JUVENILE INCARCERATION:
Alternative Custody Programs for Moderate-Risk Juveniles in the State of Florida

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BY

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Dear Dr. De Haven-Smith,

It is with great pleasure that I submit to you *JUVENILE INCARCERATION: Alternative Custody Programs for Moderate-Risk Juveniles in the State of Florida*. The juvenile crime rate steadily increased throughout the 1980s and 1990s and it reached its peak around the mid 80s causing policymakers to examine this issue. It became a concern to the public because traditional correctional facilities seemed not to work in rehabilitating juvenile offenders. A majority of juvenile crime was being committed by repeat offenders. Although crime has been slightly down in Florida, juvenile delinquency is still a concern. Juveniles remain responsible for about one out of four violent crimes in the state and aggravated assault and battery by juveniles are up. In response to the public fear of another decade of increasing crime rates, Florida adopted and developed three of many alternative custody programs for delinquents because traditional facilities seemed not to be effective. This report studies three alternative programs for juvenile delinquents: boot camps, wilderness camps, and halfway houses.

After examining these options, my recommendation is that the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice should focus on improving boot camps and halfway houses. Missing components stated by research should be implemented within these options to improve their success. Halfway houses and boot camps should and can successfully coexist to provide effective treatment of juvenile offenders.

Boot camps, wilderness programs, and halfway houses were evaluated by four criteria: recidivism rate, cost per completion, offenses during placement, and program performance. Boot camps score well with offenses during placement, program performance, and scores fairly with recidivism rate. The cost per completion is somewhat high but is still more reasonable than traditional correctional facilities. Halfway houses
score well on recidivism rate, cost per completion, and fairly on offenses during placement and program performance. It scores well over boot camps and wilderness programs in regards to recidivism and cost.

Boot camp and halfway house improvements are crucial in moving the Florida juvenile justice system in the right direction. As the juvenile population increases more arrests will be made. We need to take responsibility in making sure they are receiving help while in custody to prevent future criminal behavior.

Respectfully Submitted,

Tanisha S. Gordon
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Executive Summary

While general juvenile crime rates have steadily dropped from its peak in the 1980s, violence by young offenders still remain a tough problem. The increase in juvenile crime in the 1980s and 1990s caused policymakers to examine this issue. The majority of juvenile crime is committed by repeat offenders. The surge in juvenile crime increased the juvenile arrest rate, the cost of detention, and overburdened the juvenile court. The public became very concerned and even though rates have declined in 2000, there is still a fear that juvenile crime may rise again. This led policymakers to begin to consider alternative custody and treatment programs for juvenile delinquents. Alternative programs to incarceration such as wilderness camps, boot camps, halfway houses, drill academies, youth development centers, sex-offender programs, and maximum–security correctional facilities began to be created and implemented. The idea was to develop programs that would provide security for the community, provide stronger supervision of offenders, and a less costly and more rehabilitative option than incarceration.

Although crime has been down slightly in Florida, juvenile delinquency is still an issue. Juveniles remain responsible for about one out of four violent crimes in the state and aggravated assault and battery by them have increased. In response to the public fear of another decade of increasing crime rates, Florida adopted and developed three of many alternative custody programs for delinquents because traditional facilities seemed not to be effective. This report studies three alternative programs for juvenile delinquents: boot camps, wilderness camps, and halfway houses. These facilities offered protection for the
public, a chance for rehabilitation for the offender, and held the offenders accountable for their actions.

Florida’s residential and correctional programs for juveniles are grouped into four custody classifications based on their populations assessed risk to public safety. The classifications include Low-Risk, Moderate-Risk, High-Risk, and Maximum-Risk Residential. Alternatives are examined in the moderate-risk level. The moderate-risk level encompasses offenders who have been assessed as moderate-risk to public safety and require 24-supervision. These facilities are either secured by hardware, staff secure, or environmentally secure. Most of the offenders in this risk level have committed serious property offenses and have repeatedly committed law violations.

Information for this report was achieved using these following methods: analysis of academic literature, review of program effectiveness and performance reports from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice, and review of applicable laws, policies, and standards. The analysis of the academic literature provided insight into the problem, historical background, and future plans for alternatives. The program effectiveness and quality assurance reports provided the evaluation, data, and results for each juvenile justice program in Florida in regards to program effectiveness and overall performance. Laws, policies, and standards, were reviewed to learn how the Department responded to the problem over the years.

