended family, friends, and co-workers for supporting me and encouraging me throughout this process. It wasn't easy, but I did it! I also want to thank my amazing husband, Anthony Flores, for your continuance support and encouragement throughout this journey. You are my motivation to keep striving for the best. My constant reminder as to why I chose this profession. Lastly, thank you to my research partner Matt for your help during those stressful times.

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I dedicate this project to my first human services professor James Banks. Without your guidance, support, and endless patience I would never have started down the social work career path. I would also like to thank my mother and father for their understanding and patience, and my wife Amber whose love and dedication have carried me through the hardest times and given me reason to push onward.

Matt McGiffen

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Terminology

We will be using the following terms in this report:

- Ex-Offender: A person who has been released to the community after being incarcerated for a criminal offense. For this study, the definition includes probationers who are under law enforcement supervision and parolees who are serving jail time within the community.
- Reoffense: The commission of a new crime by an ex-offender.
- Recidivism: The rate at which ex-offenders are rearrested and reincarcerated after their release, either due to reoffense or technical violation of probation or parole.
- Prisoner Reintegration: The ex-offender's process of becoming an accepted and productive member of a community.

Problem Statement

With only 5 percent of the world's population, the United States has 25 percent of its prisoners (Bezahler, 2013 p. 3). There are roughly 2.4 million Americans incarcerated right now, a total that surpasses the number of imprisoned citizens in any other country (Engler, 2011, p. 53). According to the International Center for Prison Studies, the United States locks up 743 out of

every 100,000 residents. Since the 1980's, the U.S. has been engaged in the largest imprisonment program ever attempted by a democratic society (Kopel, 1995, p. 64). Because of the country's unusually high rate of incarceration, the average American prison now operates at 15% over capacity. Court orders to ease prison overcrowding have been issued in many states including the state of California with Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109).

The prison boom is biggest in states that have the toughest sentences and California has the most prisoners in the US. If California were a country, its prison and jail population would rank ninth in the world (Schlosser, 1998, p. 52). In 2011, California had approximately 137,000 offenders in 33 different prison institutions, including in-state and out-state private facilities and fire camps (California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, 2013). With this alarming number of incarcerated individuals comes an equally alarming number of offenders who will eventually rejoin the communities where they committed their offense.

High recidivism has been a neglected issue in the United States for years. The national recidivism rate for incarcerated individuals ranges from 49% to 61%, depending on the amount of time served with longer sentences linked to higher recidivism (Prison Trust Reform, 2010). According to the Council of State Governments Justice Center (2013), there are more repeat offenders incarcerated than first time offenders. To help lower recidivism rates, many state governments and community agencies have developed reentry

treatment programs. The goal of reentry treatment programs is to facilitate successful integration by helping ex-offenders become productive members of society.

Since the passing of AB 109, prisoners transferred to San Bernardino County probation have been given the option of entering into the “Choosing Healthy Options to Instill Change and Empowerment” (CHOICE) program. CHOICE is an intensive one year program that was formerly known only as the San Bernardino AB 109 program. The name was changed as part of an effort by the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) to transition to a more recovery based model and to reduce stigma associated with the highly publicized bill. In cooperation with the county probation department’s rehabilitation program, CHOICE delivers or refers to a range of services including GED preparation classes, a life skills class taught by DBH staff, a cognitive restructuring group, one-on-one cognitive behavioral therapy, alcohol and drug rehabilitation services, health workshops, HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C testing, parenting classes, a workforce development seminar, child support services, gender specific educational programs, and anger management courses. The goal of the program is to reduce recidivism rates and ultimately reduce the costs paid to incarcerate parolees who re-offend. The program appears to be successful in reducing recidivism while participants are receiving services as the one year recidivism rate for parolees enrolled at day

reporting centers is only 9.8% compared to 23.2% for those not enrolled and 36.4% for the entire San Bernardino County parolee population.

Though services provided to AB 109 probationers through CHOICE, have been shown to reduce the reoffense rates of participants while they are enrolled in the program, we do not know if the reduced reoffense rates persist after their time with CHOICE ends. Once their one year service end-date passes, probationers must look to the community for social support, employment, physical and mental health care. Of these needs, employment stands out as the highest priority for reentering ex-offenders with a majority of probationers identifying legitimate employment as a primary goal.

Unfortunately 90% of AB 109 probationers have substance use disorders which can make finding and maintaining employment a challenge. This combination of initial unemployment and an ongoing battle with substance use puts AB 109 probationers at unusually high risk for relapse, depression, homelessness, and reoffense. It will be their ability to find supportive peers, build meaningful relationships, and feel they have purpose within their community that will help them overcome their challenges and avoid reoffense. For these needs they will rely on their community, meaning that their successful reintegration is, in part, reliant on the support they can find from the people around them.

Before we look directly at the attitudes of community members, it is important that we identify the unique circumstances within San Bernardino that

may shape those attitudes. Because employment opportunities and the prevalence of crime have a dramatic impact on an ex-offender's ability to successfully reintegrate and are closely linked with the economic situation within a county, we must understand the economic conditions of the community AB 109 probationers will be joining. San Bernardino County currently has a 9% unemployment rate compared to the 7.4% state average. According to the US census bureau (2013), the county's per capita income and median household income are at \$21,636 and \$54,750 respectively, well below the state per capita income (\$29,551) and median household income (\$61,400). San Bernardino county also has a higher portion of residents living below the poverty rate (17.6%) than the state average (15.3%) meaning there is likely strong competition for the low earning jobs former CHOICE participants will be seeking.

The majority of AB-109 probationers live in or around San Bernardino city which presents them with even bigger challenges. Compared to the county, San Bernardino city has almost half the per capita income (\$15,322), a significantly lower median household income (\$39,097), and more than twice the percentage of residents living in poverty (30.7%). In addition to the economic challenges, San Bernardino city has an abnormally high crime rate that is growing rapidly. According to the Federal Bureau of Investigation (2012), there were 2,022 violent crimes reported in 2012 compared to only 1,624 violent crimes reported in 2010. In the last couple of years, crime rates

have significantly increased in San Bernardino city's metropolitan areas placing it third among neighboring and peer regions in overall crime rate and giving it a higher crime rate than the state and national averages (Federal Bureau of Investigation, 2012).

The poor economic situation of San Bernardino will create a barrier to employment for AB 109 probationers due to increased competition for jobs and the increased crime rate may increase likelihood of recidivism, but they may also impact the stigma reentering offenders will face upon joining the community. Community members may not accept probationers for fear that they will bring more crime to an already dangerous area. Community members who are looking for employment or do not have job security may also feel threatened by an additional group of unemployed adults looking to enter the labor force. Taxpayers and community members seeking public assistance may also feel resentful of parolees who have received services paid for with county funds. With San Bernardino having filed bankruptcy in 2012, city residents may feel that the money spent rehabilitating AB 109 probationers could have been better spent elsewhere.

Whatever the reason, hostile or distrustful attitudes towards AB 109 probationers from the community will interfere with every part of the reintegration process and may ultimately sabotage efforts to reduce recidivism. Reentering probationers who perceive stigma may be less likely to access community resources, face increased risk of isolation, are more likely

to relapse, may turn to criminal networks in their search for purpose and relationships, and will be more likely to reoffend. If our goal for probationers is successful reintegration, we must address the stigma within San Bernardino that may interfere with the process. Unfortunately, there is little information on the attitudes held by members of the San Bernardino community towards AB 109 probationers or the general increase in probationers within the community. Before potential harmful attitudes towards AB 109 probationers from within the community can be addressed, those attitudes must be identified. Since there is so little information available on this subject, we believe the best place to begin assessing attitudes is with especially influential members of the community.

This study intends to answer the question: “What common attitudes do influential members of San Bernardino have toward AB 109 probationers”

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research study is to explore and assess community members’ attitudes towards parolees under Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109). One year recidivism rates have dropped dramatically with the passage of AB 109 and the creation of the CHOICE program, but we do not know if former CHOICE participants are able to successfully reintegrate into the community after they terminate from the one year program. There is no available data on either the long-term recidivism rates of former CHOICE participants, their ability to find employment in the community, or the frequency with which they

receive services from community-based agencies after terminating with CHOICE. Because their ability to successfully reintegrate and avoid reoffense is closely tied to the community's willingness to accept them, community attitudes towards San Bernardino parolees can help us predict their chances of reoffending and becoming self-sufficient after they stop receiving intensive treatment.

We are specifically interested in community members' willingness to hire parolees, their perceptions of the impact parolees have on community safety, their beliefs about the likelihood that parolees will reoffend, their desire to assist with reintegration, and their comfort level interacting with parolees. We chose a qualitative interview design because it allows respondents as much freedom as possible with their answers while still allowing us to ask purposive questions. Since the San Bernardino community's attitudes towards AB 109 parolees have not yet been documented in formal research, we do not have a foundation of understanding that would allow us to develop a more structured questionnaire without making unreasonable assumptions about the views of respondents. Our hope is that respondents will provide much more information if given the chance to speak freely, and that their thoughts will provide valuable insight into common themes in attitudes held by larger portions of the community.

This study does not intend to give a full representation of the entire community's attitude towards AB 109 probationers, nor does it aim to answer

the question of how community stigma towards probationers will impact recidivism. This study will identify common themes in attitudes held by community members towards AB 109 probationers. By identifying common attitudes held by a small number of community members, we intend to provide the groundwork for future studies hoping to better assess the attitudes of the entire San Bernardino community towards the AB 109 population. We will not be making recommendations on how to help the AB 109 population, but will instead attempt to provide guidance for future studies on community attitudes as they determine what questions to ask of the community.

Significance of the Project for Social Work

This study is being conducted in the hopes of benefiting an extremely vulnerable and often overlooked client population, namely formerly incarcerated probationers, many of whom have substance use disorders and/or serious mental illness. Since before the beginnings of social work, the population groups that make up CHOICE clients have been stigmatized, devalued, and excluded from society. The need to help formerly incarcerated prisoners reintegrate and become accepted members of society speaks to two of the core values of social work, the innate dignity and worth of every individual and the responsibility to pursue social justice for vulnerable and oppressed populations. The NASW code of ethics also instructs social workers to act to eliminate domination and discrimination against any person based on race or ethnicity. Because the justice system has a disproportionate impact on

minorities and especially on African-Americans who are dramatically overrepresented among CHOICE clients, anything preventing formerly incarcerated persons from rebuilding their lives will also have a disproportionate impact on minorities. As part of the commitment to social and political action against racial and ethnic discrimination, social workers are obligated to support reintegration efforts as they represent an attempt to protect minorities from a cycle of release, social alienation, reoffense, and recidivism. The primary aim of this study is to lay the groundwork for future efforts to improve reentry programs, but in doing this we will attempt to identify attitudes within the community that may add to the disadvantages formerly incarcerated minorities face upon reentry.

This study also aligns with the emphasis placed by the social work profession on human relationships. A crucial part of successful reintegration is the formation of supportive relationships that will protect reentrants in a time of crisis. Our hope is that there are as many community members willing to support reentering parolees as there are who would see them return to prison or move to a different county. By assessing community attitudes towards reentrants, we hope to identify places parolees can go to find support from community members willing to welcome them.

This project is also important for future social work social work research because there is little available data on this topic. Given the fact AB 109 is a fairly new provision it would greatly benefit the social work profession to be

aware of the stigma and concerns parolees face as they return to their community, especially when they are entering as a result of a controversial and heavily debated law. By investigating the impact of policy and service changes AB 109 has brought to the community, this study will help guide future community engagement and eventual community level intervention. As the population of San Bernardino grows, the number of individuals being incarcerated and released will grow as well. For this reason, it will only become more important as time passes for the field of social work to be informed about community views towards the vulnerable San Bernardino parole population.

In regards to the generalist model, this study represents the engagement and assessment phases of the intervention process on a macro level. Researchers will go out to the San Bernardino community and engage community members, building rapport and learning who holds different types of power within the community. In the assessment phase, the clinicians will be assessing the community members' views on AB 109 probationers with the goal of learning how those views impact the reentry experience. At the end of the research study, recommendations will be made that will help guide future planning and intervention phases.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two aims to provide an overview of the existing literature regarding the origins of AB 109 and the services provided to these early released prisoners. Because AB 109 is relatively new and available outcome data is limited to one year recidivism information, we will also be looking studies of programs providing reentry services similar to those provided by CHOICE. Furthermore, literature addressing community attitudes and stigmas towards parolees in their neighborhood will be addressed with special attention given to the attitudes of employers, beliefs about the potential for reform, and how attitudes differ based on parolee race, ethnicity, gender, and age.

History

In 2006, the California prison system had reached a crisis point: built to house over 80,000 inmates, it held more than twice that number. Subsequently, the overcrowding of prisons led to inmates being unable to access adequate physical and mental health care. In response, California inmates initiated a class action suit, *Plata v. Brown*, in which they alleged their Eighth Amendment Rights of “prohibition of cruel and unusual punishment” were being violated (Sullivan, 2013, p. 419). In May 23, 2011, a bare majority

of the U.S. Supreme Court, affirmed a district court order requiring California to remedy its longstanding constitutional deficits in prison medical and mental health care by reducing prison overcrowding (Schlanger, 2013, p. 165). The court required California's state prisons to limit prison population to 137.5% of the rated capacity by the end of 2013. This would have meant bringing down the population to about 110,000 prisoners. In January of 2013, the state housed about 125,000 prisoners, which put the total population to about 147% of the rated prison capacity (Schlanger, 2013, p. 166) with an additional 9,000 prisoners being housed in out-of-state prison facilities. In February of 2013, Governor Brown asked for an extension on the deadline to remove about 9,600 inmates from the states' facilities. The extension was granted and Governor Brown has until February 28, 2016 to comply with the court's order to reduce California's prison population to 137.5% design capacity.

On April 4, 2011 Governor Brown signed Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109), The Public Safety Realignment Act, which was created to alleviate the overcrowding situation. In the Realignment program, it allows for inmates whose most recent conviction are non-serious, non-violent, and non-sex related offenses to be sent to county jails instead of prisons to serve their sentences (Schlanger, 2013, p. 184). AB 109 also included a significant shift of responsibility for monitoring, tracking, and managing felons from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) of Adult Parole Operations to county-level probation departments. Upon release from

State Prison, offenders are directed by CDCR to report to the nearest Day Reporting Center within 72 hours of release.

Currently, there is an 89% reporting rate for offenders released in San Bernardino County (AB 109, p. 13). Since the initiation of AB 109, 6,975 offenders have been transferred from state custody and 527 were transferred from other counties, which brings a total of 7,502 offenders that have been supervised by the San Bernardino County Probation. There are currently 2,251 offenders being supervised (AB 109, p. 19). Prior to passage of AB 109, the recidivism rate for parolees in the first year of their release was 82.5% (AB 109, p. 19). As of 2013, the one year recidivism rate for all San Bernardino County probationers including those not transferred due to AB 109 has gone down to 36.4%.

Similar Reentry Programs

AB-109 is relatively new and available outcome data for the CHOICE program is limited, but several of studies have looked at the outcomes of reentry programs providing similar services. The general consensus is that cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is the most consistently effective intervention in prisoner reentry (Petersilia, 2004; Grommon, Davidson, & Bynum, 2013; Lee et al., 2011). As a result, most reentry programs including CHOICE provide CBT, but there is a large amount of variance in how different programs impact recidivism so it may be the services offered in addition to CBT that determine how successful a program will be. Additionally, several

studies have questioned the effectiveness of reentry programs in general, highlighting a similar recidivism rate among participants of reentry programs and non-participants (Lee et al., 2011; Grommon, Davidson, & Bynum, 2013).

A meta-analytical study by the University of Kansas' School of Social Welfare identified several characteristics of successful reentry programs including a focus on education and housing, but did not find a significant difference in recidivism rates between service recipients and non-recipients on average across studied programs (Lee et al., 2011). Despite the general findings of the study, it noted that reentry programs that connected with community services saw reduced rates of client substance abuse and overall lower recidivism rates. Based on the wide range of results, the researchers concluded that there is no "magic bullet" program for reentry and that, "what is most likely to help reduce criminal behavior is a concerted and dynamic approach to rehabilitation that provides personal and tangible supports to offenders, such as education, housing, and employment while also provoking systemic and attitudinal changes" (Lee et al., 2011, p. 30). The findings of this study have been supported and built upon by a number of other studies on recidivism that highlight the importance of housing, social support and employment whether or not a reentry program is involved in the reintegration process (Kubrin & Steward, 2006; Visher & Travis, 2003).

