



**If you build them, they
will come.**

No, Not baseball, Prisons!

By allowing a profit-driven capitalist-enterprise model to operate over institutions that should rightfully be focused on rehabilitation, America has enthusiastically embraced a prison industrial complex. See

The federal system over the last five to seven years has been by far the largest-growing part of the (private prison) system, and it is because of the immigrant-detainee population,”

Beginning on page 20

THE MOVEMENT

**Spring 2012
Issue # 14**

The Official Newsletter of the Human Rights
Coalition for the union of Prisoners' Families

**Human Rights Coalition
Dedicated to Protecting the
HUMAN RIGHTS of All!**

Inside this Issue:

From The Desk of The Editor	2
All Power To The People	
Open Letter, By Lee A. Horton	4
"Three Strikes and You're Out" Bill, By Nancy Gertner	7
"3 Strikes Is the Wrong Way Forward", By MA ACLU	9
Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist	13
The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!	
Academic & Social Failures Drive -Up Prison Cost, By Richard "Tut" Carter, Sr.	14
Is Innocence Irrelevant?	16
Human Rights Coalition Report	
Private Prison Industry ..., By Leslie Berestein	20
Immigration Detention Centers Draw Criticism..., From HUFF POST POLITICS	24
The Economics of Incarceration, By Nile Bowie	26
Human Rights Matter	
Prison Facts, From NoNewPrisons.org	34
What's the News!	38
The Babylon System - This Must Stop!	
Open Letter to African-American/Black Community, PART II, By: C. Williams	48
Prisoners' Bill of Rights	52

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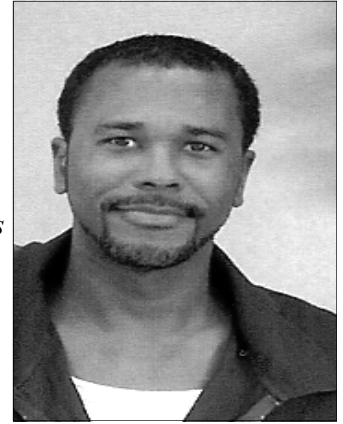
THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcalition.org

From The Desk of The Editor

Greetings Everyone!

The one thing that I admire most about the Occupy Wall Street (OWS) movement is its uncanny ability to occupy places of significance to the 1 Percents' empire and then expose how the 1 Percent control and steal Americans' and other nations' wealth for their super-profits. The tactic of occupy and expose has worked to raise the awareness, anger, and political action of Americans.



However, throughout the Occupy movement one issue that wasn't exposed was the government's profit-driven Criminal Injustice System and Prison Industrial Complex. The Occupy movement never exposed how the 1 Percent rich -ruling class of bloodsuckers on Wall Street finance and control the prison Industrial Complex and Criminal Injustice system to make super-profits of hundreds of billions of dollars from.

The 1 Percent have a vested financial interest in seeing that more and more prisons are built throughout America (and the World!) and that large corporations, which service prisons, receives the multi-million dollar prison contracts. Which also means the 1 Percent has a vested financial interest in making sure that laws are passed that will place people in prison for next to nothing and serve long prison sentences for it. The 1 Percent must feed the beast they've created with a continuous flow of human beings to make their super-profits.

The Criminal Injustice System must be exposed as the tool for the 1 Percents' profit-driven Prison Industrial Complex that we may tear down the façade of legitimacy of both, as systems of justice.

Financial institutions—like Lehman Brothers Banking Cartel, Citi Group Bank, and other banks—provide the investment capital to corporations that build and service the prisons and funding to lobby groups that they may reap their harvest of super -profits.

Corporations—like Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and Wackenhut corporation—build these hundred-million dollar pre-constructed prisons around the country and own most of the private prisons in America, including the 150 privately-owned Immigration Detention Centers in the southwestern states that are contracted by the federal government, to which they have been paying political lobbying groups to lobby (pay and bribe) politicians to submit and enact racist and often illegal bills as law. Other corporations mostly provide food, health, phone, and security services to prisons, such as Keefe, Prison Health Service, Verizon, and Wexford, to name a few, whom make billions of dollars by gaining prison contracts.