Boot camps, wilderness programs, and halfway houses were evaluated against four criteria: recidivism, cost, program performance, and offenses during placement. Based on the assessment, boot camps and halfway houses are recommended. Boot camps scored well with offenses during placement, program performance, and scored fairly with
recidivism rate. The cost per completion is somewhat high but it is still more reasonable than traditional correctional facilities. Halfway houses scored well on recidivism rate, cost per completion, and fairly on offenses during placement and program performance. It scored well over boot camps and wilderness programs in regards to recidivism and cost.

Boot camp and halfway house improvements are crucial in moving the Florida juvenile justice system in the right direction. As the juvenile population increases arrest rates will increase and we need to take responsibility in making sure that juveniles are receiving help while in custody to prevent future criminal behavior.
1. The Problem Statement

America’s juvenile justice system has the responsibility in keeping the public safe and rehabilitating delinquent youth. During the past few decades the juvenile population has enlarged, which helped increase the number of juvenile arrests. MacKenzie, Gover, Armstrong, and Mitchell (2001) found that juveniles in custody for delinquent offenses increased 35% from 1978 to 1989, a period when the youth population of the U.S. declined by 11%. The increasing rates of incarcerated juveniles, the number of juvenile repeat offenders, and the cost of traditional correctional facilities have led policy makers to seek alternatives forms of control of this population. According to Zaehringer (2001), increased public attention also led state and local governments to see the need for increased funding for juvenile correctional facilities and support for innovative alternatives.

With the increase in juvenile crime, the public grew more and more concerned. Over the past twenty years, many programs were created to attack this problem which has sparked many debates over which option is the most effective in rehabilitating the juvenile offender. The alternative programs used in juvenile justice in the past have had dual purposes: managing the juvenile offenders and deterring them from future criminal behavior.

According to Zaehringer (2001), crime rates have dropped in Florida, but violence by young offenders still remains a tough problem. Fourteen percent of juvenile offenders can be classified as chronic offenders, responsible overall for 42 percent of delinquency referrals and 67 percent of repeat referrals. Chronic offenders typically had six or more
delinquency referrals over a two-year period. Juveniles are responsible for one out of four violent crimes in this state, and aggravated assault and battery convictions by juveniles are up. Alternative custody and treatment programs for juvenile delinquents became a priority for the Florida juvenile justice system.

The idea was to develop programs that would provide security for the community, provide stronger supervision of offenders, and a less costly and more rehabilitative option than incarceration. Boot camps, wilderness programs, and halfway houses were among the alternatives that were created and implemented to be a better option than traditional correctional facilities.
II. Background and Literature Review

The juvenile justice system was developed in the late 1800s to reform U.S. policies regarding young offenders. The period between 1900 and 1918 was called the Progressive Era in the United States which was a time for social reform. Before this era offenders over the age of seven were imprisoned with adults. This had been the model throughout the beginning of the juvenile justice system. During the 18th and 19th century psychologists, social, and political reformers began to conduct research which started a shift in society’s view of juvenile delinquents. In 1824 the New York House of Refuge was built for the rehabilitation of children not punishment. This facility housed juveniles who earlier would have been placed in adult jails. Starting in 1899, different states began establishing similar youth reform homes because of the problems of youth incarceration (“History of,” 2004, p.1).

These early changes to the juvenile system were created under the newfound conviction that society had the responsibility to prevent and recover the lives of juvenile offenders before they became indulged in the criminal activity they were partaking in. The juvenile justice system began to take on the role of guardian until they exhibited positive changes, or became adults. Youth were then no longer tried as adults. Their cases began to be heard in informal courts designed for juveniles (“History of,” 2004, p.1).

In 1968, Congress passed the Juvenile Delinquency Prevention and Control Act. This act was created to influence states to develop plans and programs that would work on a community level to discourage juvenile delinquency. By 1974 the U.S. had a strong
momentum towards preventing juvenile delinquency, deinstitutionalizing youth in the system, and keeping juveniles separate from adult offenders. The Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act of 1968 were revamped and it was replaced by the 1974 Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act ("History of," 2004, p.1).

