

New ways to deal with crime

Over the last several years, I have worked with stakeholders in the criminal justice system as part of my Smart Justice Advisory Council. It seeks sensible and creative sentencing solutions and deals with the root causes of crime that infringes upon lives. I've talked to law enforcement personnel, judges, our district attorney and local and state lawmakers.

More importantly, though, I've talked to Kate Boccia of Alpharetta, who recently shared her story in the AJC's Personal Journeys' feature. She has learned more about the criminal justice system than she ever anticipated. Her son, who struggled with a heroin addiction, is in prison charged with armed robbery. Boccia took her personal turmoil and turned it into action, fighting to get young people access to addiction treatment and the courts to rethink their handling of drug-related issues.

Boccia's story is replicated throughout Fulton County and metro Atlanta as the experience of many parents. Drug use and abuse are responsible for much of the violent and property crime we deal with every day.