Political lobby groups—like the American Legislative Exchange Committee (ALEC), the Heritage Foundation, and the Reason Foundation—spend millions of dollars given to them by banks and corporations on political campaigns contributions. Their jobs are to help corporations draft and enact “model” crime legislation such as the “Truth In

(Continued on page 3)

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Sentencing” and “Three Strikes” laws, that works to criminalize people and bring them into the for-profit Criminal Injustice System and Prison Industrial Complex, in order to maintain a steady flow of people as prisoners and prison dollars. It’s all economics to the 1 Percent.

The 1 Percent considers a person or prisoner as a “commodity”, and a commodity is any article of trade or commerce. Commodities are invested in, owned, or traded on the stock exchange for profits. The Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) owns most of your prison systems and sells its stock and shares to investors (banks & financial groups mostly) on the New York Stock Exchange (NYSE). The major stock holder is the Paine Webber Group and their ticker symbol for their stock is CXW on the NYSE. There is also a Prison Realty Trust (PZN) which is a real estate investment trust and is the world’s largest private sector owner and developer.

The next round of the Occupy movement will need to occupy some government place and expose their for-profit Criminal Injustice System and Prison Industrial Complex for the multi-billion dollar government –ran business enterprise that it is, and not the system of justice the 1 Percent makes it out to be. We must begin to use our voice and actions to expose these and smash their mirrors of illusion. OCCUPY AND EXPOSE!

The Struggle Continues! All Power to the oppressed People!

Shakaboona Marshall, Co-Editor In Chief and Human Rights Organizer



Private Interests, By: Richard G. Hall Jr.

For more prison art , go to: <http://realcostofprisons.org/comix>

THE MOVEMENT

www.brcoalition.org



**“ALL POWER TO
THE PEOPLE”**

Open Letter

February 14, 2012

The Honorable Mayor Michael Nutter
The Mayor of the City of Philadelphia
215 City Hall
1400 John F. Kennedy Boulevard
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Dear Mayor Nutter:

I am writing in response to your new anti-crime initiative. I commend you on your effort to cure Philadelphia's crime problem. However, I find troubling the methods you propose in achieving this goal. The point of this letter is not simply to offer criticism, but to suggest a better alternative than a mass incarceration strategy. But before I outline my strategy let me put the problem into context.

Since the murder rate is the City's most pressing problem I will focus my comments there. A recent Philadelphia Daily News article, entitled, "State Gets High Rank On Killing List," said that a report by the Washington, D.C., based Violent Policy Center ranked Pennsylvania third among all 50 states in the murder rate. "Based on the latest FBI data, from 2009, the City's 'Black Homicide Victimization Rate' was 28.30 per 100,000 — six times the national rate — and 85 percent were gun shot victims," the article goes on to say. (Source, Philadelphia Daily News)

As of January 29, 2012 there were 32 murders reported in Philadelphia, a 10 percent jump from 2011, reported the Philadelphia Tribune. Following the trend of the last three decades, if not all, most of them were African Americans. This is beyond a simple crime wave but evidences an undeclared war being waged in the African American community in which young black males are both soldier and collateral damage. Where the only enemy is within and every casualty is by friendly fire. This is a paradox, a war that can only be won if both sides lose.

As it stands to date, this war has been successful. At an astonishing rate our young men and others in the community have been falling on the battlefield to the grave and to the grave of the prison cell. It has been an obscene waste of our most valuable human capital and a drag on the forward progress of the entire community.

How the war got started is unclear, but the root causes are well known. Summed up: America was conceived in violence, born by bullets and baptized in bloodshed. This country has had a long and bitter history of armed conflict and achieving progress through taking of life. Add to that the legacies of slavery, Jim Crow, and a substandard educational system. Then multiply it by persistent poverty and unemployment; a culture of gangs, drugs, and guns; and a value system that measures a man's worth not by intelligence but in dollars, material prosperity, and physicality; and we have an army of Manchurian candidates spread across the country in every African American community preset to assassinate itself.