Juvenile crime rose incredibly between the late 1980s and mid 1990s. The increase in crime hit its peak in 1994 and gradually declined. With the rise in juvenile criminal behavior, legislatures enacted measures to get tough on crime. The anti-crime sentiment of that period caused changes to be implemented to the juvenile justice system that made it similar to the adult justice system. Rehabilitation became a lesser priority to public safety in the campaign against juvenile crime in the 1990s ("History of," 2004, p.2).

**Background of Boot Camps**

According to Meredith (2002), boot camps and military training in corrections can be traced all the way back to Zebulon Brockway at Elmira Reformatory in Elmira, New York in 1888. When they were first created they differed from other programs by their emphasis on physical exercise, strict discipline, and physical labor. In 1983, Georgia and Oklahoma were the first adult prisons to implement boot camps. The juvenile justice system soon thereafter adopted them for juvenile delinquents. The first juvenile boot camp was developed in Orleans Parish, LA, in 1985. In 1992, the Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention funded three pilot sites in Cleveland, Ohio, Denver, Colorado, and Mobile, Alabama. Currently there are juvenile boot camps in Alabama, California, Colorado, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New York,
and Ohio. Today, over forty juvenile camps in 30 states house about 4,500 juvenile offenders each day.

Zaehringer (2001) found that Florida operates more camps than any other state at this moment. The six camps operating in Florida are run by each county sheriff’s department with oversight by the Florida Department of Justice. Florida’s first boot camp was opened in Manatee County in 1993. Post release community supervision is mandated for at least six months to ease transition.

**Background for Wilderness Programs**

According to Roberts (1988) wilderness programs derived from forestry camps for youthful offenders and the Outward Bound model which was created in Wales during World War II. The earliest outdoor program for juvenile delinquents was developed in the 1930s in the Forestry Department by Karl Holton in Los Angeles County. The youth involved in this program performed on work projects such as conservation, park development, road construction, safety programs, and farming. These projects were supplemented with individual counseling, group counseling, recreational, educational, and religious programs. The camps were for boys only and the duration did not last longer than six months.

The original purpose for the first Outward Bound School which was established by Kurt Hanhn and Lawrence Holt was to instruct merchant seamen to survive on the open sea. It also was created to teach them self-discipline, physical preparedness, group pride, teamwork, and a mutual trust to achieve arduous goals. This was brought about because many seamen died from lack of self confidence and survival skills in the North Sea after they were drifting in life boats because their ships were torpedoed by the
Germans. In the summer of 1960, the Outward Bound programs were introduced to the United States public (Roberts, 1988).

**Literature Review**

There is not a lot of substantial research conducted on this topic. Most of the literature reviewed compared boot camps, wilderness programs, and other alternatives to traditional correctional facilities independently of each other. Minimal research was found on halfway houses. Overall, the research reviewed examined cost savings, recidivism rates, reduction in prison overcrowding, and participant perceptions.

Many studies have been completed on boot camp programs. MacKenzie, Gover, Armstrong, and Mitchell (2001) conducted a national study comparing environments of boot camps to environments of traditional facilities for juvenile offenders. It discussed key issues in dealing with boot camps and its controversies. The study also discussed that critics question whether military style methods are appropriate to treat juvenile delinquents and positively affect their behavior. Supporters of boot camps defend that the boot camp structure gives staff more control over participants and that component provides juveniles a safer environment than traditional facilities.

The study also discussed past research on boot camp comparisons to traditional facilities and research found that neither type of facility were effective in reducing recidivism rates. They conducted this study using site visits, structured interviews, and fourteen point scale surveys of juveniles and staff in both types of facilities to compare environments. The measuring components were control, resident danger, staff danger, environmental danger, activity, care, risk to residents, quality of life, structure, justice, freedom, therapeutic programming, preparation release, and individual planning.
In The Development and Operation of Juvenile Boot Camps in Florida, Cass, and Kaltenecker (2001) gave an overview of boot camps in Florida. It discussed the background and beginnings of this alternative in the state. It also gave information on the statutory origin of boot camps and a description of the first boot camp developed in Florida, Manatee County Boot Camp.

In a study of alternative custody programs for youth, Howard (1997) described three alternatives to traditional facilities for juvenile delinquents. The research examined wilderness programs, boot camps, and work programs. It gave introductions, goals, evaluation results, issues, concerns, and sample programs for each alternative.

Zaehringer (2001) also conducted research on the cost and effectiveness of juvenile boot camps because of public concern about it. It provided an overview on juvenile boot camps, their cost and effectiveness, operations, research findings, procedures for setting them up, and recommendations for operating or opening in the United States.