Grommon, Davidson, and Bynum (2013) also found discouraging results in a study of an unidentified multimodal community-based reentry

program that emphasized substance abuse treatment and used a cognitive-behavioral therapeutic framework. The study did not yield significant results, but saw 30% of the treatment group rearrested within two years with 36% returning to prison compared to the control group which had a 27% 2 year rearrest rate and a 31% return to prison rate. This study also found that treatment group participants received only 6.5 hours of substance abuse treatment per week on average compared to the 10 hours per week that was intended. The study concluded that, not only was the program not having the desired impact on recidivism, but also that it was poorly implemented. The researchers theorized that the implementation of similar programs may contribute to their inability to impact recidivism rates (Grommon, Davidson, & Bynum, 2013). The findings of this study reflect poorly on the program it analyzed, but since that program is unidentified, we cannot say how similar it is to CHOICE other than its use of substance abuse treatment, its cognitive-behavioral framework, and that CHOICE's services are provided primarily by San Bernardino County rather than by community agencies.

One study yielding promising results for programs like CHOICE focused on Project Reconnect, a St. Louis based reentry agency that offers a six-month case management and cognitive behavioral therapy program (Wikoff, Linhorst, & Morani, 2012). Like CHOICE, Project Reconnect takes a recovery model approach, connects with community resources, offers one-on-one case management while addressing employment, mental health

and substance abuse concerns. Both programs offer cognitive behavioral therapy, but Project Reconnect provides one-on-one therapy while CHOICE uses both one-on-one and group therapy approaches.

There are several major differences in the treatment provided by CHOICE and Project Reconnect that likely impact their outcomes. CHOICE lasts one year while Project Reconnect lasts only six months. CHOICE is mandatory for all reentering probationers who receive housing through the program while Project Reconnect is voluntary which means Project Reconnect may see a greater reduction in recidivism due to participant self-selection. The ethnic makeup of each program's clients is also very different as Project Reconnect's client base is roughly 70% black and 30% white while CHOICE serves a much more diverse population. Finally, and most importantly, Project Reconnect provides participants with \$3000 worth of bus passes, gift cards to grocery and clothing stores, housing payments, substance abuse treatment, and job training programs over the six month period while CHOICE connects participants directly to services and offers no monetary assistance.

The results of the Project Reconnect study showed that participants were less likely to be convicted of new crimes than non-participants over the program's six-month duration. They also identified no significant differences between participant and non-participant traits other than their decision to enter or not enter the program. Among study participants, substance abuse was

associated with an increased risk of reconviction. None of the non-substance-using participants were convicted of new crimes and higher rates of substance abuse were associated with higher rates of recidivism compared to participants who used at lower rates. Participants who did not have technical conduct violations were also less likely to commit new crimes than participants who adjusted appropriately to their new living arrangements. The study did not continue to track participants after their participation in the six-month program so we do not know if participants reoffended after leaving the program (Wikoff, Linhorst, & Morani, 2012).

Attitudes and Stigma

The community attitudes towards offenders is especially negative when there are a high number of crimes in their neighborhood (Atkin & Armstrong, 2011). Offenders are not being evenly released into all regions; rather they are concentrated in small number of neighborhoods (Lynch & Sabol, 2004) and tend to be concentrated in communities with high rates of poverty and other social disadvantages (Leverentz, 2011). Atkin and Armstrong (2011) found that the concentration of probationers alone does not affect attitudes towards offenders, but that the concentration of probationers in high-crime areas may indirectly contribute to distrust and disbelief about the possibility of reform. This finding is expanded on by Leverentz (2011) who found that a perception that crime is getting worse within a community is linked with more punitive attitudes towards offenders. Additionally, Stahler et al. (2013) found that

ex-offenders are more likely to recidivate when entering neighborhoods with high concentrations of ex-offenders and historically high recidivism rates. Regardless of the concentration of ex-offenders in the areas of study, a consistent finding in research of community's attitudes towards ex-offenders is the fear of victimization (Lynch & Sabol, 2004; Leverentz, 2011).

Although there is considerable stigma against reentering ex-offenders from communities, there is evidence that the ex-offenders themselves have optimistic views of their own reintegration. Benson et al. (2011) assessed expectations of reentry among 17-26 year olds sentenced to a 90-day boot camp as an alternative to jail and found that 92% of those interviewed believed their family would be supportive despite their offenses and only 22% believed they would be unable to find work. These findings of reentry optimism are especially important because reentrant optimism, hope and family connectedness are connected with lower recidivism rates (LeBel et al., 2008). The Benson study offers some hope to reentrants and programs serving them, but we do not know how well their findings apply to the AB 109 population as they only looked at offenders between ages 17 and 26 leaving a boot camp alternative to jail, and they assess optimism only at the point of entry rather than assessing the optimism of ex-offenders living within their communities.

Finding employment after incarceration is an important aspect of offender reentry into the community. In fact, finding and maintaining employment is a condition of parole in many states and 90% of ex-offenders

believe that finding employment after release is crucial to their long-term success (La Vigne & Kachnowski, 2005, as cited in Atkins & Armstrong, 2011, p. 73). However, obtaining legitimate employment is challenging for a majority of ex-offenders as a result of barriers presented by the community structure, attitudes of potential employers, and individual characteristics such as limited job skills and low motivation (Atkin & Armstrong, 2011, p. 72). Previous studies have found that offenders being released from incarceration tend to return to the previous neighborhood where they resided prior to their arrest (Atkin & Armstrong, 2011, p. 72).

Negative employer attitudes towards hiring individuals with a criminal background limits the opportunities ex-offenders have of obtaining employment. Existing studies on employer willingness to hire ex-offenders suggest that the type of offense the offender committed plays a major factor on getting hired (Giguere & Dundes, 2002). Albright and Denq (1996) found that more than 80% of employers surveyed would not hire someone who had committed murder or sexual assault, but that 50% would be willing to hire a non-violent ex-offender and 90% would hire an offender convicted only of possession of marijuana. These findings may indicate that AB 109 probationers will have better chances of finding employment than the average ex-offender as their most recent crimes are non-violent and non-sexual, but a small minority have served time for violent crimes in the past.

Race also plays a significant role in employability of offenders as formerly incarcerated blacks are less likely to find and hold employment than other ethnicities (Foster, 2010), but black employers are more likely to be willing to hire applicants with violent offenses (Atkin & Armstrong, 2011, p. 82). Race has also been linked to recidivism with Hispanics having higher than average recidivism rates and blacks having the highest average recidivism rate of all races (Ortiz, 2014; Wehrman, 2010; McGovern, Demuth, & Jacoby, 2009). In a study on the impact of race on reentry and recidivism, Wehrman (2010) found support for the existing body of data linking race and recidivism, but failed to find a link between the race of the ex-offender and stigma from within the community of reentry.

Giguere and Dundes (2002) surveyed 62 employers in the area of Baltimore, Maryland to examine employers' willingness to hire ex-offenders. Results indicated 53% of the employers were willing to hire ex-offenders in theory, but that they had concerns about the personalities and skills of offenders. Their greatest concern (82% reported) was that ex-offenders would not have the necessary people skills to do the jobs they applied for (Giguere & Dundes, 2002, p. 399). Other concerns included the fear that customers would feel uncomfortable if they knew an ex-offender worked for their business and co-workers feeling worried about working with ex-felons. Surprisingly, employers were least concerned with the possibility of being victimized (Giguere & Dundes, 2002, p. 400).

Women are only about 7% of the U.S. prison population and 11% of the CHOICE participant population, but their incarceration rates are increasing faster than men's (Petersilia, 2001, p. 367). Most literature on reentry and employment has focused on male reentrants, but a study of resume applications by female reentrants found that reentering women have a different experience than reentering men while searching for employment. (Ortiz, 2014) Not only are reentering women are less likely than men to find employment due to employment disadvantages faced by all women (Ortiz, 2014), race and ethnicity impacts women differently than it does men.

The study found that the general trends of ethnicity and employment follow the same trends with female reentrants as with males in that blacks are the least likely to find employment, followed by Hispanics, followed by whites. Where the genders differ is that a prison record had less of an impact on black women's chances of becoming employed after submitting a resume than other groups, but that white women with prison records still had an 11% greater chance of finding employment than black women without prison records indicating that race has a greater impact on employability than history of incarceration in women. Interestingly, these trends do not exist for food service jobs when applications are submitted in person. Ortiz found that, under those circumstances, Hispanic women had a 22% success rate while white women had 14% and black women only 9%.

To better understand how stigma associated with race and ethnicity will impact AB 109 probationers in general, we must consider their ethnic makeup compared with the ethnic demographics of San Bernardino. The ethnic makeup of AB 109 probationers is similar to that of San Bernardino county as a whole except that blacks are dramatically overrepresented in the AB 109 group. Among AB 109 probationers, 25% identified as Black, 32% as White, 45% as Hispanic or Latino, and 2% as other groups when identified with a single ethnic grouping. Comparatively, among San Bernardino County residents, 9.4% identified as black, 31.4% identified as white, 51.1% identified as Hispanic or Latino, 9.6% identified as other races and 3.4% identified as two or more races (this option was not given to AB 109 participants). The vast majority of AB 109 participants are male with females accounting for only 11% of the group.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This section will describe and justify the process of selecting participants, conducting interviews, and analyzing the collected data. It will also specify what topics the interviews will cover and what reasoning we used in choosing those topics. It will also provide a rationale for using a qualitative exploratory design. Finally, this section will discuss participant confidentiality and explain how interviewees will be protected.

Study Design

The purpose of this study is to explore community attitudes towards prisoners released early because of AB 109. This study is designed to identify common themes and trends in communities members' attitudes towards ex-offenders entering San Bernardino, and to find out if they follow the same trends identified in existing literature on community attitudes towards ex-offenders. The study also aims to identify attitudes towards offenders that may be unique to San Bernardino for future study.

A qualitative approach is going to be used to gather data for this study. In depth face-to-face interviews are going to be conducted with identified community members within communities in San Bernardino with high concentrations of ex-offenders. A qualitative approach was chosen because it

will allow us to grasp the individuals perspective on the studied topic and explore their views and opinions with more depth than a quantitative study would allow. Open ended questions will be used to allow the individuals to respond in their own words and to provide as much detail as possible. We hope to identify common trends in attitudes among community members that can be used in future research with a larger sample size, but this study alone will not provide a clear picture of the attitudes of San Bernardino communities towards AB 109 ex-offenders.

The research question is: What are the trends in community attitudes towards ex-offenders released because of AB 109?

Sampling

A purposive sample of individuals residing in the San Bernardino area identified as community members will be interviewed on their attitudes towards ex-offenders entering their community. The group will consist of ten to twelve individuals with at least three participants from each of the following community position categories: employers, community center workers, and social service providers. The reason for choosing community members that fall into these community position categories is because they have influence over the attitudes of the community as a whole so we expect their views will be more representative of the entire community than any other potential interviewees, and their attitudes will have a greater impact on an ex-offender's successful reentry than anyone else in the community because of their status.

Potential participants will be contacted via telephone or in person to obtain consent to conduct face-to-face interviews. All interviewees will hold positions within the community where they may potentially come into contact with ex-offenders in their personal and professional lives. The participants do not need to have prior knowledge of AB 109, but we will assess their knowledge of the law during the interview. There is no particular age range, gender, or ethnicity that is going to be targeted, but we hope to create a participant group that represents the diversity of San Bernardino.

Data Collection and Instruments

The interviews will focus on participant attitudes, views, and beliefs about ex-offender employment, neighborhood safety, personal comfort interacting with ex-offenders, and the possibility of reform. In addition to this general rationale for our instrument, a brief explanation of our rationale behind each question is included with the attached questionnaire instrument.

Interviewers will also ask follow-up questions based on the information shared by participants, but all questioning will focus on employment, safety, personal interaction with ex-offenders, and views on reform. We chose to focus on these four areas because existing literature on prisoner reentry found that these four factors heavily impact an ex-offender's ability to find employment and social support which relate directly to their likelihood of recidivating.

Our survey is designed to address issues, attitudes and beliefs that past literature has found influences the community members' willingness to

employ ex-offenders and/or offer them social support. We hope to find out if the general trends in community attitudes towards ex-offenders in other areas hold true with ex-offenders released under AB 109 in San Bernardino. We also hope to find out if the factors that have been found to influence employers' attitudes towards hiring ex-offenders in other areas also influence personal attitudes towards ex-offenders in San Bernardino.

Because this study is purely exploratory, there are no independent or dependent variables. The study will explore views, values, ideas, and places as revealed in thematic qualitative clusters. In reviewing the data, we will first ask if there are common themes identified by interviewees, then compare them to the themes identified in previous literature to find out if our findings about San Bernardino residents reflect existing knowledge about general attitudes towards ex-offenders.

Procedures

Data will be gathered by conducting in person interviews using the interview instrument attached in the appendix. Participants will be selected purposively based on their status as employers of San Bernardino residents, social service workers serving communities with high concentrations of ex-offenders, or community center workers employed in communities with high concentrations of ex-offenders. Consent to interview participants will be obtained through telephone, email, or face-to-face contact and consenting participants will be interviewed in person at a time and place of their choosing.

Participation in this study will be voluntary and participants will be able to withdraw from the study at any time during the interview, or afterwards by contacting the researchers. Interviews are expected to take between fifteen and thirty minutes and will be conducted in person by one researcher. Interviewees will be compensated for their time with a twenty dollar gift card. The process of identifying potential interviewees, gaining consent, and conducting interviews is expected to take no more than four months.

Protection of Human Subjects

Although the researchers will need identifying information to contact potential participants, no identifying information will be recorded as part of either the requests for consent to conduct interviews, the interviews themselves, or any post-interview contact. To further protect confidentiality, all data collected will be stored in a locked box accessible only to the researchers. Participants will be given informed consent statements before being interviewed and debriefing statements after their interviews. No information will be recorded on individuals who do not wish to be interviewed and, should participants choose to withdraw their consent at any time prior to publication, no records of their participation will be published.

Due to the study's focus on individuals holding specific positions in San Bernardino, there will be certain unavoidable limitations to confidentiality. Although the names of individuals will not be recorded, the positions they hold within San Bernardino may be considered identifying information. To further

protect participants, only information needed to group them with a community leader type (employer, community center worker, social service provider) will be published and the regions of interest will only be identified as “locations with high concentrations of ex-offenders”. These limitations to confidentiality will be discussed in the informed consent and debriefing statements.

Data Analysis

The study will explore people, places, things, and ideas, as revealed in thematic clusters. The method of research that is going to be used to complete the data analysis is qualitative and exploratory. To analyze the collected data, the audiotape face-to-face interviews will be transcribed and the data will be categorized in significant thematic clusters to allow us to identify correlations between common themes, and between themes and respondents. We will draw conclusions with the analyzed data alone, and by comparing the data with the conclusions of other studies on community attitudes towards ex-offenders.

Summary

Chapter three described how the study was designed. A sampling population was identified and procedures were provided. Data collection and the process of developing an instrument were described. Procedures for protecting human subjects were explained. How researchers are going to analyze the data was explained.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter presents data gathered through face to face interviews conducted in March and April 2015. It will present the demographics and responses of the participant views towards early-released offenders under AB-109. It will focus on common themes that were identified by the study. This chapter includes the findings of participants' attitudes towards the following areas; employment, safety, severity of the crime, criminal lifestyle, social support and relationships with ex-offenders.

Demographics

The demographic makeup of this study included male and female adults between the ages of 20 and 70 of black, white, and Hispanic ethnicities. The ethnic makeup of the sample group was 5 Hispanic, 3 White, and 3 Black meaning Blacks were overrepresented in this study when compared to the overall population of San Bernardino. Six females and five males were interviewed creating a slight overrepresentation of women in the sample. No age range was overrepresented across the entire sample group, though all social service worker interviewees were in the 31-40 age range. A visual breakdown of the participants organized by interviewee category (employer, community center worker, social service worker) is given in the tables below.

