

Occasional Series on Reentry Research
Into the Belly of the Beast: An Embedded Criminologist Reflects on
California's Prison Reform

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Joan Petersilia is a Professor of Criminology, Law and Society in the School of Social Ecology, University of California, Irvine. Prior to joining UCI, she was a RAND Corporate Fellow and Director of the Criminal Justice Program at RAND. She has directed major studies in policing, sentencing, career criminals, juvenile justice, corrections, and racial discrimination. Her expertise includes policy analysis, program evaluation, cost/benefit analysis, and statistical analyses. Dr. Petersilia's current work focuses on parole and prisoner reintegration. Since February 2004, she has served as Special Advisor for Research and Policy to California's Youth and Adult Correctional Agency (YACA). Dr. Petersilia is the director of the newly-established UCI Center for Evidence-Based Corrections, and was a Visiting Professor of Law at Stanford Law School during the 2005-2006 academic year.

Dr. Petersilia has served as president of both the American Society of Criminology and of the Association of Criminal Justice Research in California. She is an elected fellow of the American Society of Criminology, and received its Vollmer Award for her overall contributions to crime and public policy.

Her most recent publication is: [Understanding California Corrections \(2006\)](#). This report summarizes existing data about California corrections in the hope that reform can be discussed on the basis of evidence rather than politics.

Dr. Petersilia has a BA. (1972) in sociology from Loyola University of Los Angeles, a MA (1974) in sociology from Ohio State University, and a Ph.D. (1990) in Criminology, Law & Society, from the University of California, Irvine.