Wilderness Programs for Juvenile Offenders: A Challenging Alternative begins with a discussion of the similarities and differences between traditional training schools and wilderness programs. Next, the author provides a brief historical perspective on wilderness programs, followed by examination of the similarities and differences among the different established programs. Vision-Quest which is a well known adventure program is described in this research. Some programmatic factors are reviewed including purposes, nature, content, and sample evaluations of wilderness programs. The author ends his research with recommendations for more research based on uniform statistics,
standardized outcome, and recidivism measures, and longitudinal data so valid comparisons of the effectiveness of the various programs can be made (Roberts, 1988).

Wilson and Lipsey (2000) meta-analyzed evaluations of wilderness challenge programs to assess the impact on delinquent behavior. Studies were selected for the meta-analysis based on a set of detailed criteria developed from the author’s program theory outlined in this paper.
III. Methodology and Evaluative Criteria

Information for this report was achieved using these following methods:

- Analysis of academic literature
- Review of program effectiveness and performance reports from the Florida Department of Juvenile Justice
- Review of applicable laws, policies, and standards

The academic literature was researched by using the following databases: JSTOR, First Search, Expanded Academic Index, Wilson, and EIRC. The analysis of the academic literature provided insight into the problem, historical background, and future plans for alternatives. The literature also gave insight into the environment of the programs from researchers and past participants. The program effectiveness and quality assurance reports provided the evaluation, data, and results for each juvenile justice program in Florida in regards to program effectiveness and overall performance. Laws, policies, and standards, were reviewed to learn how the Department responded to the problem over the years.

Quality Assurance

The Florida Juvenile Justice system encompasses virtually all programs and services in the juvenile justice continuum through either direct contact or contract. The Department of Juvenile Justice’s Quality Assurance System requires an annual performance review of every program in that continuum. It evaluates the internal processes in programs to determine the level of performance and the quality of services being provided. The Department measures processes, outcome, and cost to present a
complete picture. The Florida Department of Juvenile Justice quality assurance system was established by the Florida legislature in 1994 as part of the Juvenile Justice Reform Act (“Quality”, 2003).

Review teams comprised of QA staff and management staff of the Department and contracted provider organizations completes three to five day onsite reviews at every program. These teams rate programs in all components of program responsibility. They examine policies and other documents, interview staff, youth, parents, and complete on site evaluations. By consensus the team arrives at a quantitative rating for each program. Programs receive a performance rating profile each year documenting the overall program performance and compliance rating given (“Quality”, 2003).

Juvenile Justice Programs and services are evaluated based on their performance in a given set of standards. These program components include: Program Management, Admissions, Living and Treatment, Case Management, Mental Health/Substance, Behavior Management, Food Services, Health Services, Program Security, Program Safety, Transition Planning, Training and Staff Development, and Conditional Release. The educational program proponents include: Transition, Service Delivery, Administration, and Contract Management (“Quality”, 2003).

**Program Accountability Report**

The report presents measures of cost and effectiveness for comparisons among programs and across levels. This report was used to retrieve data on programs in regards to cost, offenses during placement, and recidivism rates (“PAM”, 2003).
Evaluative Criteria

Four criteria were chosen to evaluate these proposed options: boot camps, wilderness programs, and halfway houses. Data for recidivism rates, offenses during placement, cost, and program performance were retrieved from the Quality Assurance and Program Accountability Reports. The data was averaged, ranked, and submitted into a table by alternative. High, moderate, or low was assigned to each score to represent the rank of it in that category. Program performance was already completed in the Quality Assurance Report.

**Recidivism Rate** – Recidivism is a subsequent juvenile adjudication, adjudication withheld or adult conviction for an offense that occurred within one year of a youth’s release from a Department of Juvenile Justice commitment program to the community or a conditional release program. This criterion was selected because it is a good indicator of program effectiveness. Most studies include recidivism rate measures because a lot of juvenile crime is committed by re-offenders and crime is happening quickly upon release. High recidivism rates are usually evaluated as a program’s ineffectiveness to treat and rehabilitate offenders. Recidivism rates for moderate-risk programs in Florida were taken from the PAM report.