Table 1. Ethnicity

	Employers	Community Center Workers	Social Service Workers
Hispanic	2	1	2
White	2	0	1
Black	0	2	1

Table 2. Age

	20-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61+
Employers	2	0	1	1	0
Community Center Workers	0	0	2	0	1
Social Service Workers	0	4	0	0	0

Table 3. Gender

	Employers	Community Center Workers	Social Service Workers
Female	1	1	4
Male	3	2	0

Employment

Participants were asked to respond to a question identifying their attitudes towards ex-offenders competing for employment. Table 1 provides the various responses given by the participants. All the participants favored the idea of ex-offenders competing for employment. The common view expressed by the participants was the importance of employment for ex-offenders to successfully reintegrate into society.

Table 4. Employment

Interview #	Employment
1	“They have a right to have a job, I would rather them work so I feel very comfortable with them working and I would rather them work so if they’re up for the job and they get it, then they’re obviously they should obviously have that job you know, if they qualify more than someone who’s not an ex offender you know, they should get that job and it’s gonna be better for the community if they do have a job because then they’re not gonna wanna offend you know, that’s my opinion.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
2	“They need to work and eat to just like anybody else, you know and a lot of em do come out and they take the time to become skilled when they’re in, but its society’s responsibility to say if you can do good work I’ll hire you, but just like anybody else they need to know consequences can happen.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
3	“If they have like the skills to do it I don’t see a problem.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
5	“Why not? They deserve the right to be able to work just, just like we do. They deserve the right to have that second chance.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
6	“I feel that it’s gonna be a lot harder for them to go up against someone that’s not an offender.” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Interview #	Employment
7	“I think the honest ones should be able to have a second chance because you can tell those who want it or not.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
8	“I see it this way, if the individual has the skills then why shouldn't he get the job. We're in the social work field and if somebody has the tune up skills better than me, I think they deserve the job.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
9	“I believe if they have the prior experience and skills, then they should have an opportunity to come back and work.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
11	“Getting a job is the best thing and keeping them busy. It's fantastic, that's what they need.” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Safety

Participants were asked to respond to a question identifying their fears towards ex-offenders living nearby them. Table 2 provides the various responses given by the participants. Of the participants, six reported that they had no fears of an ex-offender living near them. Three participants reported they had fears of ex-offenders living near them due to their safety and the safety of their children. Two participants reported it would depend on the many factors, such as the crime they committed and their rehabilitation process.

Table 5. Safety

Interview #	Safety
1	<p>“Um..I think that as long as um they’re getting the resources they need, they’re getting jobs and they’re getting housing and that we have those resources available to them people that they’re working with to get that to happen, I don’t think there’s gonna be a big effect on the community.” (Survey interview, April 2015)</p>
2	<p>“I don’t have any fears you know. I I think, the most, the lot of them don’t want to reoffend, but I think uh...congregation amongst themselves with no positive outlet is the reason they end up reoffending” (Survey interview, April 2015)</p>
3	<p>“Well like anybody I would feel that it’s it’s dangerous...I have kids, I have kids so I worry, I don’t let em go out, I mean they can’t be kids the way I want em to be because I’m always constantly stressed out.” (Survey interview, April 2015)</p>
4	<p>“I don’t have no fears. Why should I fear something that I am?” (Survey interview, April 2015)</p>
7	<p>“It pretty much depends on what they did. . .It also brings me back to, I know my uncle is not going to steal from us. It’s kind of hard to say, you have to know what it feels like to be in that situation to give people the benefit of the doubt.” (Survey interview, April 2015)</p>
8	<p>“Personally, none because I am a father to a 10 year old and I usually keep her close. I’m not concerned that they are going to do something. It goes back to your perception on how these people are, how do you look at them. Do you put a stigma upon them or give them a second chance. I believe some of them do deserve a second chance.” (Survey interview, April 2015)</p>
9	<p>“I wouldn’t like to be on guard all the time, having to watch my back or having to worry about being out after dark. And since these offenders are not sex-offenders, there’s no system to where I can look them up and see if they are living nearby me. They are being released and we don’t where to. But the fact that these crimes are non-serious and nonviolent doesn’t worry me too much.” (Survey interview, April 2015)</p>

Interview #	Safety
10	“I have guns. I have a fear of when they gone through my door I might miss them. I am fully capable of defending myself for the most part. My kids are all grown, so I have the flexibility.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
11	“Well that they are going to hurt my kids or myself or that they are going to steal my stuff, you know it depends on what they are ex-offenders of.” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Severity of the Crime

Participants were asked to respond to a question identifying their change of comfort level with ex-offenders pertaining to the severity of their crime. Table 3 provides the various responses reported by the participants. Seven participants reported their comfort level changes with the higher of the severity of the crime. One participant reported their comfort does not change at all. Two participants reported that it would depend on the crime. One participant declined to respond to the question.

Table 6. Severity of the Crime

Interview #	Severity of the Crime
1	“The higher the severity, the more uncomfortable I would feel... *laughs* ...of course violent offenders, sex offenders, um I would feel uncomfortable with, but I mean just, you know say drug offenders I I wouldn't feel uncomfortable” (Survey interview, April 2015)
2	“It doesn't I mean. What they show me is how I treat them” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Interview #	Severity of the Crime
3	(In response to “how does your comfort level change with the severity of the crime) “Um it does I try like I said I try to treat everybody equal, but then there’s just some people you just kinda like you you’re kinda you’re weary of them because you know what they’ve done” (Survey interview, April 2015)
4	“I don’t like molesters, I don’t like rapists...I don’t like nothing that you have to harm a person” (Survey interview, April 2015)
7	“It pretty much depends on what they did.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
8	“I try not to get into levels because then I become part of the stigma.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
9	“It changes with the violence of the crime. For example, if someone robbed a store at gunpoint compared to someone robbing a store and killing the person, then that right there frightens me.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
10	“I don’t go through life afraid. I know a wide variety of people and I make my own independent decisions.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
11	“Oh absolutely, yes. It’s one thing to steal a parked car it’s another thing to hold a gun or a knife to someone’s head.” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Criminal Lifestyle

In their responses to other questions, most participants identified a “criminal lifestyle” or “criminal mindset” as a safety concern or a barrier to successful reintegration. Table 4 provides a various range of responses provided by the participants. The most common theme, identified by six participants, was that ex-offenders needed to change their “criminal lifestyle.” Another three participants identified “criminal mindset” as a concern for their community, while two participants did not mention either.

Table 7. Criminal Lifestyle

Interview #	Criminal Lifestyle
1	“Especially if they were from San Bernardino, going back to the place where they came from where they offended in then they’re gonna get reconnected with people that they, you know, their friends or whatnot so it’s probably more likely that they’ll reoffend if they’re going back and being, you know, with the same crowd that they were with before.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
2	“they come out with the jailhouse mentality and a way of doing things and they can’t do that out here and nobody’s telling them that” (Survey interview, April 2015)
3	“You know and that they won’t have any respect for our community as it is and they’ll pretty much have that jail mentality.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
6	“They would bring that lifestyle in (to the workplace) and since they already committed a crime I feel that they don’t think it’s that big of a deal.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
7	“I’m sure some of them would want to better themselves because they know what it’s like in there and they don’t want to go back to prison or jail. But at the same time, I feel like a lot of them might end up back in they system because it’s hard to change their ways.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
8	“Sometimes they don’t really go back to reforming, they go back to some of their old behaviors.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
9	“I believe in second chances and I think they deserve one if they are really trying to change. But I would like to see that they are mentally changing.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
10	“If they get too much help they won’t make the growth steps that it takes to move from a criminal lifestyle to another lifestyle. It’s not going to be easy for these people to make this transition.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
11	“They have to get new friends. That’s the problem, they have to find a new circle of friends.” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Social Support

Participants were asked to respond to a question identifying their thoughts on social support offered to ex-offenders entering the community. Table 5 provides nine of the responses provided by the participants. The most common response given by the participants emphasized of the importance of providing social support for ex-offenders upon reintegrating into the community. The different factors participants identified as important social support include: family, friends, and programs like counseling, vocational training, and work readiness assistance.

Table 8. Social Support

Interview #	Social Support
1	"It's very important I think for people for ex-offenders to have social support, strong social support." (Survey interview, April 2015)
3	"Well, I know I understand people have to live and because they can't get jobs...but not better support than what they give the people who actually work." (Survey interview, April 2015)
5	"It's very important to have, the more you have them out there and socialize with people, the more you teach them how to be productive in society it could be a plus. As far as money wise I don't think it should be as easy if you're not giving back to the community." (Survey interview, April 2015)
6	"Um I think it's good trying to, trying to help em out because everybody has different views on ex-offenders." (Survey interview, April 2015)
7	"More programs that would help them with transitioning into the community." (Survey interview, April 2015)

Interview #	Social Support
8	“I don’t think there’s any social support besides the counseling. . . I wish there was more help for them because I know sometimes there are good people.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
9	“I believe it’s necessary. Whether it’s just a couple of people, but they need that support. In some ways, it’s critical for their success in reintegrating the community.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
10	“The biggest social support they should have is assistance to finding work. They should have some sort of job program or job training program. . . In general, I don’t think they should get financial assistance, they should get practical assistance.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
11	“I kind of wish there was more of it because I think it would keep these guys out of trouble.” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Relationship with Ex-Offenders

Participants were asked to respond to a question identifying their experiences with ex-offenders in their personal and professional lives. Table 6 provides the various experiences the participants have encountered with ex-offenders. Four participants reported they have experience with ex-offenders in their professional life only and three reported having experience with ex-offenders in their personal life only. Four participants reported they have experiences with ex-offenders in both their personal and professional lives.

Table 9. Relationship with Ex-Offenders

Interview #	Relationship with Ex-Offenders
1	“Um...none um, I know I have some people now that I work with that do have a criminal record that have been to jail before and um, that’s the only experience I have” (Survey interview, April 2015)
2	“Well through the clubhouse system sometime we have a lot of ex-offenders come through.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
3	“I have worked with them, I try to treat everybody equal, but some of em, just their mentality coming out is, I dunno, I don’t understand it, I don’t get it.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
4	“Every day, right here I see em every day, all over San Bernardino, I’m a homeboy.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
5	“I do work alongside an ex offender, I remember now. I was okay with it. I was okay with it I would just always have my eye on her because of offenses that she does commit or how she does behave.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
7	“Yes, I have as far as family and friends. My uncle was charged with distribution of drugs. I understand people do get into trouble and they bounce back.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
8	“My uncle had it pretty rough, he served a short prison sentence. There are also a couple of people in my church too. They still have those weird behaviors, they act a little different.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
9	“I do have experience with ex-offenders in my family. Anywhere from non-serious crimes to violent crimes. And of course they come in and out.” (Survey interview, April 2015)
11	“I just bought breakfast for a friend of mine, who has 5 felonies. . . I make independent judgments. I look at the whole person, what does this person have to offer. . . I’ve also hired a couple of ex-offenders.” (Survey interview, April 2015)

Summary

This chapter covered both the demographics and the qualitative findings of the study. The qualitative data was analyzed and ranked in order of the most important factors identified by the participants. The major themes identified were employment, safety, severity of the crime, criminal lifestyle, social support, and relationship with ex-offenders. All of these participants were able to elaborate on their view towards early-released offenders under AB-109. The results of the qualitative data will be further interpreted and examined in the next chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

Chapter five will discuss the results and limitations of this qualitative study. After reviewing the findings, this chapter will explore their implications for social work practice, policy, and future research.

Discussion

Upon analysis of the qualitative data, we have identified six major themes in community member attitudes towards ex-offenders released under AB-109. Ranked in order from most important to least important in understanding how the attitudes of San Bernardino community members will impact ex-offender reentry, the six themes are: employment, safety, severity of the crime, criminal lifestyle, social support, and relationship with ex-offenders.

We identified employment as the most critical factor in the successful reintegration of ex-offenders into the San Bernardino community. This conclusion is consistent with Visher, Winterfield, and Coggeshall (2005) findings that stable and satisfying employment is the best predictor of post release success. The respondents in universally supported ex-offenders competing with the general population for employment, and a number of respondents identified employment as a key protective factor against recidivism. In response to the question of ex-offender employment, one

respondent stated, “Getting a job is the best thing and keeping them busy. It’s fantastic, it’s what they need to keep them out of jail,” (Participant 11, survey interview, April 2015).

We have also interpreted employment as an indicator of the community’s willingness to give ex-offenders a second chance. The majority of the respondents expressed their willingness to offer a second chance by working alongside them. One respondent stated, “They deserve the right to be able to work, just like we do. They deserve the right to have that second chance,” (Participant 5, survey interview, April 2015). Another respondent stated, “I believe if they have the prior experience and skills, then they should have an opportunity to come back and work,” (Participant 9, survey interview, April 2015). All respondents believed ex-offenders should have an opportunity in employment, but concerns were raised in regards to them receiving advantages in hiring. On the topic of fairness in hiring, one respondent stated “But if it’s something for some reason a company is looking to hire ex-offenders specifically, in a way something like affirmative action, then I disagree. I don’t believe they should get special treatment,” (Participant 9, survey interview, April 2015).

Ex-offenders are typically characterized by poor work histories and limited skills, but there are some former offenders who have held jobs before incarceration and are only barred from employment by their their criminal record (Visher, Winterfield, & Coggeshall, 2005). A criminal background

impedes offenders from obtaining legitimate employment. Two out of the four hiring managers/employers interviewed did not hire ex-offenders due to their company's policy, however, they expressed their personal opinion in regards to this matter as one respondent stated, "Honestly, if I wasn't told by higher ups to toss the application away I would consider interviewing them for the job." (Participant 7, survey interview, April 2015) This finding is congruent with the study of Holzer (1996) who found through his research that between 30 and 40 percent of the employers had recently hired an ex-offender.

We have also interpreted employment within the community as a route to self-sufficiency for ex-offenders, a conclusion that is consistent with past research on the topic. Stable employment is needed in order to be able to meet their basic needs such as housing, food, and clothing (Brown, 2011). Our findings indicate that within San Bernardino, there are a number of employers and community members who are willing to support ex-offenders' attempt to become self-sufficient by hiring them or being open to competing with them for jobs. One respondent expressed his opinion on ex-offenders competing for employment and becoming self-sufficient in stating, "Do I mind felons competing for jobs? No, the job is a starting point. What they really should be doing is start their own business," (Participant 11, survey interview, April 2015). This respondent went on to further discuss the need of teaching entrepreneurial skills to formerly incarcerated offenders, in hopes of making their transition into the community smoother.

The second most important attitudinal theme we have identified is safety. In this study, we have interpreted the community's feelings about AB-109 ex-offenders' impact on safety as ambiguous. The study revealed differing levels of trust within the community. A slight majority of the interviewees reported they had no fears of ex-offenders entering their community. As one participant stated, "I don't think it would be a bad impact because they're not, you know, hardcore offenders," (Participant 5, survey interview, April 2015). A second participant stated, "the fact that these crimes are non-serious and nonviolent doesn't worry me too much," (Participant 9, survey interview, April 2015). Employers and hiring managers seemed to express the same belief. However, they expressed concerns in regards to their personal safety. This finding is congruent with that of Giguere and Dundes (2002) study that found employers were more likely to look past crimes such as property crimes and drug offenses, but were less likely to look past more serious crimes such as robbery and sex-crimes. These findings may indicate that there are segments of the population that have no safety concerns about the AB-109 population and will have no qualms about interacting with them personally and professionally.

Unfortunately for AB 109 ex-offenders, almost half of the respondents were concerned for their safety and several expressed fears that ex-offenders might become violent. An employer stated, "I would have concerns for my physical safety...or used to solving things physically instead of having a

discussion,” (Participant 10, survey interview, April 2015). Another employer added, “I’ve worked alongside with ex-offenders before. My concern is really that they’ll hurt me,” (Participant 11, survey interview, April 2015). The presence of children in the community also appears to increase safety concerns as several respondents indicated that they feared for their children’s safety or that their fears would be greater if they had children. One respondent stated, “Well like anybody I would feel that it’s it’s dangerous...I have kids, I have kids so I worry, I don’t let em go out, I mean they can’t be kids the way I want em to be because I’m always constantly stressed out” (Participant 3, survey interview, April 2015). Not all respondents who discussed their children were fearful of ex-offenders, but the fact that many were leads us to believe that ex-offenders may face especially strong community resistance if they live in areas with large numbers of children. Because parents with small children gravitate towards safer parts of the city, this could force ex-offenders into areas that already have a strong criminal element and ultimately lead to increased risk of recidivism.