What has been elusive is how to end the war (or stop the violence). In your announcement you said, "There are three words that will be the context of what I am talking about, prevention, intervention, and collaboration." (Source: Philadelphia Tribune, front

(Continued on page 5)

page, 1/27/12). Sounds good but then you go on to say: "We have a message for every punk, every criminal, every person carrying an illegal weapon in the city. Got a gun? Go to jail," and to every murderer or potential murderer you warned, "I put a \$20,000 bounty on your head." (Philadelphia Tribune, 1/27/12).

With all due respect, Sir, this type of rhetoric may be good for a news sound bite but will do nothing to save lives or reduce crime. Unfortunately, the people carrying guns, committing crimes and harming people don't care about going to jail. In fact, they relish it as a rite of passage. As such, the city simply cannot incarcerate itself out its crime problem. Furthermore, Pennsylvania's prison population, like the rest of the country's, is bursting at the seams — of which Philadelphians comprise 51.9 percent and 47 percent of those on death row. Moreover, the state just can't afford the incarceration strategy anymore.

Consequently, your plan completely fails to capitalize on the lessons learned from the 1980's, 1990's, and 2000's concerning how to reduce crime. You are right, the key is prevention, intervention, and collaboration. But speaking as someone who has lived in high crime areas and is now incarcerated, how your plan achieves these three goals is troubling, wrongheaded and would only succeed in filling jails.

The bottom line is that tough talk, bounties, more police, and more incarceration, like 15th Century medicine, just don't work. The majority of the crimes and acts of violence being carried out in the city are by the youth, and initiatives like yours never reach their awareness until it is too late. Therefore, to stem Philadelphia's crime and violence problem a bold, new, unorthodox strategy is necessary. What is needed is a direct confrontation, Occupy Wall Street styled initiative. One where public officials and the residents of high crime areas work in tandem to stop the violence. Thus what I propose, a Five step people oriented approach.

Step One: Sir, you and other political leaders must make yourselves available to the residents of high crime areas on a daily basis. You and other politicians can take a page out of the Mayor of Newark, Corey Booker's play book. He moved into the projects in a high crime area and succeeded in organizing the community to reduce crime and the murder rate.

If you and other politicians are serious about ending crime, instead of announcing \$20,000 bounties and more incarceration and telling the residents of high crime areas what to do from afar, commit a year to living with them, organizing them, and showing them what to do to make their communities safe. Furthermore, implement what President Barack Obama suggested in his state of the union address to stop allowing our children to drop out of school and require them to graduate. Get the youth off the streets and cut crime in half.

Step Two: Organize the concerned residents to take responsibility for their children and to occupy their neighborhoods for a year. The goal: flood the streets with as many people as possible to disrupt the flow of crime. Organize them to take over the corners like the occupy movement has taken over municipal grounds all over the country; i.e., host rallies, marches, block parties, community cleanup cookouts etc.. Organize the most outspoken men/women into 20 men/women patrols to act and stop the violence, missionaries by day and peace keepers at night. Organize the parents to search their homes for the guns of their "children" and turn them over to police. Like Bill Cosby said, they can "conduct a shakedown of your kids room." The community activist can work with the city to organize/train residents for this task.

Step Three: Christian Churches and Muslim Mosques both have to play their part. In her Philadelphia Tribune article, Aliya Z. Khabir, expressing a level of frustration with the Muslim

(Continued on page 6)

community for their lack of action to help reduce the murder rate in Philadelphia stated, "We cannot remain silent, disillusioned and stagnant .. We should take the initiative to be not only the voice of reason, but symbols of positive and progressive action." (Philadelphia Tribune, 1/27/12, pg. 9B). Sister Khabir is absolutely right, but this also goes for Christians.