**Offenses during Placement** – This criterion was selected because one of the goals of the juvenile justice department is to provide safety to the public. One of the responsibilities for the alternative programs is to ensure that participants are also in a safe environment. In the past, there have been incidences of abuse by staff that resulted in the serious injury and death of program participants. The offenders also should be safe from harm from...
their peers. Offenses during placement are a good indicator to see how well the program participants are managed. This data was retrieved from the PAM report.

**Cost** - In the current age of increased accountability, government funded programs must demonstrate cost effectiveness in order to maintain support. This data was retrieved from the PAM report.

**Program Performance** - Quality Assurance evaluates the internal processes in programs to determine the level of performance and the quality of the services being provided. This criterion was selected because it ensures that providers and programs are meeting constitutional minimums of care and custody and are following the Department’s policies and standards. Program performance ratings were taken from the Quality Assurance report.

There are a few limitations to this study. One limitation is that there was minimal literature and studies found on wilderness camps and halfway houses to help expound on those alternatives. Another limitation was that there were so many more halfway houses than boot camps or wilderness programs which may have skewed the data in a positive light towards the halfway house alternative.
IV. Policy Options

This section explains three alternative custody programs for moderate-risk juvenile delinquents. Each one is evaluated using four criteria detailed earlier: recidivism rate, cost, offenses during placement, and program performance. This report was created to guide policymakers toward the most effective alternative with all criteria in mind as the best option to juvenile incarceration.

Boot Camps

Among the options to juvenile incarceration are boot camps, which flourished in the United States in the late 1980s. The use of them rose quickly in the 90s, and by the year 2000 there were approximately 70 juvenile and adult boot camps operating in the United States. Currently there are juvenile boot camps in Alabama, California, Colorado, Florida, Indiana, Iowa, Louisiana, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New York, and Ohio. The offenders in boot camps are usually male, nonviolent, first timers or repeat offenders. There are state and privately run camps where the participant will be challenged mentally and physically. Judges offer the offender the option to attend boot camp or serve a longer prison term. Boot camps are short term and the range of stay can range from three to nine months. They have become a popular alternative due to the camps portrayal of strict discipline, hard work, and control by a drill sergeant (Howard, 1997).

Even with its popularity in the 1990s, boot camps remained a controversial topic. Critics question whether the military style methods are an effective and appropriate way in treating and managing juvenile delinquents. Critics also question whether the focus on group activities addresses individual needs and issues. Another issue is about the population of offenders who are sent to these camps. There is a concern about these
offenders because some of them would be on probation if it wasn’t for the existence of boot camps (Howard, 1997).

Other concerns relate to the nature of the work performed. Some think that the hard work is meaningless and less transferable to the real world because the job market for released inmates is decreasing over time. Others think that the nature of the work is acceptable because of its punitive and rehabilitative nature. Advocates of boot camps contend that this structure provides a safer environment than traditional facilities and gives the staff more control. Youth are then less likely to fight each other or be victimized by their peers. Advocates also believe that the use of the military style model promotes respect for staff and builds camaraderie among the participants (Howard, 1997).

MacKenzie, Gover, Armstrong, and Mitchell (2001) reported that boot camps may include wearing uniforms, marching in formations, as well as responding to drill instructors commands rapidly. Offenders will enter the program in groups called squads or platoons. It will include a structured environment that includes trainers getting into the faces of the participants. They will be occupied in a rigorous daily schedule which requires them to wake up early and stay active throughout the day and evening. Boot camps generally have a sixteen hour day beginning at 5:30 am and ending around 9:30 pm. Their day may include drill and ceremony practice, physical activities, challenge programs, as well as academic education. Youths may receive punishments such as push ups or running laps for misconduct.

Boot camps have four features that distinguish them from other alternatives: military camp atmosphere, participation in military drills, physical training, considered an alternative to a longer prison term, and separates offenders from other prison inmates. Today juvenile boot camps aim for some form of rehabilitation which may include
substance abuse treatment, basic education, vocational education, health and mental health care, individualized case management, aftercare services, and or military drill and ceremonies (Howard, 1997).

**Recidivism Rate**

Many studies have been completed on boot camp programs. One of the goals of boot camps is to reduce prison crowding through the reduction in the rate of recidivism. A recent general review of the effects on correctional boot camps on offending and recidivism rates found that in nine studies boot camp participants had lower recidivism rates than the comparison group, and in eight studies the comparison group had lower recidivism rates than the boot camp groups. A meta-analysis found no significant differences in recidivism rates between boot camp and comparison groups (Howard, 1997).

