



Jon E. Ozmint

Jon E. Ozmint grew up in Anderson, S.C., and graduated from T.L Hanna High School. After graduation from The Citadel with honors, Ozmint attended the University of Alabama School of Law. He began his legal career by serving on active duty with the U.S. Navy, in the Judge Advocate General's Corps, where he served in various capacities in the criminal justice system. After four years with the submarine force in New London, Connecticut, Ozmint returned to his home of Anderson, SC. With prior service in the Army Reserve, Ozmint continued his military service after leaving active duty. He is currently a Commander in the U.S. Navy Reserve, serving as Reserve Legislative Counsel, Deputy Chief of Naval Operations for Readiness and Logistics.

Upon leaving active duty, Ozmint accepted a position as a prosecutor in the Tenth Circuit Solicitors Office. He then served as General Counsel to the State Department of Labor, Licensing and Regulation until 1994, when the Attorney General appointed Ozmint as Deputy Attorney General and Chief Prosecutor for the Statewide Grand Jury. In that position, Ozmint supervised the largest contingent of law enforcement agents, attorneys and staff in the Attorney General's office.

Focusing on large, multi-state drug conspiracies and public corruption, Ozmint successfully prosecuted drug traffickers from New York, Miami, California, Texas, Haiti, Cuba and Mexico. These efforts stopped thousands of pounds of illegal drugs from reaching South Carolina.

Ozmint also prosecuted public corruption across the entire state of South Carolina, including the successful prosecution of 15 public officials in the largest public corruption case in the history of South Carolina courts, the Sumter School District embezzlement cases. During his years in court, Ozmint maintained a 96 percent conviction rate and never lost a trial in circuit court.

In 2000, Ozmint left the Attorney General's office and entered private practice. In 2002, he ran for Attorney General in the Republican primary.

In January 2003, Governor Mark Sanford appointed Ozmint as the Director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections (SCDC). Ozmint took the helm of an agency that had cycled through four directors in five years and had become the proverbial “whipping boy” for many politicians and media outlets. Eight years later, Ozmint left the department as the fifth most senior corrections directory in the nation.

As director, Ozmint focused on outcomes in every functional area. The department became model for efficiency and effectiveness. In the face of difficult budget cuts, the agency maintained an appropriate balance: it improved safety while preserving and expanding programming designed to give willing offenders the chance become productive citizens upon release.

Even as funding and staffing ratios dropped to record low levels, the agency reduced escapes and all types of assaults. After reducing education expenditures by 40 percent, inmate GED completions set agency records in five of Ozmint’s eight years and vocational completions also increased to record levels.

In measures of efficiency, the department led the nation with variable costs that ranked among the lowest in the nation, including the lowest daily food costs and health care expenditures in the nation. Over Ozmint’s tenure, the agency developed food, medical, and other cost control measures that have been emulated across the nation.

Several new programming initiatives focused on partnerships with other organizations, leveraging resources to meet the needs of inmates. A new vocational training program, SPICE, partners with state technical colleges and has been expanded to three locations statewide. A new privately funded inmate “seminary” program is offered by Columbia International University and two faith-based addictions counseling programs provide services to hundreds of inmates leaving SCDC prisons each year. When Ozmint took over, the agency had no faith-based housing units. When he left, SCDC had five faith-based units.

Tackling the turnover and retention problems that plagued the agency, Ozmint implemented incentive pay for uniformed officers working in maximum- and medium-security prisons and developed and implemented a leadership development course that is now mandatory for all front line supervisors. Ozmint personally addressed every class comprising the more than 1,200 employees who matriculate at the agency’s academy each year; and, the agency’s new character development initiative is improving the culture in every SCDC prison. Vacancies and turnover rates dropped dramatically during his tenure. Ozmint also implemented a program that reduced the agency’s workers compensation premiums by almost \$4 million, or 20 percent, over a four year period ending in 2011: the first comprehensive and successful such program in the history of South Carolina state government. Premiums, which were more than \$13 million and rising, were reduced to \$8.6 million by 2011.

Ozmint made sure every employee knew and maintained an on-person copy of the agency mission of Safety, Service and Stewardship - reminding SCDC employees of their duty to protect and serve in a fashion that always considered the taxpayers of South Carolina.

Ozmint has served as chairman of the Staff Safety Committee for the American Correctional Association and of the Legal, Legislative and Policy Committee of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA). He led ASCA's national fight for cell phone interdiction technology and was instrumental in representing the association in negotiations on, and responses to, the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Ozmint has testified dozens of times in the South Carolina statehouse, on capitol hill in Washington, and in other states across the nation. He has served on numerous boards and commissions, including the six years on the Oliver Gospel Mission and he currently serves on the SC Sentencing Reform Oversight Commission. Ozmint is licensed to practice in South Carolina and Alabama and in federal courts at every level.

Ozmint and his wife, Luanne, have four children. The Ozmints attend Shandon Baptist Church, where Ozmint serves as a Sunday school teacher and Deacon. He is an avid hunter, a little league coach and an occasional runner, having completed six marathons.