As the Mayor you can reach out to Muslim Mosques, Christian Churches and other religious entities to organize themselves to be a catalyst to end the violence. Ministers and Imams alike can flood the streets with their congregations. Their members can march, pray, organize the youth and the residents to stop the violence and crime. Since Friday is when religious services for Muslims are held, Imams can set up right on the worst, drug ridden corners and make prayer. The Christian Ministers and Catholic Priest can do the same on Sunday. The days of hiding behind the walls of Churches and Mosques have long since gone, it is time to go out among the people. Your presence is needed.

Lastly, Mayor Nutter, to help ensure that state prisoners returning to Philadelphia have a smooth re-entry, you should utilize those state prisoners serving life and long term sentences. A lot of these men and women have been in prison for decades, have grown wise and have a wealth of fresh ideas. They want to see the streets where their families live become safer. Their years in prison have given them a unique position of respect in the eyes of those young men/ women for which society has thrown up its hand. They speak their language, identify with them, and have been mentoring to them for years with success. They can provide a profound voice of reason to unlock the ears of these lost souls. No disrespect to the Department of Corrections (D.O.C.) but prison programs are ineffectual and the recidivism rate lies as proof thereof.

It is time to do something that works. The City

should set up a program with D.O.C. that utilizes the wisdom of these prisoners. They already do it individually on a small scale, and the D.O.C. uses them to quell violence in prison, so why not take the handcuffs off and put them to work to help stop the violence in the City. Let them do their part to help effect some change in those prisoners who will be returning to Philadelphia one day while they are here, so they can re-enter the city as productive citizens. Lifers and long timers from Philadelphia were once the problem, they understand it, so why not let them be the solution.

In conclusion, implementing this five step strategy would represent a sea of change from what's been tried thus far. We can make the city safer by focusing on the people instead of mass incarceration. Because there is strength in numbers the human presence on the streets would be a direct challenge to the crime problem, would provide opportunities for mass mentoring, and would bolster the community's ability to maintain the peace and give it courage to confront those who would harm witnesses and other innocent residents before it happens. It would cost far less than the initiative you announced, as it utilizes the resources already available: the people.

The question is do you have the will to face the problem head on? If the civil rights movement was able to occupy the south to end segregation, the Mayor's office should be able to lead the city to occupy a few neighborhoods to stop a war of crime and violence that is killing city's residents. The solution lies with the people who are in danger of being the next victims - Us, not with more incarceration.

Sir, I pray that you receive my suggestions with an open mind, not as coming from a prisoner and critic but from someone who cares deeply for Philadelphia and the safety of its residents, which include my family also. Please, I hope that you will say yes to the people and not to mass incarceration.

Thank you for your time and I await your reply.



**"ALL POWER TO
THE PEOPLE"**

MA: Boston Globe Op-Ed by Nancy Gertner: Be tough, and smart, on crime- the murder of Melissa Gosule - horrible as it was - does not justify the "three strikes and you're out" bill

IT WAS a despicable crime, and ended a life full of promise. A young woman, 27, was raped and killed in 1999 by a violent criminal who had picked her up on the side of the road after her car broke down. The perpetrator deserved to be caught, tried, and punished severely.

But the murder of Melissa Gosule - horrible as it was - does not justify the "three strikes and you're out" bill that state lawmakers are considering. "Melissa's bill," as it is called, is supposedly aimed at keeping the most dangerous repeat offenders behind bars, without the possibility of parole. Its backers insist the bill is designed only for the worst of the worst, the habitually violent offenders presumably like Michael Gentile, the man convicted of Melissa's murder.

What few are saying, however, is that Gentile's record did not fit the "worst of the worst" profile. He had a non-violent adult record - petty larcenies, breaking and entering, marijuana possession, disorderly conduct, trespassing, and shoplifting - and the dispositions imposed by the various courts reflected the petty nature of the crimes. Should the judge who had Gentile before him on the second disorderly conduct charge, or the second trespassing charge, have thrown the book at him? Should the judge who sentenced Gentile for breaking and entering and larceny have given him more than two years in prison, when that was his first incarceration? In fact, nothing about his criminal record would have predicted that he was capable of murder.