The PAM report found that the average recidivism rate for Florida’s moderate-risk juveniles in boot camps were 44%. High recidivism rates may be due to inadequate after care components.

**Offenses during Placement**

According to the PAM report the average offense during placement for boot camp juveniles was 4%. An often noted positive about these camps was the safer environment provided by its structure and control of staff.

**Program Performance**

The Quality Assurance report stated that boot camps had an 86% performance score with a commendable rating succeeding the other alternatives.
Cost

Most studies reviewed concluded that boot camp programs are the better alternative when it comes to cost savings than traditional correctional facilities because of shorter residential stay. Communities often implement juvenile boot camps, in part, to reduce costs. The cost differential for a year in boot camp is approximately $33,480 and a year in a traditional facility is approximately $47,400 (Howard, 1997). The PAM report stated that the average cost per completion for boot camps were $36,056.00.

Wilderness Programs

Wilderness programs have been implemented also as a correctional alternative for juvenile delinquents. These programs evolved from the Outward-Bound model developed in Wales during World War II and the forestry camps of the 1930’s, into treatment programs aimed at helping juveniles triumph over emotional and behavioral problems. The wilderness model takes away the offender from modern society and focuses on the essential needs of food and shelter, with the goal of fostering the development of self-confidence and socially acceptable coping mechanisms for the participants. These programs assume that low self esteem, external locus of control, and poor interpersonal skills are key risk factors for misbehavior. Improvement of these factors, in turn, is assumed to lead to reductions in criminal behavior (Howard, 1997).

According to Howard (1997) there are over 100 wilderness programs in operation in the United States, serving 10,000 clients annually. These programs help adolescents through wilderness therapy. Techniques include immersion in an unfamiliar environment, group living with peers, therapy sessions, and educational curriculum. They provide
participants with rigorous physical activity and emotional challenges in which small, closely supervised groups learn to work cooperatively, follow instructions, and increase self esteem. Activities are designed to push the youths beyond their assumed capabilities, to help them solve their adolescent identity crisis and to develop in them a sense of their strengths and potential.

There are some similarities between programs but they do vary greatly. Some commonalities include mastering difficult physical challenges, creating an opportunity for heightened self-respect, using the outdoors to display the reality of ensuring one’s own survival as the setting for teaching academic subjects, and learning how to work with others to complete a task. Wilderness programs have similar goals as well to each other. One goal is to meet the youths’ needs for adventure and action in a positive manner. Another goal is to help them develop their self-esteem and self reliance by coping with the challenges of the program (Howard, 1997).

Wilson and Lipsey (2000) found concerns have been raised about wilderness camps due to the confrontational style to deal with the participants’ misconduct. Another concern is the lack of theoretical basis for wilderness program. Some suggest that guiding frameworks are lacking and guiding frameworks are a necessity to understand how wilderness camps can address factors causing juvenile delinquency.

According to Wilson and Lipsey (2000), supporters of wilderness programs suggest that having a staffing ratio ranging from one adult for five youths to almost a one on one relationship is very productive. This helps with rehabilitation and focusing in on the individual’s needs. A small group of offenders are assigned to one adult and they are viewed as a family unit in which the staff serves as role models.
Recidivism Rate

There have been many evaluation studies of wilderness programs. Some evaluations have found recidivism rates to be lower for youths who participated in wilderness camps than for youths who did not participate. Other studies found the rates to be similar. There has been no conclusive evidence that these programs are effective in reducing recidivism (Howard, 1997). According to the PAM report, the average recidivism rate for wilderness camps in Florida was 39%. The high recidivism rate may be due to lack of an adequate after care component.

Offenses during Placement

According to the PAM report, the average offense during placement for wilderness camp juveniles was 4%. An often noted positive about these camps was the small staff to participant ratio which provides a safer environment.

Program Performance

The Quality Assurance report stated that wilderness camps had an 81% performance score with a commendable rating. It had the second best rating out of the three alternatives.

Cost

The PAM report stated that the average cost per completion for wilderness camps were $43,681.00. This might be a high amount because most wilderness camps are contracted with private providers.
**Halfway Houses**

Another way to lessen prison populations while providing close supervision is the halfway house alternative. They have become popular in some states, and are an integral part of residential and correctional alternatives in the state of Florida. Halfway houses also known as community residential centers are houses in which offenders live that provide supervision, room/board, and treatment (Greenwood, 1996).