Our overall conclusion about respondent attitudes about safety is that there are different levels of trust within the community. While other participants expressed their acceptance towards working alongside offenders stating, “I wouldn’t be too worried because if the employers are okay, then why wouldn’t I be,” (Participant 7, survey interview, April 2015). This participant seemed to support and trust in their employer’s decision of hiring an ex-offender. Overall,

the community seemed to have different beliefs on how the safety of their community would be impacted.

The third most important theme we identified was that the severity of an ex-offender's crime tends to impact how the community perceives them. Our respondent responses are consistent with the findings of Giguere and Dundes (2002), and Albright and Denq (1996) that employers are less likely to hire ex-offenders who committed violent or sexual crimes. In addition to supporting the existing literature on hiring preferences, we found that the severity of an ex-offender's crime impacted respondents' willingness to work alongside them, their perceived impact on community safety, and respondents' overall opinion of them. We believe that the severity of an ex-offender's crime had a marked impact on most respondents' views on employment, safety, criminal mindset, and the possibility of reform.

This trend may have mixed results for the AB 109 population. On the one hand, AB 109 ex-offenders were released from non-violent, non-sexual charges so the natural conclusion would be that the community will accept them more easily than they would be of other ex-offenders. Several community members stated that they did not have a problem with the AB 109 population because their crimes were not serious. This sentiment is illustrated by one respondent's statement, "The higher the severity, the more uncomfortable I would feel...of course violent offenders, sex offenders I would feel uncomfortable with, but just drug offenders I I wouldn't feel

uncomfortable.” (Participant 1, survey interview, April 2015) There were also three respondents who stated that they had made a conscious choice not to judge ex-offenders no matter what crime they committed. This may mean that a significant portion of San Bernardino residents either have no preconceptions about ex-offenders entering the community, or are willing to ignore their preconceptions and give ex-offenders a truly fresh start.

Our respondents’ willingness to accept non-violent, non-sexual offenders into their community may give us reason to be optimistic for AB 109 ex-offenders entering San Bernardino, but their views at the time of the interviews may not be representative of those held by the community as a whole. Before we first contacted our participants, many of them knew little or nothing about AB 109. Assuming that our sample is representative of San Bernardino’s population, it is likely that most community members are equally uninformed on the specifics of the AB 109 law. This means that many community members will not know that AB 109 ex-offenders were released from non-violent, non-sexual charges, and may be more fearful of the population than our survey results suggest. It is also important to note that, while AB 109 ex-offenders were serving non-violent, non-sexual charges at the time of their release, some of them have long histories of incarceration and have served time for violent or sexual offenses in the past. It is likely that community members will be less accepting of those ex-offenders who have

previously committed violent or sexual crimes even if their most recent crime is not violent or sexual.

The fourth most important theme we identified was the belief that the “criminal mindset” is permanent that reentering ex-offenders would continue their criminal lifestyle after their release. The community also expressed a belief that the “criminal lifestyle” or “criminal mindset” may be a barrier to a successful reintegration into the San Bernardino community. Community expressed skepticism about the possibility that ex-offenders will reform upon reentering the community. Respondents attributed the lasting criminal mindset to several factors including the lack of employment opportunities in the city, ex-offenders returning to old circles of friends, and behaviors learned while incarcerated. About half of the participants linked the city’s financial state to ex-offender recidivism, stating that ex-offenders who were not able to find work would go back to their old behavior. One participant believed the city’s high crime rate and poor economic state would limit the opportunities for ex-offenders, which would cause them to resource to what they know best to fulfill their needs. Another participant expressed their belief that reconnecting with the same circle of friends that got them in trouble in the first place would lead them to reoffend. For many ex-offenders going in and out of jail is a vicious cycle that becomes part of their lives. Studies have found this cycle to usually start with juvenile delinquency and lead to criminal activity in adulthood (Blomberg, Bales, Mann, Piquero, & Berk, 2011). During their incarceration,

offenders are told when to eat, when to shower, when to go to sleep, and when they can have visits. For some of them, their contact may even be restricted with other inmates as they may be housed in solitary confinement. All these factors can cause an individual to become institutionalized. For the purpose of this paper, institutionalization is being defined as having the psychological effects of being incarcerated for a long period of time. This can cause difficulties upon returning to the community by making the transitioning process for the individual more difficult.

The fifth theme we identified in our data was the importance of social support in the reintegration process. Nearly every respondent expressed a desire for more social support to be provided for individuals reentering their community, stating that it was a key part of successful reintegration. Those who did not express a desire to see more social support still viewed it as an important component to successful reintegration or vital to the rehabilitation process. Despite the value respondents placed on social support, a lack of available support was mentioned by most respondents. Some mentioned that there was a lack of support from close family and friends. Others mentioned the lack of resources and training programs. One participant believed the primary reason individuals get arrested is because they are mentally ill. (Participant 10, survey interview, April 2015) This participant's belief runs contrary to the findings of Paula Ditton (1999) who found that only about 16% of the incarcerated population suffer from a mental illness. Additionally, most

jails screen inmates for psychiatric illnesses at intake (Adams & Ferrandino, 2008) mental health treatment is available within the jails so many mentally ill ex-offenders are receiving treatment. Another respondent expressed their belief that one of the social support systems ex-offenders need is counseling (Participant 8, survey interview, March 2015). In San Bernardino, there is a day reporting center which functions as a “one stop shop” to address the assessed needs for parolees including individual and group counseling offered by both the San Bernardino probation department and the CHOICE program. Other cities like San Bernardino’s neighbor Riverside also have specific programs to help address the needs of early-released offenders under AB 109. There seems to be a consensus that more programs are needed to focus on the individual needs of this population to make their reintegration into society successful. Overall, the responses given by the community seemed to show compassion towards this vulnerable population.

The sixth most important theme we identified was that every respondent had at least one past or current personal or professional relationship with an ex-offender, and almost half of the participants either had a close personal relationship with an ex-offender or numerous working relationships with ex-offenders. If our sample is representative of the city’s general population, we can conclude that San Bernardino residents commonly have at least one personal or professional relationship with an ex-offender.

The most likely explanation for this finding is the city's unusually high crime rate, but the trend may have positive implications for the AB 109 population.

The presence of ex-offenders in the personal and professional lives of our respondents means they are likely more aware of the needs and challenges of ex-offenders than the average member of a different community. This increased understanding may explain why every participant expressed a belief that social support is important to the reentry process regardless of their opinions on other subjects. Our respondents' past relationships with ex-offenders did not however, lead them to believe all ex-offenders can reform and several respondents with multiple relationships with ex-offenders believed some ex-offenders would never let go of their criminal mindsets. Overall, we believe the participants' past relationships with ex-offenders makes them more aware of the needs and challenges of the AB 109 population and may have a positive impact on their beliefs about safety, employment and social support, but may have a mixed impact on their views about the possibility of reform.

Study Limitations

This study is limited by the fact that the participants may be hesitant to fully share their views because they have no prior relationship with the researchers and may be wary of having their views publicized. Participant views expressed may not be completely truthful because participants may be influenced by the participants' perceptions of what views are most socially acceptable. Participant self-selection may also impact the study's findings as

participation is voluntary and we do not know how potential participant attitudes may impact their willingness to consent to interview. Also, cognitive fatigue may be a limitation if the interview goes over the suggested time due to the open-ended nature of questions. The small sample size of our study will also prevent it from assessing the attitudes of the entire community.

Implications for Social Work

Our finding that there is so much variation between San Bernardino employers in their willingness to hire ex-offenders and city residents in their willingness to work alongside ex-offenders is this study's most important observation for the field of social work. Before assisting ex-offenders with their job seeking efforts, practitioners should identify community employers who have hired ex-offenders in the past or are open to hiring ex-offenders. We recommend that practitioners develop and maintain a list of ex-offender friendly employers to share with their clients who are seeking employment. Similarly, practitioners should identify community resource providers that have had experience working with ex-offenders in the past and who are optimistic about the possibility of successful reintegration. We believe these are good practices when working with ex-offenders in any community, but they are especially important in communities with high crime rates and where a majority of community members have prior experience with ex-offenders.

On a macro level, we believe social workers should take an active role in educating community members on the specifics of AB 109 and other highly

publicized laws that release large numbers of ex-offenders into communities. The majority of our respondents stated that the severity of an ex-offender's crime impacts their view of the individual, but the majority also had limited knowledge of AB 109 before speaking with us besides that it released a large number of ex-offenders into the community. Assuming our sample is representative of the entire community, informing the public that AB 109 is not releasing anyone serving time for a violent or sexual offense would help reduce fear related to the influx of early released prisoners.

Recommendations for Future Research

More research needs to be conducted to determine whether or not the views expressed by this study's respondents are similar to the views held by the community as a whole. In this study every respondent had at least one past or present relationship with an ex-offender. Additional research is needed to find out if this trend is consistent across the entire community. This study also identified a range of opinions regarding the impact ex-offenders have on safety within a community and supported existing findings that a common community response to ex-offenders is a fear of victimization (Lynch & Sabol, 2004; Leverentz, 2011). Additional research is needed to find out what other factors are linked with community members' views on safety. This study also identified a common fear that ex-offenders will carry their criminal mindsets into the community, we were not able to identify a link between that belief and a concern for community safety. Additional research is needed to discover

what correlations exist between views on safety and views on lasting criminal mindsets or the possibility of reform.

More research is also needed to find out if there is a correlation between prior relationships with ex-offenders and the willingness to hire or work alongside an ex-offender. Past research on ex-offender employment has linked past employer contact with ex-offenders and willingness to hire ex-offenders (Giguere & Dundes, 2002), but more focused research is needed to determine how the two variables interact and if the relationship changes in a community where prior relationships with ex-offenders are more common. Future research into the possible correlation between relationships with ex-offenders and willingness to hire ex-offenders should also consider the nature of the prior relationships and how many ex-offenders each employer has known personally. Giguere and Dundes (2002) found that 60% of employers had occasional contact with ex-offenders and 15% had frequent contact, but did not ask about the nature of the relationships.

Additional research is also needed to further explore the community's willingness to establish supportive relationships with ex-offenders or fund programs providing social support to ex-offenders. The respondents of this study all stated that they felt social support was important, but they each defined social support differently and only two discussed their role in providing social support. Future research focusing on the existing supportive

relationships between ex-offenders and community members might help better understand the social support offered in this community.

Finally, this study aimed to identify community attitudes towards ex-offenders in hopes of understanding how they impact reintegration and recidivism rates, but additional research is needed to understand how San Bernardino's ex-offender population interacts with the community. Future research should explore the interaction between ex-offenders and the community from the ex-offender's perspective. Additional research is also needed to understand how reentry programs like CHOICE interact with the community. We have a better understanding of the community's view towards ex-offenders, but we learned little about community members' attitudes towards reentry programs. It is likely that community attitudes towards ex-offenders will be impacted by their understanding of the city's reentry programs and beliefs about their effectiveness. If we are to fully understand how the community's attitudes impact recidivism, future research will need to explore the interaction between community members and ex-offenders from every possible perspective.

APPENDIX A
INTERVIEW INSTRUMENT

Interview Instrument

- 1.) **Before we first contacted you, what did you know about AB 109 and what are were your thoughts on the law?**
 - This aims to establish a baseline for the participant's knowledge of our population of focus, discover any strong feelings they may have towards the law, and find out if their views relate to individuals released under AB 109 or to ex-offenders in general.

- 2.) **How familiar are you with the services offered by San Bernardino County to ex-offenders released under AB 109?**
 - This will expand on our understanding of the participant's knowledge of our population of focus and help us compare attitudes between respondents who are familiar with the population versus respondents who are not. Follow-up questions will address the respondent's view on the services they are familiar with.

- 3.) **What experience have you had with ex-offenders in your personal life?**
 - This question is based on findings by Albright & Denq (1996) that employers who have had personal relationships with an ex-offender are more likely to hire ex-offenders. It also aims to draw out experiences respondents have had with ex-offenders in the past in hopes of connecting them with current attitudes towards ex-offenders.

- 4.) **What experience have you had with ex-offenders in your professional life?**
 - Similar to question 2, this question is based on findings by Albright & Denq (1996) that employers who have hired an ex-offender in the past are more likely to be willing to hire ex-offenders in the future. It also aims to draw out experiences respondents have had with ex-offenders in the past in hopes of connecting them with current attitudes towards ex-offenders.

- 5.) **What kind of impact do you think AB 109 will have in the safety of your community?**
 - This question will help us determine how welcoming participants may be towards ex-offenders which relates to their willingness to provide social support and the stigma ex-offenders will feel upon entering the community. It also relates to a finding by Leverentz (2011) that a perception that crime is getting worse is linked with more punitive attitudes towards offenders.

- 6.) **How likely do you feel ex-offenders are to reform once they enter the community?**
 - This question relates to the value the respondent may see in providing support to ex-offenders and their general acceptance of the population.
- 7.) **How welcoming do you think your community is to ex-offenders?**
 - This question further explores the respondent's beliefs about their community's willingness to provide social support.
- 8.) **What factors do you think make it hard for ex-offenders entering San Bernardino to avoid re-offense?**
 - This question aims to identify reentry factors specific to San Bernardino.
- 9.) **What are your thoughts on social support offered to ex-offenders entering your community?**
 - This question aims to gather information on the likelihood that ex-offenders in San Bernardino will be able to find social support. Follow-up questions will focus on the reasoning for the respondent's answer and how their views have changed in response to AB 109.
- 10.) **What fears do you have about ex-offenders living nearby?**
 - In addition to providing insight on specific fears respondents may have that may impact their willingness to provide social support, this question will help us compare our findings to Leverentz (2011) and Lynch & Sabol (2004) which wrote that a fear of victimization is a common part of the attitude most communities have towards ex-offenders.
- 11.) **How does your comfort level with ex-offenders change with the severity of their crime?**
 - This aims to explore the respondent's attitude towards different types of offenders and discover if any differences exist between their attitudes towards offenders released by AB 109 and ex-offenders in general due to the non-violent/non-sexual most recent offense stipulation of AB 109. It relates to findings by Giguere & Dundes (2002) and Albright & Denq (1996) that the type of crime committed by an ex-offender is a major factor in an employer's decision to hire or not hire them.
- 12.) **What concerns would you have working alongside an ex-offender?**
 - This question aims to explore respondent attitudes on employment of ex-offenders. It is based on findings by Giguere and Dundes that

employers may be hesitant to hire ex-offenders because for fear that co-workers would be concerned about working with them.

13.) How do you feel about ex-offenders competing for employment?

- This question relates to San Bernardino's high unemployment rate and aims to ask whether the city's lack of jobs has an impact on community attitudes that is not discussed in past literature on other communities.

Questions for Employers Only

1.) Have you hired an ex-offender in the past.

- this question is based on findings by Albright & Denq (1996) that employers who have hired an ex-offender in the past are more likely to be willing to hire ex-offenders in the future.

2.) What concerns would you have in employing an ex-offender.

- This question intends to allow employers to discuss whatever concerns come to mind during the hiring process. It is intentionally vague because suggesting possible concerns may harm the validity of the study.

3.) How would the nature of an ex-offender's crime impact your willingness to hire them.

- This question relates to findings by Giguere & Dundes (2002) and Albright & Denq (1996) that the type of crime committed by an ex-offender is a major factor in an employer's decision to hire or not hire them.

APPENDIX B
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

The study in which you are being asked to participate is designed to assess community members' attitudes towards parolees under Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109). This study is being conducted by Master of Social Work student's Mari Herrera and Matthew McGiffen under the supervision of Dr. Thomas Davis, PhD, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino. This study has been approved by the Institutional Review Board, California State University, San Bernardino.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this study is to capture beliefs and attitudes towards early-released offenders under AB 109. This study will identify common themes in attitudes held by community leaders and other influential community members towards AB 109 parolees.

DESCRIPTION: Participants will complete a face-to-face interview in which 13 to 16 questions will be asked. The interview may last 15 to 30 minutes.

PARTICIPATION: Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may refuse to participate at any time and may freely withdraw from participation at any time. You may skip or not answer any questions you do not wish to answer.

CONFIDENTIALITY: Your interview responses will be completely confidential. All data obtained will be reported without identifying information and all responses will be kept in a locked box to protect your confidentiality. The audio recordings will be destroyed 1 year after the project has ended.

DURATION: The interview will involve approximately 15 to 30 minutes of your time.