Here is the problem: If the goal of the bill is to incapacitate people like Gentile, then Massachusetts will be locking up nonviolent repeat offenders for a long time. If the goal is to target "the worst of the worst," Gentile would not have been among them.

Still, some say that repeat offenders should be put in jail for years in order to stop them from a life of crime. But that's how California started on a path to overcrowded and dangerous prisons, leading to a court decree requiring the release of thousands of prisoners. California had used its three-strikes law to jail far more offenders than all the other states and the federal government combined.

The murder of Melissa Gosule - horrible as it was - does not justify the "three strikes and you're out" bill.

To be sure, the proposed Massachusetts bill is narrower than California's. In fact, the backers of the bill insist that it will not make a substantial difference in imprisonment rates because the state has

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

had a habitual offender law since 1887, and it has not been used very much. The 1887 law required two prior crimes for which the offender was imprisoned more than three years in order to qualify for the maximum term of imprisonment (albeit with parole). If prosecutors are not charging offenders under this law, why is a new one necessary? Is it that prosecutors want this bill precisely to widen the net of eligible offenders, arguably to catch those like Gentile?

The other crime that provided the basis for the Massachusetts bill was the tragic murder of Woburn police officer John Maguire at the hands of a parolee, Domenic Cinelli. Cinelli had been sentenced to three life terms in prison under the 1887 habitual offender law, among other provisions, but he was still available for parole. If the Legislature wanted only to address the Cinelli situation, it could have drafted a much more targeted bill - no parole for offenders subject to multiple life terms, for example.

We surely need to punish repeat nonviolent offenders. But we also have to determine what works to control their behavior, and what makes sense as a criminal justice policy. Lengthy incarceration for nonviolent offenders, just because we don't have better alternatives, does not make sense. We have to ask the hard questions: What combination of punishment along with drug treatment, reentry programs, and intensive supervision will deter someone like Gentile? The answer is not jail, jail, and more jail - not if we want to have the resources for the policies that we know are effective.

We have to reserve prisons and scarce correctional resources for the most violent. We need to be not just tough on crime, but smart about it. Putting a name on a bill - even a name that reminds us of a thoroughly despicable crime - is no substitute for real reform.

Nancy Gertner, a retired US District Court judge, is a professor at Harvard Law School.
<http://www.bostonglobe.com/opinion/2012/02/22/tough-and-smart-crime/fRIBDWpcibhmX4gEE5NGoL/story.html>

Sudoku mp13 Medium

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"ALL POWER TO
THE PEOPLE"



"3 STRIKES" IS THE WRONG WAY FORWARD FOR MASSACHUSETTS

American Civil Liberties Union of Massachusetts

A lot is on the line and we need your help. Massachusetts lawmakers are under intense pressure to pass a "3 strikes and you're out" proposal that would make our already harsh sentencing laws even more punitive.

In November, each branch of the state legislature hurriedly legislation that would, among other provisions, expand "mandatory maximum" sentences for people with certain criminal histories who are convicted of new crimes.

That's right—mandatory maximum sentences.

Please ask legislative leaders to reconsider these overly harsh sentencing proposals.