They have dual purposes: a punitive component and transitional services for the offenders. Halfway houses provide a restrictive community-based setting where the offenders are limited to the halfway house facility except for employment. The second purpose is to provide reintegration and transitional services for offenders who are at the end of their sentence. Offenders may be able to receive weekend passes to visit their family and friends. Houses tend to be old houses, or a large residential structure. They are state and federally ran, and some are contracted out (Greenwood, 1996).

**Recidivism Rate**

According to the PAM report, the average recidivism rate for halfway house participants were 36%. This alternative has the lowest recidivism rate and it may be due to its total commitment to treatment and its therapeutic environment. Early studies on halfway houses have not revealed better recidivism rates than offenders in traditional facilities. The results were similar although some types of offenders benefited from these programs more than others.
Offenses during Placement

There was a 7% average for offenses during placement, which is higher than the other two options. This higher number may be due to its less restrictive environment.

Program Performance

The Quality Assurance report stated that halfway houses had a 78% performance score with an acceptable rating. This rating is acceptable by the Department but to receive special status it must reach the 80% mark for a commendable rating. Halfway houses need a slight improvement with program performance. It rated the lowest out of the three alternatives.

Cost

Halfway houses did prove to be cheaper than housing offenders in traditional facilities. The PAM report stated that the average cost per completion for boot camps were $23,068.00. This option may be cheaper because the facilities are houses and they usually accommodate smaller populations.
V. Conclusion

This report presented three alternatives to incarceration for juveniles in the moderate-risk level. Each alternative was assessed by criteria that is important in finding overall program effectiveness. Tables 1 and 2 summarize these results.

The data in Table 1 are the results from averaging data retrieved from the Quality Assurance and Program Accountability Reports which evaluated each moderate-risk juvenile offender program. Table 2 lists the subjective rankings given by the author of this report to analyze the most effective alternative. After reviewing alternatives my recommendation would be to improve upon halfway houses and boot camps, even though there was not a significant difference between the results.

Halfway houses did well with cost effectiveness, offenses during placement, and recidivism rates. It had the lowest average in the cost and recidivism category. Halfway houses may have done well with cost because the facilities are houses and they usually accommodate smaller populations. The low recidivism rate may be explained by their total focus on treatment and not punishment. It had a highest average in the offenses during placement category which may be due to the less restrictive environments than its counterparts. Halfway houses do need to improve upon its program performance; it had the lowest average out of the three alternatives.

Boot camps had the highest average in program performance and faired well with all of the other criteria. Boot camps did have the highest average recidivism rate which can be improved upon. In comparison to traditional correctional facilities, boot camps still are a more reasonable and effective option. Wilderness camps faired well in most criteria besides cost per completion. Wilderness camps had the highest average of cost per completion with no better results than boot camps or halfway houses.
There are a few missing elements that should be implemented to increase the success rate of these recommended programs. The offender should be thoroughly assessed by a qualified social service professional for appropriate placement instead of a judge or prosecutor. During the participants’ tenure in the program individual needs should be targeted and the program should include strict discipline, various treatment, physical challenges, educational components, and vocational education. After care and community supervision is a very important component missing in these alternatives. After care services should be implemented for at least one or two years to help the offender’s transition back into society.

Boot camp and halfway house improvements are crucial in moving the Florida juvenile justice system in the right direction. As the juvenile population increases, more arrests will be made and we need to take responsibility in making sure offenders are receiving help while in custody to prevent future criminal behavior.
### Table 1: Alternative Averages

#### Evaluative Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Cost per Completion</th>
<th>Recidivism Rate</th>
<th>Offenses During Placement</th>
<th>Program Effectiveness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boot Camp</td>
<td>36,056.00</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilderness Programs</td>
<td>43,681.00</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>81%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halfway House</td>
<td>23,068.00</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Alternatives
Table 2: Ranking of Alternatives and Alternative Criteria (FY 2001-2002)

Evaluative Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Alternatives</th>
<th>Cost Effectiveness</th>
<th>Recidivism Rate</th>
<th>Offenses During Placement</th>
<th>Program Performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boot Camp</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilderness Programs</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Halfway House</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Quality Assurance Program Performance

Performance Score

Program Model

- Boot Camps
- Wilderness Camps
- Halfway Houses
References


