

We all suffer consequences of mass incarceration

I recently learned of a new phrase in the criminal justice reform arena — “collateral consequences” — and decided I needed to understand more about this.

For the returning citizen or ex-convict, collateral consequences are the consequences of a criminal conviction that are not part of the civil, state penalties — incarceration, fines or probation. They are additional actions triggered by a conviction. Loss of professional license, ineligibility for public funds, and loss of voting rights are among thousands of consequences that make coming home and staying home nearly impossible.

As I think about the effect of collateral consequences on the returning citizen, something dawned on me. What about collateral consequences to the community and to businesses? — consequences that reach deep into every one of us?