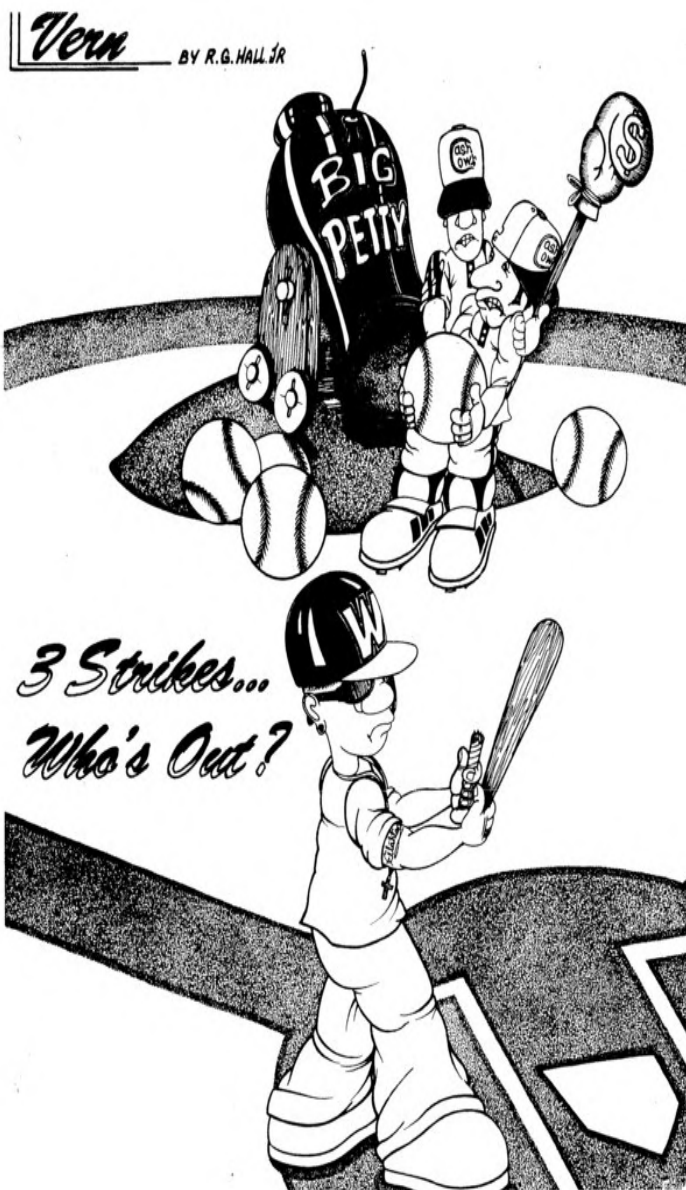
Unless we take bold and steady steps, "3 strikes" would tie judges' hands and require them to impose the maximum possible sentence on any a "habitual" offender—such as stealing something with a value over a \$250 threshold.

It should never even be a possibility that a judge could be force to lock somebody for years for an offense like stealing an iPod or an expensive pair of shoes. On top of that, the law would push back any chance of parole, and in many cases strip it away entirely. That's not only wrong, but with a price tag of nearly \$50,000 a year to taxpayers, we can't afford it.

Please tell Massachusetts lawmakers that mandatory maximum sentences are the wrong way to go.

- ACLU of Massachusetts

To tell your Senator or State Representative to reconsider "3 Strikes" law go to: <https://secure.aclu.org/site/Advocacy?cmd=display&page=UserAction&id=4043>



3 Strikes...Who's Out? By: Richard G. Hall Jr.
For more prison art go to Real Cost of Prisons at:
<http://realcostofprisons.org/comix>

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THE PEOPLE"



SAVE THE DATE!! Now is a critical moment in the campaign to bring real justice to Pennsylvania. Decarcerate PA recently released a three point platform calling on the governor and the legislature to 1) stop building new prisons, 2) reduce the number of people in prison, and 3) reinvest money in our schools and communities. Over fifty organizations from across the state have come together to endorse this platform. These organizations work on a wide variety of issues, including creating quality public schools, fighting for workers' rights, protecting civil liberties, advocating for quality healthcare and housing for people with HIVS/AIDS, fighting deportations, and developing methods of transformative justice. While we work on different issues, we all recognize the need to stop the state's massive prison expansion and reinvest money in our schools and communities.

On Friday, March 30th, Decarcerate PA is hosting a party to celebrate the launch of the platform. This is an opportunity to meet other organizations working for positive change in Pennsylvania, free food, music, and poetry at this celebration.



When: Friday, March 30th from 5:30-8:00
Where: Liberty Resources, 714 Market Street
More info here: <http://www.facebook.com/events/339315049452062/>

We also want to make sure Governor Corbett gets this message loud and clear, so **on April 5th we are taking our demands to the streets!** School reformers, AIDS activists, workers, civil libertarians, immigrants, lawyers, service providers, prisoners and formerly incarcerated people, queers, transformative justice practitioners, parents and families: this is our mass movement against mass incarceration. We hope you will join us!