RISKS: There are no known or identified risks with your participation in this study.

BENEFITS: It is hoped that the results obtained will provide the groundwork for future studies to better assess the attitudes of the entire San Bernardino community towards the AB 109 population.

VIDEO/AUDIO/PHOTOGRAPH: I understand that this research will be audio recorded. Yes or No

CONTACT: If you have any questions regarding this study or about research participant rights, you may contact research advisor Dr. Thomas Davis, PhD at 909-537-3839. Email: tomDavis@csusb.edu

RESULTS: The results for this study can be obtained after September 2015 at the Pfau Library at California State University, San Bernardino located at 5500 University Parkway San Bernardino, CA 92407.

CONFIRMATION STATEMENT: I have read the information above and agree to participate in your study.

SIGNATURE: (Place an X) Signature: _____ Date: _____

APPENDIX C
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

**Study of Community Attitudes Towards Early-Released
Offenders Under AB 109
Debriefing Statement**

This study you have just completed was designed to assess community members' attitudes towards parolees under Assembly Bill 109 (AB 109). This study will identify common themes in attitudes held by community leaders and other influential community members towards AB 109 parolees. It is hoped that the results of this study will provide the groundwork for future studies to better assess the attitudes of the entire San Bernardino community towards the AB 109 population.

Thank you for your participation and for not discussing the contents of the interview with other community leaders. If you have any questions about the study, please feel free to contact: Dr. Thomas Davis, PhD, Professor of Social Work, California State University, San Bernardino at (909)537-3839 or email tomdavis@csusb.edu, Mari Herrera, MSW student, California State University, San Bernardino at (951) 901-3353 or email herrm310@coyote.csusb.edu, Matthew McGiffen, MSW student, California State University, San Bernardino at (951) 743-9310 or email mcgiffem@coyote.csusb.edu.

APPENDIX D
INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview 1
White Female Age 30-40

Interviewer: "Before we first contacted you, what did you know about AB 109 and what were your thoughts on the law?"

Respondent: "Um what I knew about 109, AB 109 was that they were letting offenders, low crime, how do you say that, low crime offenders um... out to save money for the prison system um, and back into the community. For my research study I had learned that a lot of them were being sent to Hemett I was told and low income areas that already had high crime so I don't know if that's an issue. Um...so yeah that's basically what I know."

Interviewer: "How familiar are you with the services offered by San Bernardino County to ex-offenders released by AB 109?"

Respondent: "I don't know much about the services that are given."

Interviewer: "What experience have you had with ex-offenders in your personal life?"

Respondent: "Um wait I wanna go back to the last question."

Interviewer: "Okay"

Respondent: "I do know that the housing authority of the county of San Bernardino uh, I know that they have a housing, they have two that I know of, they have two different housing programs for AB 109. That's all I know."

Interviewer: "Okay. Um and what experience have you had with ex-offenders in your personal life?"

Respondent: "Ex offenders um..."

Interviewer: "Probationers, parolees, newly released offenders."

Respondent: "Um...none um, I know I have some people now that I work with that do have a criminal record that have been to jail before and um, that's the only experience I have and working with those people its hard to get them into housing because nobody because you know they always check criminal background and when that comes up within the past ten years they don't generally wanna take em so that's the one challenge and the one experience I have with criminal offenders."

Interviewer: "And that kind of answers it, but if there's more you'd like to say, what experience have you had with ex offenders in your professional life?"

Respondent: "Yeah that's, yeah cause I don't have any in my personal, but in my professional that's, that's the challenge is getting those people housed cause of their criminal records so."

Interviewer: "And what kind of impact do you think AB 109 will have on the safety of your community?"

Respondent: "Um..I think that as long as um they're getting the resources they need, they're getting jobs and they're getting housing and that we have those resources available to them people that they're working with to get that to happen, I don't think there's gonna be a big effect on the community. As long as they're getting the resources that they need, like I said as far as housing and jobs, then they're not gonna, I don't think that they're gonna recommit. And a lot of times I think that criminals commit crimes because they're living in poverty, they're stealing, they're doing things to survive so if you take them out of survival mode they're more likely to want to work with the, you know, work, you know be a good citizen."

Interviewer: "Um how welcoming do you think your community is to ex offenders?"

Respondent: "Uh my community that I personally live in?"

Interviewer: "Either that you live in or you work in."

Respondent: "Um well the community that I live in um, they are not very welcoming um, as far as I know like in Hemett San Jacinto, in Hemett I know that we have a lot of AB 109, not that we're welcoming to it, but that somehow, politically or some way or other they've been, so from hearsay, they've been sent, a lot of been them has been sent there, but the community's not open to it we don't, they don't like it, but it's just happened that way somehow so, yeah, if that makes sense."

Interviewer: "And uh, what factors do you think make it hard for ex-offenders entering San Bernardino to avoid reoffense? What makes it hard for people en...uh ex-offenders to avoid reoffense in San Bernardino?"

Respondent: "What are you? Repeat it I'm sorry."

Interviewer: "What factors do you think make it hard for ex-offenders entering San Bernardino to avoid reoffense?"

Respondent: "The county or the city?"

Interviewer: "The city"

Respondent: "The city? Um I think probably because the city of San Bernardino is just very overstricken with poverty um, like half of the community is on some sort of assistance, there's a lot of crime um so going back to, especially if they were from San Bernardino, going back to the place where they came from where they offended in then they're gonna get reconnected with people that they, you know, their friends or whatnot so it's probably more likely that they'll reoffend if they're going back and being, you know, with the same crowd that they were with before."

Interviewer: "Um and what are your thoughts on social support offered to ex offenders entering your community?"

Respondent: "What is it?"

Interviewer: "What are your thoughts on social support offered to ex offenders entering your community?"

Respondent: "Um I think that they need social support. I think that's a huge factor for people who succeed. Um social support is helpful for finding a job because you know people have connections, they know people. Um having somewhere to go having people to lean on, it's very important I think for people for ex offenders to have social support, strong social support."

Interviewer: "What fears do you have about ex offenders living nearby?"

Respondent: "Um I guess my only fear would be that they're not getting the resources and the help that they need. Um and that they may be, because of that then they may be um, a threat to the community I guess. But if they are receiving those services those resources than they're less of a threat so my only concern is that they're not getting the resources and the help that they need to become stable um...yeah.

Interviewer: "How does your comfort level with ex offenders change with the severity of their crime?"

Respondent: "The higher the severity, the more uncomfortable I would feel...*laughs*...of course violent offenders, sex offenders, um I would feel uncomfortable with, but I mean just, you know say drug offenders I I wouldn't feel, what's the word you used?"

Interviewer: "Comfortable"

Respondent: "I wouldn't feel uncomfortable with them, or theft or I dunno, depending."

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have working alongside an ex offender?"

Respondent: "What concerns would I have? I think it would depend on like you said the severity of the crime. I wouldn't wanna work with sex offenders I know that's one of my biases, I would not wanna work with sex offenders, that's probably my only uh...ummm, what's the question again?"

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have working alongside an ex offender?"

Respondent: "Um yeah so I guess it would be, I guess it would just depend on the severity of it, if they were gonna harm me or something uh, yeah, I dunno how to answer that."

Interviewer: "How do you feel about ex offenders competing for employment?"

Respondent: "Um... *speaking to herself* how do I feel about ex offenders competing for employment? *speaking to me* I feel okay with it I mean, they have a right to have a job, I would rather them work so I feel very comfortable with them working and I would rather them work so if they're up for the job and they get it, then they're obviously they should obviously have that job you know, if they qualify more than someone who's not an ex offender you know, they should get that job and it's gonna be better for the community if they do have a job because then they're not gonna wanna offend you know, that's my opinion."

Interviewer: "Um and finally, without providing any identifying information on where you live, where you work, your employer, could you give a little information on what you do professionally and your professional background?"

Respondent: "Um okay so I do rapid rehousing, we get referrals from a particular agency and um...we work with those families who are homeless and we help them find landlords um that are willing to work with them um within their income and whatever circumstances maybe an eviction or a criminal background and we help them find permanent housing. And we pay deposit, first months rent, application fees um, holding deposits um, anything that helps them move into a place of permanent housing."

Interviewer: "And your profess...your educational background?"

Respondent: "Masters of Social Work."

Interviewer: "Okay, okay that's it, thank you very much."

Respondent: "You're welcome."

Interview 2
Black Male Age 40-50

Interviewer: "Before I first talked to you, what did you know about AB 109 and what were your thoughts on the law?"

Respondent: "Uh AB 109 I didn't know very much, I knew it dealt with early release and probation and parolees and stuff like that. Uh I guess it deals a little bit with uh...mental diagnosis also, is that part of it or is it just early release or?"

Interviewer: "I can't answer that kind of question in this, I'd be happy to talk with you after the interview, just about the law"

Respondent: "Right well that's pretty much all I know about it ya know, which I really think that, you know, something like that for I mean people coming out of incarceration you know back into society they need a transition. They need to be prepared before they leave uh, the facility and they need to be put in a place where they can be prepared to live on their own you know. Cause a lot of people that I've talked to really don't want them around you know, which is sad, but that's just reality you know. So pretty much they'll be living on their own or they'll be congregating with people who have been incarcerated like them."

Interviewer: "How familiar are you with the services offered by San Bernardino County to ex offenders released under AB 109?"

Respondent: "Not very familiar."

Interviewer: "What experiences have you had with ex offenders in your personal life?"

Respondent: "Well through the clubhouse system sometime we have a lot of ex offenders come through and uh they do have mental diagnosis and um, a lot of em are very good people they just made some mistakes you know. And I think reintegration back into society I mean they're not given a lot of chances you know, and they're held back by a lot of policies and procedures and the way things are put together because you know they make even one little mistake you know and they're locked up again you know. So they don't have any wiggle room which all of us have you know, they don't have that chance to make any mistakes you know, but they're going to because I really don't feel they're being properly prepared."

Interviewer: "What experience have you had with ex offenders in your professional life?"

Respondent: "A lot of them have been really good people, you know. And then there's a lot of them that don't want to do anything, you know. And they don't have the drive to want to do anything, you know. But for the most part in my experience, professional experience, they've all wanted to come out and do something."

Interviewer: "And uh what kind of impact do you think AB 109 will have in the safety of your community?"

Respondent: "*long pause* Wow...that's up to how well these people are prepared to come back into society, you know, and it's up to us to prepare them cause a lot of them went in young. And they're coming out old with no skills, no social skills, proper social skills or anything else you know, which is really not fair to them you know. Cause they come out with the jailhouse mentality and a way of doing things and they can't do that out here and nobody's telling them that that's...if they're telling them that that's not the way to live, just telling them, teaching them and showing them the model you know, or people that have been successful coming out. You know I don't think they're seeing a lot of that so they're not seeing a lot of successes from people that are like them, you know.

Interviewer: "How likely do you feel ex offenders are to reform once they enter the community?"

Respondent: "I would say maybe, prepared properly I would say at least 50% will not reoffend. If they're prepared properly coming out, you know."

Interviewer: "How welcoming do you think your community is to ex offenders?"

Respondent: "Well with my experience it's very welcoming, you know, it's good to see em not in that situation anymore and a lot of them are very very happy when they first come out you know, but the problem is there are not a lot of opportunities. You know so they do get discouraged after a week, two weeks, a month of just sittin around and not being able to do anything cause nobody wants to hire you and there's certain jobs you can do that you probably can't take care of a child on and you know and uh, there's back child support that needs to be paid usually and they can't do that and unfortunately child support division will stick the screws to em you know. And they'll end up having to owe all this money and that's what they see, I owe all this money, but I have no way to pay you know. And they get very discouraged and there not enough programs to help them with that and then they end up making a bad choice here and there you know, but I would say at least 40-50 percent won't reoffend if they're prepared properly."

Interviewer: "What are your thoughts on social support offered to ex offenders entering your community?"

Respondent: "Same thing *chuckles* same thing yeah. Social skills, a lot of em are very charismatic, I mean if you deal with a lot of offenders man they're very charismatic you know they learn that somewhere you know its something about em you know, but they can really make you believe that the sky is orange you know they can make you believe that. You know and uh I think if directed properly you know that kind of energy and that kind of skill could be an asset to society a complete asset you know."

Interviewer: "What fears do you have about ex offenders living nearby?"

Respondent: "I don't have any fears you know. I I think, the most, the lot of them don't want to reoffend, but I think uh...congregation amongst themselves with no positive outlet is the reason they end up reoffending you know. Because if they don't have any positive outlet somebody's gonna say dude we could just walk up and take that beer off that truck you know. And I mean if there's nothing else positive going on and they've been out five or six months with nothing to do you know, their mind is going like anybody else's mind you know, and if their mind is gotta sit idle its a playground, its a playground for things that are not positive. And they're more likely to do it because they've been there before, it's the norm for them."

Interviewer: "How does your comfort level with ex offenders change with the severity of their crime?"

Respondent: "It doesn't I mean. What they show me is how I treat them you know. If you show me that you're manipulative if you show me that you can be a danger you know and you show me and thats the way you feel you know, and that's what you're portraying then that's how I have to take you, you know. I mean it's the same in any kind of relationship between two people or two people meeting each other, what you show me is who I think you are cause I don't know you. But a lot of them don't learn that the way they had to be when they were incarcerated is not the way they have to be in society. You know you don't always have to have your chest poked out, you don't always have to be the toughest guy on the block, you don't always have to be those things in regular society you know. You can take a deep breath and you can just walk down the street without maddogging somebody, you know they don't need to know you're tough, all they wanna do is go about their business. We don't even teach the simple things to them you know, so when they come out they come out the way they were inside and creates a lot of problems for them. So I have no problems with them, what they show me is how I take you."

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have working alongside ex offenders?"

Respondent: "I don't have any concerns you know, I mean I'm diagnosed and with me being diagnosed I'm sure people have concerns with me you know working alongside them you know. And I can't I can't you know, the stigma of being incarcerated is I would say almost the same stigma you have with people diagnosed with mental illness, I think it's pretty much the same thing."

Interviewer: "How do you feel about ex offenders competing for employment?"

Respondent: "They need to work and eat to just like anybody else, you know and a lot of em do come out and they take the time to become skilled when they're in, but its society's responsibility to say if you can do good work I'll hire you, but just like anybody else they need to know consequences can happen. If you're late for work all the time, you don't do your job properly you're gonna get fired you know. And you're not getting fired because you were an offender, you're not getting fired because you were incarcerated, you're being fired because you didn't do your job, you know. People don't, they don't wanna take the time to let them know that you know and and I think a lot of em need to learn their lesson just like anybody else, if I don't do my job here ima get fired and ima get fired because of poor performance. They need to know that its not cause they were incarcerated they're being fired or being let go from the job, its not because they were incarcerated they're gonna get the job you know because preferential treatment they're not gonna treat the job the same if they earned it. When you earn something you treat it differently you know. And they're grown people just like me, they know they earned that they're gonna treat it with respect."

Interviewer: "And finally without providing any identifying information, could you tell us a little bit about your professional and educational background?"

Respondent: "Um I have a high school diploma and I've gone to many many trainings for the county for PFA and uh uh peer to peer counseling. Uh I've done uh I can't remember the name of that class, but what it entailed is we learned to uh motivation skills, we learned motivation skills we learned uh, how to show empathy that is true you know because a lot of times on the job we have to encourage em even though we know they're not gonna get up out of the chair we gotta encourage em to get up out of the chair you know. But we we we learned how to motivate from within, we learned how to be a real peer from within, we learned how to be helpful from within, and its true compassion that we're giving out you know. And I think those classes really really helped you know, as far as I'm concerned as far as my professional skills.

Interviewer: "And your professional background?"

Respondent: "I'm a peer and family advocate *title and department deleted* and um, I have been working since, well actually its been a year, a year and two weeks. Yeah its been a year and two weeks I've been on the job and."

Interviewer: "That's all the questions I have so thank you for that, thank you for your time."

Interview 3
Hispanic Female Age 40-50

Interviewer: "Before I first spoke with you, what did you know about AB 109 and what were your thoughts on the law?"

Respondent: "I uh, oh I didn't know the code name for it like I did not know that, but um, my thoughts about it, no, I don't agree with it, I don't see why they would release such dangerous people. I can see other criminals, but not those ones."

Interviewer: "How familiar are you with the services offered by San Bernardino County to ex offenders released under AB 109."

