

 **CityLink** Center

We are writing on behalf of the Spiritual Advisory Council of CityLink Center, a group of Pastors and leadership of 15 local churches with thousands of congregants. Our churches engage as supporters of CityLink Center, recognizing the needs within our communities and the ability of CityLink as a systemic solution to break the cycle of generational poverty. We also recognize the need of our church members to follow God's call to actively engage in serving our neighbors; CityLink provides an excellent platform for that engagement.

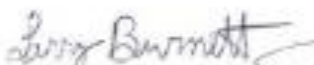
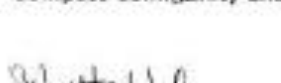
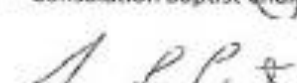
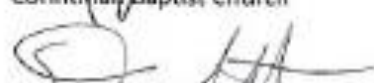
A massive challenge for our community is the lack of economic opportunity for individuals with criminal convictions. We simply cannot expect our young men to leave correctional institutions and re-enter society as productive members if every door is closed in their face. We are asking individuals to change their ways but not providing an avenue or support to do so. This is a repeated topic at our quarterly Spiritual Advisory Council meetings and we have steadily encouraged CityLink's leadership to identify opportunities to fill this gap.

At our last meeting, we were extremely enthused to hear about the prospect of Center for Employment Opportunities entering the Cincinnati market in a partnership with GreenLight fund and CityLink Center.

We heard about CEO's innovative model of transitional employment which provides a clear path and opportunity for individuals returning home from prison. The thoughtful program engages individuals and eliminates the need to revert to criminal behavior to meet immediate financial commitments or concerns. The program gives space and time to transition while employed. We are overwhelmingly in support of the program entering the Cincinnati market and believe that partnership with CityLink will only further strengthen the outcomes of the program.

We appreciate that there are no 'silver bullets' to complex social challenges but do recognize the ability for a targeted program with strong historic results like CEO to advance this critical issue in our city.

As a body, we believe in the core tenant of grace and redemption. For too long we have spoken of these principles from our pulpits but as a community neglected to provide that same grace and opportunity for true redemption to returning citizens. We hope that you will consider our support of this initiative and share our excitement for the prospect of this program.


Dr. Robert Baines
Southern Baptist Church
Pastor James Strayhorn
BrightStar Community Church
Pastor Chuck Mingo
Crossroads Church
Pastor Nick Burnett
House of Hope Fellowship
Pastor Dorrien Hinsey
Compass Community Church
Pastor Gene Ellington
Consolation Baptist Church
Pastor KZ Smith
Corinthian Baptist Church
Pastor Chris Beard
Peoples Church
Pastor Matt Holtman
Landmark Baptist Church
Pastor Ennis Tait
Church of the Living God
Pastor Drew Smith
College Hill Presbyterian
Pastor Tom Baxter
Peoples Church
Pastor Jerry Culbreth
Tried Stone New Beginnings
Pastor Rhansyl Harris
The Rock Church