Respondent: "Minimal"

Interviewer: "What experiences have you had with ex offenders in your personal life?"

Respondent: "Um, I like I said, I have worked with them, I have worked with them, I try to treat everybody equal, but some of em, just their mentality coming out is, I dunno, I don't understand it, I don't get it."

Interviewer: "And what experiences have you had with ex offenders in your professional life?"

Respondent: "Professional, personal okay I got that one backwards *laughs*. Okay, professional life like I said, yeah we can't we can't really discriminate up against everybody anybody and we have to treat em as equal but the only thing is we can't allow, we have to keep an eye on it cause we can't allow certain like you know, age groups with them so. Like it does come into play, I have seen it.

Interviewer: "What kind of impact do you think AB 109 will have on safety of your community?"

Respondent: "Well like anybody I would feel that it's it's dangerous, I mean there is no way to control anybody, anybody at all I don't care what your what your vice is or what your illness is, it's like. It effects you anyway everyday it'll effect you because like, I have kids, I have kids so I worry, I don't let em go out, I mean they can't be kids the way I want em to be because I'm always constantly stressed out, but as long as I'm there to watch em hopefully I can detour anything from happening to them.

Interviewer: "How likely do you feel ex offenders are to reform once they enter the community."

Respondent: "That's a good question. I have, I have pros and cons on that one okay. Like I said it depends it depends on the individual okay like um, anybody can be reformed if they want it they accept it, but there are just some people that are just so broken to begin with I mean you can't reform em you know it's individualwise."

Interviewer: "How welcoming do you think your community is to ex offenders?"

Respondent: "None, they're not, they won't even hire em."

Interviewer: "What factors do you think make it hard for ex offenders entering San Bernardino to avoid reoffense?"

Respondent: "The element itself. There's so many drugs and really no job opportunities for anybody and everybody already has the prejudice mind against them like they won't accept them as just the person themselves."

Interviewer: "What are your thoughts on social support offered to ex offenders entering your community?"

Respondent: *sighs* "Well, I know I understand people have to live and because they can't get jobs I mean I understand that there's some support for them, but not like better support than like what they give the people who actually work."

Interviewer: "What fears do you have about ex offenders living nearby?"

Respondent: "That they'll that they will commit the crime again basically you know and that they won't have any respect for our community as it is and they'll pretty much have that um that jail mentality."

Interviewer: "How does your comfort level with ex offenders change with the severity of the crime."

Respondent: "Um it does it does like um, I try like I said I try to treat everybody equal, but then there's just some people you just kinda like you you're kinda you're weary of them because you know what they've done so obviously you take extra precautions and try not to be so...me, aggressive like I am."

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have working alongside an ex offender?"

Respondent: "Um like I said, it depends on the offense. I mean they are people and if they're willing to work and they treat you you know the way you treat them then it's cool but I mean you're always gonna have that in the back of your mind."

Interviewer: "How do you feel about ex offenders competing for employment?"

Respondent: "If they have like the skills to do it I don't see a problem you I don't, but like if they can bring it to the table good for them because that would only help their person to like you know who they are and give them a little confidence in life and maybe it'll detour them from a set back."

Interviewer: "Could you tell me without giving any identifying information, a little about your professional and educational background."

Respondent: "Okay um well I um work in offices pretty much, I have worked non-profits so I do run into a lot of adverse demographics so I meet a lot of different people. Education wise I do have vocational, I did graduate from vocational school, but I am going back to college."

Interviewer: "And your your educational, like, profession."

Respondent: "My educational profession, I am a...office assistant, we'll go with that one."

Interviewer: "And you're working at a community center, would you say you're a community center worker?"

Respondent: "I do work at uh this center and I also work at an adult center so that's where I I mostly work with elderly. I don't know if you want me to say exactly where I work."

Interviewer: "No I'd rather you not say exactly where you work, I wanna avoid that."

Respondent: "Okay, I do work with adults though..mainly."

Interviewer: "Okay. Well that's all I have-"

Respondent: "I'm a nervous person so..."

Interviewer: "That's okay, thank you so much for taking the time to do this."

Interview 4
Black Male Age 60-70

Interviewer: "Before we contacted you, what did you know about AB 109 and what were your thoughts on the law?"

Respondent: "Well uh uh I'll tell you the truth, if it wasn't for uh uh judge *name* uh doing the drug program, I wouldn't be here, I'd still be in the pen, no but he brought me back from the pen and he put me in in the drug rehabilitation program and I made counselor and I've been working with him ever since then. I honor that man so so, okay now we can get busy, I had to honor him."

Interviewer: "Okay. Before we first contacted you, what did you know about AB 109 and what were your thoughts on the law?"

Respondent: "I know to read, and plus plus I used to be a criminal. Yeah so so I uh and plus I go to the library and I read things and that's how I got back here. I uh I went to the law library every day because they gave me a certain amount of time and I didn't think it was right and he brought me back and he accepted it and he figured that I was worthy. You know that's how I find out about all the programs cause I go to all the meetings."

Interviewer: "So you were familiar with the specific law AB 109?"

Respondent: "Uh well...petito, just very little about it you know."

Interviewer: "Uh how familiar are you with the services offered by San Bernardino County to ex offenders released under AB 109."

Respondent: "Uh I have a son and uh, everybody up here damn near is uh criminals man or had been you know what I mean, but the program that we have we we we like the older guys that have been through what these younger ones going through we talk to em we try to we try to instill in their mind, hey man, you guys are gonna be older. You know what I'm saying, you guys are gonna have kids. You know, how do you want your kids to act? How do you want your grandkids to act, how do you want your grandsiblings to act? How do you want em to act, do you want em to act like you did? It was rough when we grew up man, you know we grew up on the panthers, Muslim guerrillas, Mexican mafia uh uh, what uh green berets, black berets, and uh...what was it, everything, brown berets, everything. Brown national, everything we grew up under so uh, we basically know how to treat the different colors and everything but a lot of these kids they don't know how to treat you. They don't even know how to treat their own mother and father, they're disrespectful man, they're they're they're not built like we are. We'll get out there, if we had to fight we we we went out there and threw *inaudible* and everything, you know fought with our fists and everything or boxed or wrassled or and started spar.

These kids but they don't wanna do nothing but sit up here and *sniffing noise* uh uh that spray that you clean components with and weed...cocaine they want everything. We wanted money, we wanted fadia that's that's what we wanted ya know we wanted that. These guys these people right here they don't want nothin they don't even wanna work. Even my kids grandkids they they you know you have to push it in em you have to tell em hey, hey, okay now, you know you gotta do your chores right? And you know you want this computer, you know you want this TV, you know you want this phone okay so work for it like I did.

Interviewer: "Do you know much about uh what the county does for early released offenders?"

Respondent: "I went to a meeting years ago when they were supposed to turn it over, when the city was supposed to turn everything over to the county, is that what you're talking about? Similar, that what you're talking about? The county runs everything now, if you have four or less years you do everything for the county or they put you in some kind of program, rehabilitation program or something?"

Interviewer: "Okay"

Respondent: "Yeah well that's what judge *name* started a long time ago, but he started with, with uh, with drugs. Yeah, he started drug program.

Interviewer: "What experiences have you had with ex offenders in your personal life?"

Respondent: *laughs* "Every day, right here *location* I see em every day, all over San Bernardino, I'm a homeboy I uh...from the westside. Every day I see em. I'm looking at one right now, maybe a couple in there right now, every day I see em.

Interviewer: "What experiences have you had with ex offenders in your professional life?"

Respondent: "Same thing, every day. Every day I I come in contact with em because I uh I have programs, I have anger management, I have parenting, black parenting, I have substance abuse you know, so I have to come in with em. Because they have to go back and, you know, uh give kinda have to give em a certificate and plus might have to go to court with them or something you know. Just try to help them out because I was helped, I'm just giving back what was gave to me, that's all I can do.

Interviewer: "What kind of impact do you think AB 109 will have on the safety of the community?"

Respondent: "I think it will because it, that that with uh, I would say *pause* that would keep the hardened criminals in jail and the ones that that uh thats worthy to be out here, that would keep em out here wouldn't it?"

Interviewer: "Right, the law is early release for non-violent, non-sexual."

Respondent: "Right that's what I said you know, but you would say it like that I would say it like they say it in the pen you know, get it over with."

Interviewer: "How likely do you feel ex offenders are to reform once they enter the community?"

Respondent: "I have. Well it took me a while, I have. I have. I had to. I had to or die. You know I got shot in the streets, I did things out in the streets that you probably wouldn't do, wouldn't think of doing, but that was the life that we was in, you know that was the environment that we was in that was the, what would I say, that was the time that we was in. These guys are in a different time than we are, we was more about the money, the fadia, the dinero, the duckets the uh, the money. These guys are they about hurting you, that's all they are, they rather steal from you and rob you than to get out there and ask you, hey do you need some help man or sir do you need me to cut your hair or sir do you need me to paint some things? They rather they rather you know, they rather break into your house when you're not home, and and they could be your next door neighbor."

Interviewer: "So how likely do you think ex offenders now are to reform?"

Respondent: "Well they got they got programs for the ex offenders to get not in to get out of jails and everything and they're going back into the institutions and in to juvenile halls and into the Indian reservation and whatever. You know and they talkin to the dudes and trying to tell em hey man hey, you guys need to come back to reality because uh, the stuff you guys doing you'll end up dead, period. You know if if life don't kill you, the member in your gang will. Well what I mean by life, disease and things, you know what I mean, putting all kinds of stuff in your body. The police will, or a gang member will, and that's that's for sure. You will be mangled or you will be dead, there's no half way, you know what I mean? Or you will be in jail for the rest of your life, that's dead.

Interviewer: "How welcoming do you think your community is to ex offenders?"

Respondent: "Right now, I think it's very welcoming, you know, I'm here. You know you got bout three in there that's here, you got a whole neighborhood. You got a whole neighborhood this neighborhood right here man, it it it's a

bunch of homeboys homepeople that's grew up together, but only problem you have is when the people come in and put their graffiti from another town or another neighborhood and you put it here, you have a problem. You know what I mean cause you bringing some some, it might be an enemy of *location*."

Interviewer: "What factors do you think make it hard for ex offenders entering San Bernardino to avoid reoffense?"

Respondent: "If I told you, you'd probably shoot me. *laughs* Hey they get them biggots down there, get em off they ass, you know what I mean, downtown get em off they ass and start having some of these guys that they call, that already did they time you know, and and out here trying to do right and you won't give em a job. Give em a job. If you have to start a business with em, those guys that's in there that's in the penitentiary or something like that man, they can work wonders. With computers, phones, tables, they build everything there, they make everything. So give them guys they, they got a trade, give em a trade, you can start a trade all you gotta do. These guys put em up on, put em on some kind of thing like they had us, we had to uh, like uh, when I hired, I hired in under neighborhood youth core. Something to help the kids and everything, the deadbeat dads and moms and everything, you know, help they kids. And I retired from *business* you know a lot of guys went in that program, but you know they don't have programs like that no more. But right here we have a neighborhood watch youth core, right here neighborhood watch, right here we pay em stipend five dollars an hour to go out and find uh, find young kids you'd be surprised you know what they come up with. Uh we pay em for graffiti, help the city, you know its no graffiti out here, there's nobody tearing up stuff around here so they're our eyes, you know, they're the eyes of the community, that's the next generation.

Interviewer: "What are your thoughts on social support offered to ex offenders entering your community?"

Respondent: "Me I'm for it. I'm for it because I'm an ex offender to, you understand what I'm talking about, if it wasn't for Judge *name* bless his heart I would still be in the pen, you know. That man helped me, that man gave me these you understand *points to a stack of certificates*, he sent me through everything I got a whole stack of em like that. You know what I say about certificates they're only good if you use em. If you don't use all the knowledge and stuff like that, what's the good of going to school, what's the good of people putting money out to rehabilitate your mind and you getting the best books the best of everything, free food, they're paying you for having your dumb self in there. They pay you, don't you know you get from a quarter to to, a quarter's 25 dollars a month, 28 cents is 28 dollars a month, if you get paid a dollar fifty that's a hundred fifty dollars a month so yeah. They basically,

it's not much but you are doing something. You staying out of that stuff, you staying out of that sale you staying away from them youngsters. You ever been to jail man?

Interviewer: "No"

Respondent: "Well you seen it on TV huh? Yeah it's it's worse than that on TV, TV is fake, you go there that's no fake bro. You know."

Interviewer: "What fears do you have about ex offenders living in your community?"

Respondent: "I don't have no fears. Why should I fear something that I am? You understand what I'm talking about. Ima fear, I'm just like, just like me, I was born and raised here, I'm from the west side, the whole west side, *locations* the hood, you know? Why should I be scared to go...I'm *age* years old, why should I be scared and I'm retired from *business* and I all worked in *business* and I be scared to go in my neighborhood. I was born here, Imma be scared? No I'm not scared of a ex offender cause I am one, they better be scared of me. I come from the old school bro, and I got conventions to do things you know?"

Interviewer: "How does your comfort level with ex offenders change with the severity of their crime?"

Respondent: "No, no the only thing that that I don't like, and you know what I'm gonna say, I don't like molesters, I don't like rapists you understand? And you can fill in the rest, I don't care if you rob, you know, I don't care if you steal whatever, breaking breaking in, I don't like breaking and entering because you move persons, you understand you know? I don't like that and I don't like that white savior black savior you know I don't like nothing that you have to harm a person. You can make money without harming a person, you know."

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have working alongside an ex offender?"

Respondent: "It don't bother me I work with em every day, you might be an ex offender and might be telling a lie so how do I know? You don't even know if I'm an ex offender do you? You don't know, you know, okay."

Interviewer: "How do you feel about ex offenders competing for employment?"

Respondent: "Okay I retired from *business* and every other place here so, you know. I'm for it, they need employment to man, how you gonna judge somebody for something they did a long time ago, huh? You you gonna judge, okay uh, you judge uh, when we was at *business* we loaded the helicopters and planes up to this to go to the war. Most people came came back from

Vietnam couldn't even get a damn job, couldn't even get get no help and they had agent orange and everything else wrong with em and that was wrong. Them people went over there and risked their life for you. Now they accept everybody that was under the war now, but they didn't accept people that was under the Vietnam war, we was under the Vietnam war. You know, they rehabilitate and giving these guys everything.

Interviewer: "And without giving any identifying information, could you tell me your educational background and your professional."

Respondent: *laughs* "Ima be right back, I'm gonna let you judge."

respondent leaves the room and is gone for several minutes. He comes back with a folder full of certificates.

Respondent: *mumbles while opening the folder* "And I'm a dummy. These are not all of em, here, here sir, these is nubians, these is my relation, I'm in Afro-American mental health. Well you tell me my education and I tell you if you're right."

Interviewer: *laughs* "I wish I could guess I mean it, no no, I mean it would kind of invalidate the study if I would."

Respondent: "Ima, no I'm gonna tell you."

Interviewer: "I really can't say it or it would, it just, I wouldn't be able to use your interview for the study if I were to."

Respondent: "Here this is all my relations right here." *hands interviewer the folder* "West Side Nubians right here, now, tell me what, what."

Interviewer: "I'll tell you after the interview what I would have guessed if you'd like."

Respondent: "Here's my mission statement here, mm hmm. Look in there, you should see, you should see my diploma in there. *respondent and interviewer both look through the certificates* Isnt that, that, that's Afro-American mental health that's. Let me see, what I got, where are you at? All this, all this, all this bunk. Ain't nothing but bunk. *continues to look through folder* It's just mission statements. *passes interviewer a GED certificate* Now, tell me what's happening. I got out, I got out before I got the last thing, but that's...

Interviewer: "Okay so you, you were working on your GED and you got out just before you finished it?"

Respondent: "I took it, I took the test, all I gotta do is go back and get the, what the name?"

Interviewer: "Okay, the certificate?"

Respondent: "Yeah, but that's been years now you know what I mean? That's *college name*."

Interviewer: "Well it doesn't, it doesn't get old, it doesn't expire, I mean it's good."

Respondent: "I know it doesn't expire, but that's right, the level of education I got man. Phew...from, from, zero that preschool to twelfth grade, from twelfth grade to college, from college to penitentiary. *laughs*. Now."

Interviewer: "Okay and give me like a general, general description of what you do professionally."

Respondent: "I run my mouth."

Interviewer: *laughs* "Like a field."

Respondent: "Into politics man okay, into politics. *laughs* "Run my mouth, you see this here I run my mouth."

Interview 5
Hispanic Female Age 30-40

Interviewer: "Okay uh, before we contacted you what did you know about AB 109 and what were your thoughts on the law?"

Respondent: "Um I knew very little, like I said I've heard people commenting in and out. From what I did hear I had a little bit of mixed feelings in regards to how it would work or what they would expect the inmates or the releases to do."

Interviewer: "How familiar are you with the services offered by San Bernardino County to ex offenders released under AB 109."

Respondent: "Not too much"

Interviewer: "What experiences have you had with ex offenders in your personal life?"

Respondent: "Like I said, family members, my own husband so a little bit. Um, you know. *laughs*

Interviewer: "And what experiences have you had with ex offenders in your professional life?"

Respondent: "None. That I know of."

Interviewer: "What kind of impact do you think AB 109 will have on the safety of your community?"

Respondent: "I don't, I...good question. I don't think it would be a bad impact because they're not, you know, hardcore offenders. Although maybe as far as not seeing a lot of productive people in the community who have been released."

Interviewer: "How welcoming do you think your community is to ex offenders?"

Respondent: "Well, in a religious point of view as far as like a religious community I know they're very welcoming. As far as our society nowadays some people are afraid or do um judge, are easy to quick to judge."

Interviewer: "What factors do you think make it hard for ex offenders entering San Bernardino to avoid reoffense?"

Respondent: "Education. Education as far as kept giving them, you know proper education to be able to get a proper job. To be able to actually be productive in the community. Some do fall back into their old ways."

Interviewer: "What are your thoughts on social support offered to ex offenders entering your community?"

Respondent: "As far as like...social as meaning money wise or meaning social as how?"

Interviewer: "It could be money, it could be the actual like, whatever the support systems are in place, it could be the people around them, however you-"

Respondent: "Okay, I think, as far as people it's very important to have you know, like I said, the more you have them out there and socialize with people, the more you teach them how to be productive in society it could be a plus. As far as money wise I don't think it should be as easy if you're not giving back to the community. I feel you know, they're gonna be having some kind of assistance you know lets show them how to give back until they do get back on their feet. It's all that support."

Interviewer: "What fears do you have about ex offenders living nearby?"

Respondent: "None really. Cause I think that really like I said, it goes to teaching our children and they just...none."

Interviewer: "How does your comfort level with ex offenders change with the severity of their crime?"

Respondent: "It does change depending on their crime. I'm always obviously gonna be a little off-standish you know, not maybe be as welcoming, but if it's something not severe."

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have working alongside an ex offender?"

Respondent: "Actually I do work alongside an ex offender, I remember now. I was okay with it. I was okay with it I would just always have my eye on her because of offenses that she does commit or how she does behave. Now that I just remembered *laughs* Um, but as long as like I said, as long as we, I'm fine with it, I feel secure, like I said I do kind of keep my distance."

Interviewer: "And how do you feel about ex offenders competing for employment?"

Respondent: "Why not? They deserve the right to be able to work just, just like we do. They deserve the right to have that second chance."

Interviewer: "And finally, without providing any identifying information, could you state your educational background and your area of profession...professional area?"

Respondent: "Okay, I'm actually an aesthetician. I also taught religious education to elementary school to elementary school and high schoolers at *school name*."

Interviewer: "And your educational background?"

Respondent: "Um GED and some college, some, what is it called, trade skilling."

Interviewer: "In what field if I may?"

Respondent: "Anesthetics."

Interviewer: "Okay, okay that's all I've got."

Respondent: "That's it? That was quick."

Interview 6
20-30 Hispanic Male

Interviewer: "Before we first contacted you, what did you know about AB 109 and what were your thoughts on the law?"

Respondent: "Um I knew that uh, it released prisoners early."

Interviewer: "Before we contacted, before I first talked to you?"

Respondent: "Oh no, no I didn't know anything about it before."

Interviewer: "How familiar are you with the services offered by San Bernardino County to ex offenders released under AB 109?"

Respondent: "Not familiar"

Interviewer: "What experience have you had with ex offenders in your personal life?"

Respondent: "Just uh, my fiance's brother was in the uh, in the system, that was it, but I didn't have too much contact with him."

Interviewer: "What experience have you had with ex offenders in your professional life?"

Respondent: "No experience"

Interviewer: "What kind of impact do you think AB 109 will have on the safety of your community?"

Respondent: "I feel really less safe because they're they're supposed to do their time and they didn't and I think that's an easier way something that they think they can get away with now. You know like won't be, the punishment is not as harsh anymore."

Interviewer: "How likely do you think ex offenders are to reform once they enter the community?"

Respondent: "Not likely, I don't think they're likely at all to reform."

Interviewer: "How welcoming do you think your community is to ex offenders?"

Respondent: "Uh, not welcoming. I know I wouldn't be that welcoming if I had a neighbor that I knew was in the, you know got released early, I wouldn't be, I don't think I'd feel as safe knowing that."

Interviewer: "What factors do you think make it hard for ex offenders entering San Bernardino to avoid reoffense?"

Respondent: "Say that, say that again."

Interviewer: "What about San Bernardino or just about ex offenders, what factors do you think make it hard for ex offenders entering the city to avoid committing another crime?"

Respondent: "Hmm, I'm not really, I don't think I understand the question."

Interviewer: "Okay, what factors do you think cause ex offenders reentering the community to commit another crime?"

Respondent: "Cause them to?"

Interviewer: "Yeah, what factors contribute to it?"

Respondent: "Oh uh, I would say I would say not like, poverty you know, they don't have enough you know funds available so they gotta do things against the law to try to make that that income, that's what I would think."

Interviewer: "Um and what are your thoughts on social support offered to ex offenders entering your community?"

Respondent: "Social support like uh, clubs and stuff that are trying to get these people?"

Interviewer: "Yeah that counts as social support."

Respondent: "Um I think it's good trying to, trying to help em out because everybody has different views on ex offenders."

Interviewer: "What fears do you have about ex offenders living nearby?"

Respondent: "Hm fears that I know they've done something already and every, I don't think they're really habilitated after the amount of time they're in there so I don't think they're scared to do it again or they would uh, they would commit another crime."

Interviewer: "And how does your comfort level with ex offenders change with the severity of the crime?"

Respondent: "It changes a lot, like depending on what they did like if someone murdered someone I'd be a lot more scared of them than if someone hit a dog and ran away from it you know and didn't report it and then got caught later on."

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have working alongside an ex offender?"

Respondent: "Concerns uh, my concern would be like in a workplace they're, I think their workplace would be like how long they were in jail or prison for and I think they might bring that in the workplace."

Interviewer: "And how do you feel about ex offenders competing for employment?"

Respondent: "I feel that it's gonna be a lot harder for them to go up against someone that's not an offender."

Interviewer: "Okay and I've got a few questions related to employment. Have you hired an ex offender in the past?"

Respondent: "No I haven't."

Interviewer: "What concerns would you have in employing an ex offender?"

Respondent: "Uh the same concerns that I have with the previous question, you know, that they would bring that lifestyle in and since they already committed a crime I feel that they don't think it's that big of a deal."

Interviewer: "And how would the nature of an ex offender's crime impact your willingness to hire them?"

Respondent: "It would impact a lot depends on what they did so, depending on the severity of the crime committed I think there's a lot of people that are, that are not ex offenders I could, I could hire so it would, it would effect, what they did would definitely effect whether I hired them or not."

Interviewer: "And finally, without providing any identifying information, what is your educational background?"

Respondent: "Uh high school and I have a associates degree."

Interviewer: "What field?"

Respondent: "I believe it's called, it's just been so long, associates of science degree."

Interviewer: "And what is your profession?"

Respondent: "I'm a laboratory manager."

Interviewer: "And management, so you do hiring."

Respondent: "I do hiring for my company."

Interviewer: "Okay, perfect that's it."

Respondent: "That's it?"

Interviewer: "That's it, thank you very much"

Interview #7 Hiring manager, Hispanic Female 20-30

1. I had heard about it but wasn't sure what was the name of it.
2. No, I'm not familiar with the services AB 109 offers.
3. Yes, I have as far as family and friends. My uncle was charged with the distribution of drugs. I understand people do get into trouble and they bounce back. He works at Stater bros. he was an employee therefore since he graduated. Now he is in his 30's, so he had gotten into trouble. He went to jail for a year and half and he was released under good behavior. Then he was released under good behavior. One of my friends was also on house arrest.
4. Not that I know of, just from stories I have heard I could guess because I've worked at subway before and I know that they look for long term employees. And because a lot of people don't hire ex-offenders, of course they are going to be "I'm going to hire you because you're not going to go anywhere else" I think it just depends. The manager there seemed to want people who had no other options.
5. When I first heard of it, I thought it was a real dumb idea. It's kind of scary because some of them could just be working the system. They are going to be good so they can be let out early but then they commit a crime. But when it comes to my uncle, of course I know that he did change. I'm kind of split in half, if I wasn't in the personal level with it, having my uncle be involved with it, then I would totally be against it. But seeing that he did come back and change. (Break) I'm 50/50. I would want them to be treated equally but at the same time you can also relate it to some of the incidents related to the school.
6. I'm sure some of them want to better themselves because they know what it's like in there and they don't want to go back to prison or jail. But at the same time, I feel like a lot of them might end up back in the system because it is hard to change their ways. I think it's society's fault because they don't give them a second chance. But you ruined it the first time, so it's hard to trust somebody., especially since some of them can be real good liars.
7. Not very welcoming, especially San Bernardino because we probably have the highest crime rate and plus these offenders are being released back into the community. Also, because we are probably in the worst shape, as far as income wise. Even the people who have the best resume can't get a job, they are not going to hire a felon.
8. Drugs and not having a supportive a family. For example, if it wasn't for my family my uncle would have probably ended back in jail. Nobody visited him in jail because we wanted to let him know how much he hurt his family. They were behind in bills and even had to sale their house. It wasn't just about him, he had a family he provided for. I think for a lot of

people, if they don't have anybody to fall back on or care for them then they won't do it for themselves. Then they go back to the only that comforts them, whether it's drugs or whatever else they are doing.

9. More programs that would help them with transitioning into the community. For example, programs that would aid on finding employment because it's hard for them to do so. I also think there should be jobs specifically for them, so they can have an opportunity to get back on their feet.
10. It pretty much depends on what they did. For example, I would be scared of an ex-offender because I have younger siblings. Also, if they committed a crime already they would probably have the temptation to do it again. I also have an app, it's called crime spotter, where I check because I'm a real paranoid person. It also always brings me back to, I know my uncle is not going to steal from us. It's kind of hard to say, you have to know what it feels like to be in that situation to give people the benefit of the doubt.
11. Depending on how bad it is, then I'm definitely going to have my guard up. If I know somebody is a sex-offender and I constantly see them pass by then I'm going to let my employees know "to watch out for them"
12. For the most part, I wouldn't. I just think it's best to have an okay relationship with everybody. I wouldn't be too worried because if the employers are okay, then why wouldn't I be.
13. I think the honest ones should be able to have a second chance because you can tell those who want it or not. On the other side, they can also be working the system. Anybody can be real good in paper, they probably wouldn't but they would probably be good on talking themselves up. I think you just have to be able to read people. When I interview people, I'm not judging their answer, I'm judging how they answer me, their mannerisms, other non verbal communication. I understand a lot of people get nervous when being interviewed, and if they are not nervous then I start wondering because you wouldn't want to hire somebody who is overconfident because then they don't know how to take orders sometimes. Especially if they were an ex-offender then I would know to pay attention to certain things because, I had. In our application, it asks if they have ever committed a felony. Honestly, when I see that I am told by my higher ups to automatically throw the application away.
14. No. No matter what the crime is, the application is tossed away.
15. First, what was the crime. With somebody who was a thief, I wouldn't be able to put them on the cash register because we would be concerned of them stealing. As far as somebody who committed a violent crime,

there would be many factors involved such as how long was it, what was the situation, where did it happened because if it happened at work, I wouldn't want to put my employees in that situation. If I were to hire them, I would make it a point to work with them and also the assistant manager. Because everybody is a perfect employee when they are working with the manager but with the assistant manager they aren't on top of their game.

16. The more violent the crime is, the less likely it would be to hire them. But at the same time, depending on what the crime was and how long ago it was, it would be part of my decision making. If it was a long time ago, I would like to give them a second chance. Especially a person who would personally bring a job application because anybody could fill out an online application, but a person to bring it in person. I believe first impressions is 50% of my decision making. If my boss wouldn't have told me to discard the applications, then I would have considered them for the job. A lower, less serious crime would be preferable.

Interview #8 Clinician (community member) Hispanic Female 30-40

1. AB 109, I wasn't really aware of it.
2. Not very familiar with it.
3. My uncle had it pretty rough, he served a short prison sentence. He has to register every year. There are also a couple of people in my church too. They still have those weird behaviors, they act a little different. They try to stay involve doing different activities especially with the church. My uncle, church is the way to cope with what happened in his life.
4. I've visited a couple in Public Guardianship. Again, their behaviors are really out there. You see that they are really anxious people and seclude from other people. My group home job, I've had one and they are really reserve and quiet. Once the residents found out, they kind of ganged up on him.
5. It's going to affect the safety of my community especially if those people have those same type thought processes and behaviors that couple present a problem to children. Especially children, those are the ones that are more at risk. At the same time, if you keep them in the prison system they may also end up getting best up and killed. It's not a win win situation. They get hurt or somebody else gets hurt.
6. Sometimes they really don't go back to reforming, they go back to some of their old behaviors. For example, my uncle he did get some help. He said he used to go to classes with other sex-offenders they talked about their session they had with kids and going back and doing the same thing with other people again. I don't think they really reform unless they are in some type of counseling that can help. Otherwise, I don't think they really reform too much into the community because the community secluded them as well too.
7. Not very much at all. The city is impoverished and they are limited in resources. The community could be really mean towards these individuals at times.
8. Obviously, when they have a record a lot of these places don't want to hire them. I think there is a lot of political and social themes that get in their way from reentering the community and try to do better for themselves. A lot of people get in trouble again and re offend.
9. I don't think there's any social support besides the counseling. They offer them counseling, whether they belong to a religious organization or secular based organization, people are still going to judge them by what they've done. I wish there was more help for them because I know sometimes there are good people that have bee wrongfully convicted. We have people in politics that are constantly robbing others their well being and their goods but we ring put them behind bars. We allow them to go free but yet we have somebody who might have committed a

crime involuntary. I know somebody who didn't commit the crime, got married to his wife who already had a kid, and she turned around and said he did something when nothing was ever proven, but he still has to register for life.

10. Personally, none because I am a father to a 10 year old and I usually keep her close. I'm not concerned that they are going to do something. It goes back to your perception on how these people are, how do you look at them. Do you put a stigma upon them or give them a second chance. I believe some of them do deserve a second chance.
11. I try not to get into levels because then I become part of the stigma. I know sometimes these individual do the things they do because something happened to them when they were young and then they create these behaviors as they go along and then it becomes a cycle. I mean, I do have sympathy for them.
12. I would be okay with them. If I see any type of behaviors that would create a problem, I would probably talk to them. If they maybe need some type of help. I wouldn't be too concerned, we are in a date of age where nothing is too out of balance. I could either accept it or not. I'm pretty acceptable of it.
13. I see it this way, if the individual has these skills why shouldn't he get the job. We're in the social work field and if somebody has tuneup skills better than me, I think they deserve the job. I think everybody should have a chance. If they want these individual to get better again then they need some kind of resources.
-They're not giving them the skills they need to reintegrate to society, so whatever they know best they are going to go back to doing it again. If they don't have no opportunity then of course they are going to be stuck, be on the street, get themselves in trouble. It's a really hard cut and dry topic of what can you do .

Interview #9 Behavioral Specialist (community member) Black female 30-40

- 1) I knew it was a law that would early release non-sex offenders & non-violent offenders that was supposed to go into effect next year? (Explanation of AB 109 by interviewer) See, I didn't know it was something that was already into effect and they didn't tell us anything.
- 2) I'm not quite too familiar with the services but I have assisted a couple of trainings where there have been presentations about a day reporting center in San Bernardino, I believed it was called United Way.
- 3) I do have experience with ex-offenders in my family. Anywhere from non-serious crimes to violent crimes. And of course they come in and out. Right now, I have two cousins incarcerated, one is supposed to come out at the end of this year and the other one is probably not going to come out anytime soon.
- 4) At my previous job, at the San Bernardino Resource Center, we served the homeless and mentally ill. Sadly, to say a lot of the homeless population has been involved with the legal system anywhere from petty crimes to serious crimes. There was a couple of times where we had to call the cops to intervene.
- 5) I believe since the crime rate is already high and the city is bankrupt, it's going to increase the crime rate even more because the resources are limited.
- 6) I think it depends on the support they have when they get out. If they do have that support, then their chances are greater but if they don't then they are just going to go back to what they know what to do.
- 7) I don't think our community is very welcoming at all. Personally, I believe we should be more accepting to this population, but because of the fear some people have, it makes hard to do so. I think if anything the community is just more fearful especially in San Bernardino.
- 8) Not having employment, Housing and the limitation of resources. I think they should be linked to resources once they are released but unfortunately that doesn't happen and they go back to what they know best, whether it's hustling or whatever they were doing before that got them caught up.
- 9) I believe it's necessary. Whether it's just a couple of people, but they need that support. In some ways, it's critical for their success in reintegrating the community.
- 10) I wouldn't like to be on guard all the time, having to watch my back or having to worry about being out after dark. And since these offenders are not sex-offenders, there's no system to where I can look them up and see if they are living nearby me. They are being released and we

don't know where to. But the fact that these crimes are non serious and non violent doesn't worry me too much.

- 11) It changes with the violence of the crime. For example, if someone robbed a store at gunpoint compared to someone robbing a store and killing the person, then that right there really frightens me, that the individual was capable of killing another human being.
- 12) I would just be concerned if they are really trying to change. I believe in second chances and I think they deserve one if they really want to change. But I would like to see that they are mentally changing. I wouldn't want to worry about them stealing money or doing something else illegal.
- 13) I have two opinions on that. First, I believe if they have the prior experience and skills, then they should have an opportunity to come back and work. But if it's something for some reason a company is looking to hire ex-offenders specifically, in a way something like affirmative action, then I disagree. I don't believe they should get special treatment.

Interview #10 Small business owner (employer) White Male 40-50

1. I had heard about it on the newspaper and I knew it was to resentence what they call victimless crimes and to try to get out people out of the prison system, there's too many people in prison.
2. I have no familiarity, to be honest with you and I didn't know they were offering them services but that's a good idea. I think locking people up is one thing but people need help that's why they ended up in prison.
3. I've known a few and the real people is that they are mentally ill and most of them aren't too bright. It's not necessarily a rich or poor or black and white thing but some people are more clever than others and don't get caught. Like I said, I think a lot of them are mentally ill. They need help. They can't cope what we call just normal functions of life it seems and some people seem to thrive on that drama of tensions and constant battles over everything but then again I'm in the taxi cab business, most of our drivers are a little cucky.
4. Well yea, We come across them in the taxi business but unfortunately some of them I can't employ because of their felonious backgrounds. Some of them I know, yes the guy has been arrested for drug charges. They're like an alcoholic you know. If you get off the drugs and stay off the drugs they're fine and I don't consider it a crime. I bend the rules on occasion of the people I employ even though they don't qualify I will take them on anyways.
5. Well hopefully it doesn't impact the safety of the community. I've learned that it's not all just drug charges, these guys have done robberies and things like that which I don't honestly understand why they are making them a lesser of a crime because it's still wrong. A lot of times it impacts the poorest people, I mean if all you have is a bike and a guy jacks your bike then your screwed. Not that I'm rich or anything but if someone stole my car it wouldn't be the end of the world.
6. Oh, it's less than 50% Most guys that are in prison go back. I mean, the level of recidivism is in the 80's percent, isn't it? Yes, it's high but I mean some of these guys too they never finish high school for whatever reason their family situation is so fucked up that they couldn't get through high school.
7. I think it's fairly welcoming. There's a lot of people in prison and there's only a matter of time before you run into family members or friends of friends who have done time.
8. They have to get new friends. That's the problem, they have to find a new circle of friends. They need a new family or something.

9. I'm not aware of it, I kinda wish there was more of it because I think it would keep these guys out of trouble. But then again their family situation is so messed up that.
10. Well that they are going to hurt my kids or myself or that they are going to steal my stuff, you know it depends on what they are ex-offenders of. I know that they do in occasion excite the wrong guy but most guys that are in prison belong in prison whether it's exactly that crime or not it's something. I mean cops can be real jerk offs and make up stuff but most of these guys are guilty of something's. Of course your kind of reluctant go live next door but I think that's reasonable but at some point you have to realize that people can change and hopefully they have and play by the rules.
11. Oh absolutely, yes. It's one thing to steal a parked car it's another thing to hold a gun or a knife to someone's head. Same as the prostitution thing, it's a choice that you are making, it just happens to be illegal. Most of the time, I don't think these women doing that are necessarily being forced to do it. They made some bad choices. Seems to me you can always find \$40 to get in the greyhound and the fuck out of there. When it comes to robbing things of people, yea you have a choice you don't have to do that.
12. I would have concerns of my physical safety if it's a guy that is a big strong man that has been in there pumping iron for five years. Or used to solving things physically instead of having a discussion. A lot of these guys seem to have a short temper problem. Again it goes back to being it's a mental illness or disability.
13. Oh, that's fine, it's great. Getting a job is the best thing and keeping them busy. It's fantastic, that's what they need.
14. Yes.
15. Well it really depends on the crime, what they have been convicted of. I mean the child molesters guys, the sex-offenders yes I don't want them so close to my kids. We just have to be careful and think about it but it really does depend on the crime they did.
16. Well it does impact it if I'm looking for child care, then absolutely I really wouldn't want anybody who has done anything recently of any sort. Anybody who has done any sexual crimes, I wouldn't really want them near me. It's weird though because some guys I've known for so long that I know that he is registered and all that stuff but I really don't think he would do anything, he is harmless. Then there's other guys, I don't have any thought that he would commit the crime again. I just get a vibe or I can just see a little flash in his eyes. Other guys not in a million years. Sometimes you just get a feel for people some people give you

those hibigeebies. Try to use your sixth sense that we all have, those hairs that stand in the back of your neck. But you never know.

Interview #11 Small business owner (employer) White Male 50-60

- 1) Yes, I thought it was misguided. I thought they thought about just the cost and how to save money for the state but no money for the victims. You can't unrape a child, or any of this stuff. So releasing these animals with the rest of the civilized population is not a good idea. (Clarification of AB-109) That's the latest crime, it doesn't mean the crime before that. Most of these people plead down their pleas. For example, a baby raper who just recently got arrested for stealing a pizza. I say if you rape someone, I don't see why we should be lenient with you. And that whole thing is joke. I've been watching and hearing the news. The guy who was involved in the shootout the other was released under that program as a nonviolent offender. First of all adding government to anything is bad. Government is a necessary evil and to say that government officials make decisions that are good for you, it almost never happens. These people have their own agendas. They want to empty the jail and they want to do this. There's nobody that's overpaid than the prison guards union. California refuses to build prisons. We should have them out in tents in the desert. Its the number one thing that we should do to defend our citizens that are going to play by the rules. That fact that we let Government make decisions once again in this matter, is a huge failure. . . How many people have died? They said there was about 60 people that have died already. They had a count on how many people have died because of this early released program of people that should be in jail that murdered people. Governor Brown, what a genius.
- 2) well, my step son worked as an educator in chino prison for awhile. He said that some of these prisoners would be crying because they couldn't make the 'cha' sound. They have been failed so badly by the education system that they couldn't even sound out vowels and stuff. It's sad, that that's the case. The great problem here is that once again, the government. It's teacher's union that they have social promotion. They won't hold you back, nobody is held accountable. The schools have become unionized work places, where they don't give a damn about kids all they care about is their overpaid pensions. The schools are a massive failure in California. We pay more money that we should. The prison population is just the exclamation point at the of my sentence. That said, you gotta understand it's a loss generation. The system has failed them, they are in jail because they should be. While, in the perfect world it would be great to be able to do something with them but we have to protect ourselves from the predators. I have to protect my daughter, my son and myself. If a business is burglarized by a burglar, your not protected like you would in a residence. Half the time they charge it as a misdemeanor. They can destroy your life by stealing

a computer that has tax return data that you have to be accountable for. You get guys that drive by and shoot a rock thru your window, it cost me \$800 bucks to get a new window. You can't have those people in the world. If we are all going to play by rules, you don't want to release those animals. When the realignment program started all the radio stations I listen to were cataloging that this guy was just released. All the blood is on the politicians hands, they have failed educationally. We as the people decided we wanted the three strikes rule. Every time I get a chance to lengthened prison I vote for it because they can't be redeemed. These people are criminals today, they are going to be criminals tomorrow. There comes a point where society has to cut its losses and write them off. When a judge sentences you something it needs to mean something. That said the prison system is a failure. I don't think the government is capable of judging whether these individuals are safe to be released to the public. There's 50, 60 dead people that can sign that.

- 3) I just bought breakfast for a friend of mine, who has 5 felonies. They're gun related for possession of weapons. Personally, the second amendment says we're allowed to have weapons. Obama decides on the laws he wants to enforce I decide on the laws people can break. I decide which felonies count. If the crime involved moral turpitude, somebody that is lying, stealing or cheating I'm not going to associate with them. If it's somebody that has a bad reputation or had truncated justice that's a different story. I make independent judgments. I look at the whole person, what does this person have to offer.
- 4) I've hired a couple of ex-offenders. Mostly Because when you go from being an employee to an employer, than you understand the problems of an employee. As an employer, I realized I want to get the job done at the lowest cost possible. Employees are not benefits, employees are cost. You have to keep them down. I hired a guy who had two earrings in his ears and tattoos all over. I spent the whole interview thinking what kind of guy tattoos Mickey mouse on the side of his neck. He was an ex-offender and my wife wanted me to hire him. But I needed a job done, so I was willing to hire him for the job. He met my expectations because my expectations were low. I had another ex-offender who had a four car accident in my business. I had to ask well, what happened here? Well, he said I'm legally blind. He drove to the interview, well that's a problem I don't have a license. As an employer, I can't protect myself against that. Good thing my insurance company paid most of it. So I've had mixed experiences.
- 5) I think the entire state of California is more dangerous. They shifted cost from the state to the private sector. What price can you put on somebody's life? If you ever been a crime victim? In 1980, I had to fight

off two men who came into my house. I ended up walking down the street in my underwear with blood coming out of my nose until I found a phone. You can't put a price on your security. I'm a relatively big guy but there's women and children. The community is not safer, the government off loaded a cost to the victims of crimes.

- 6) some people change, that's not the way to bet. If they are not punished, if they don't experience something horrible, they are not going to be inclined to change. I know a guy through a friend of mine who did a robbery at a liquor store with a gun. They put him a jail. He got 5 years in jail but he did 53 days. How can this be? This can be because the people making these decisions have their own interests at heart. I know that people do change. The general rule of life is 80/20. We call it 80% of what happens to you has to do with you and 20% is the breaks. I say if you really make it horrible 20% of the people will see their flaws and change.
- 7) well it depends on what they've done. I've seen when they release ex-offenders people lose their mind. If you get arrested because you shorted \$30,000 to the IRS that's a big difference than you molested a child. I don't know any businessman whose paperwork is in order. It depends on what the crime is. I wouldn't living next to an embezzler, in fact I might ask them for some tax advice.
- 8) attitude is a big one. We live in a country that there is a lot of opportunities still. The streets are paved with gold. If you never enter the workplace with the intent of money and look at other people with a predatorily lifestyle that you have a sense of entitlement then your doomed. Attitude is one thing, what their educational level is matters as well. A lot of people unfortunately, have been educated wrong. It's hard to have clarity of thought in that area. There's a lot of factors.
- 9) there's a part of me that says that they probably need assistance. I'd rather have the government that has failed them, which is really what happened take some responsibility for it and try and mediate some the damage that has been done to their lives. The difficulty is that government isn't that nibbled. Social services in general, are one of the most destructive things known to man. Having said that, I think there's a part of me that says they need help but any effort from the government to help them will destroy them. If they get too much help they won't make the growth steps that it takes to move from a criminal lifestyle to another lifestyle. It's not going to be easy for these people to make this transition. The biggest social support they should have is assistance of finding work. They should have some sorts of job program or training program. Teach them something that we generally need done and it's not something that everybody can do. In general I don't think they should get financial assistance, they should get practical assistance. I

think if they used halfway houses, don't put them in independent living situation, you put them in a poor house where they'll have a desire to get out of there as soon as possible.

- 10) I have guns. I have a fear of when they done through my door I might miss them. I am fully capable of defending myself for the most part. My kids are all grown, so I have the flexibility. I'm not afraid of the mentally insane. I don't have a lot of fear in my life. On the other hand, I have alarms.
- 11) I don't go through life afraid. I know a wide variety of people and I make my own independent decisions. I know a guy who just went to state prison for kiddie porn. It wasn't even kiddie porn, he was just pretending to be a 14 year old sending another 14 year old pictures. I see how people react to him. I can see other peoples point of views, but from my point of view they're pictures, that's it. I'm not uncomfortable around that guy. I think it varies with peoples. There's a guy that I know that beat up his wife, that guy I have a much bigger aversion to. I suppose it's what your personnel thing is. Some crimes are paper crimes, some crimes are not, you know. If he did that crime with moral turpitude chances are I'm not going to be comfortable with him. If he stole from somebody, it's only a matter of time, before he steals from me. I'm fine with paper crimes. Half the time you can't even interpret the law.
- 12) I've worked alongside with ex-offenders before. My concern is really that they'll hurt me. Men work in fields that they have a 20 times higher risk of getting hurt in the workplace than a woman's job. Work is a dangerous place, one bad decision. . I've worked with guys that have been high or whatever. I have a 40 year career and I've only been injured twice. In one of those occasions it was because the guy was high. Most of the people won't steal.
- 13) that's probably a good thing, real competition if it's on the same terms. It's good if someone is really trying to get a job, trying to do that stuff. I don't have a problem, I compare well to other men in that field. I think they should be teaching them entrepreneurial skills. I've talked to a couple of offenders and they focus on what they can't do because they have felonies. I've had to tell them that they focus on the wrong things. First of all, most if the jobs they eliminated you from are "job" you don't want a job. Get your own business, your own thing. You want to own the place, you should get on your knees and thank that society is not going to let you waste your life away. Do I mind felons competing for jobs? No, the job is a starting point. What they really should be doing is start their own gig.
- 14) yes.
- 15) the nice thing of an ex-offender is that you have their criminal record in front of you. You know what they're capable of doing. There's benefits

of hiring an ex-offender. You're talking about all the negatives. I've hired an ex-offender for one of my car dealership businesses I used to have and he made me money. He thought outside the box compared to my linear thinking. It made me think to myself that I'm really inadequate in that part. The thing with those felons is that they really color outside the box. My experience has not been all negative.

- 16) I make my own decisions based on somebody's demeanor, really. The background check is good but I wouldn't rely on those things, they're stupid. I really didn't run background checks on the employees I had because I expected a certain amount of my experience with the employee to be a reflection of their relationship with them. When you are an employer, you have a relationship with your employee. If I'm mistreating my employees or short changing or not paying them fair, I should expect them to do that kind of stuff, you know. If I like a guy, I'll hire him regardless of his history or reputation. I trust my gut and I'm right most of the time. I make my hiring decisions by the conversations. I think can the guy do the job I want, can the guy make me money. The reason I am hiring somebody is so that I could make money. Will this guy cost me more grief than he's worth?

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ASSIGNED RESPONSIBILITIES PAGE

This was a two-person project where authors collaborated throughout. However, for each phase of the project, certain authors took primary responsibility. These responsibilities were assigned in the manner listed below.

1. Data Collection:
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2. Data Entry and Analysis:
Team Effort: Mari Herrera & Matthew McGiffen
3. Writing Report and Presentation of Findings:
 - a. Introduction and Literature
Team Effort: Mari Herrera & Matthew McGiffen
 - b. Methods
Team Effort: Mari Herrera & Matthew McGiffen
 - c. Results
Team Effort: Mari Herrera & Matthew McGiffen
 - d. Discussion
Team Effort: Mari Herrera & Matthew McGiffen