When: 3-6pm on Thursday, April 5

Where: Governor Corbett's Philly office (200 S. Broad St.) at 3pm
Criminal Justice Center (1301 Filbert St.) at 4pm
Love Park (15th St. & JFK) at 5pm

We are scheduled to start at 3pm at Governor Corbett's Philadelphia office (200 S. Broad St.) to demand an end to prison expansion. At 4pm, we will march to the Criminal Justice Center (1301 Filbert St.) to demonstrate real solutions to reduce the number of people in prison. At 5pm, we will march to Love Park (15th and JFK) to symbolically break ground on the caring, healthy communities we want to build.

If you are an individual and want to show your support for these demands you can sign our petition online:
<https://www.change.org/petitions/no-more-prisons-a-call-to-decarcerate-pennsylvania#>

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"Hero"

Why can't Nat Turner be my "Hero"

Ten years in solitary confinement, I learned the truth about the New World aka Western Hemisphere

"Hero"

Why can't Denmark Vesey be my "Hero"

Ten year in solitary confinement, I learned European invaders tried to create two races in the New World aka Western Hemisphere, for example, Anglo-Saxon race for North Americans and Hispaniola-Race for Central and South Americans

"Hero"

Why can't Gabriel Prosser be my "Hero"

Ten years in solitary confinement, I learned the United States have a dark history taken Africans against they will into slaver in the New World aka Western Hemisphere.

"Hero"

Why can't Robert F. Williams be my "Hero"

Ten years in solitary confinement, I learned from 1882-to-1968 it was 3,446 public lynching down south in United States of African-Americans



Robert F. Williams

"Hero"

Why can't Shields Green be my "Hero"

Ten years in solitary confinement, I learned that public lynching or "pic-nics" a term that described a white mob "pick-ing" a black person they called "Nigger" to hang while they enjoyed a day in the great outdoors



Shields Green

"Hero"

Why can't Joseph Cinque be my "Hero"

Ten years in solitary confinement, I learned the United domestic terrorist, for example, Ku Klux Klan, Knights Camellia, White brotherhood, Red Shirts, pale faces

States have
of the White
(among others)



Harriet Tubman

"Hero"

Why can't Harriet Tubman be my "Shero"

Ten years in solitary confinement, I learned the historical truth about the New World aka Western Hemisphere have a cut-throat vicious capitalist mentality - European invaders from Christopher Columbus to George Washington and Thomas Jefferson murdered, raped and robbed the indigenous native to establish the Louisiana Cession Act, Missouri Compromise, Kansas-Nebraska Act, and Homestead Act, etc.

"Hero"

Why can't Toussaint L'Ouverture be my "Hero"

Ten years in solitary confinement, I learned more in solitary confinement than the Philadelphia Public School system

"Hero" why can't Denmark Vesey be my "Hero"

I love my heroes who fought oppression, racism and a unjust capitalist system. Why people mad at me. Nate Turner, Denmark Vesey, Gabriel Prosser, Robert F. Williams, Joseph Cinque, Harriet Tubman, Toussaint L'Ouverture all are Heroes in my book

"Hero"

In the Struggle
In Solidarity

Jerome "Hoagie" Coffey



Toussaint L'Ouverture

Hello,

I am fortunate to be one of the people who corresponds with Dortell Williams. A week or so ago, he sent me a copy of his new book. I am reading it now and it is very good. If you have ever read any of his essays (including "Making Sense Out of Life Without the Possibility of Parole"

http://www.realcostofprisons.org/writing/williams_making_sense.pdf), you know that he is an excellent, insightful, funny and informed writer. Dortell's daily diary begins on May 3, 2008 and ends on Sept 23, 2008.

Dortell is serving a life sentence in Lancaster, CA. I recommend it. Please help spread the word about this excellent book.

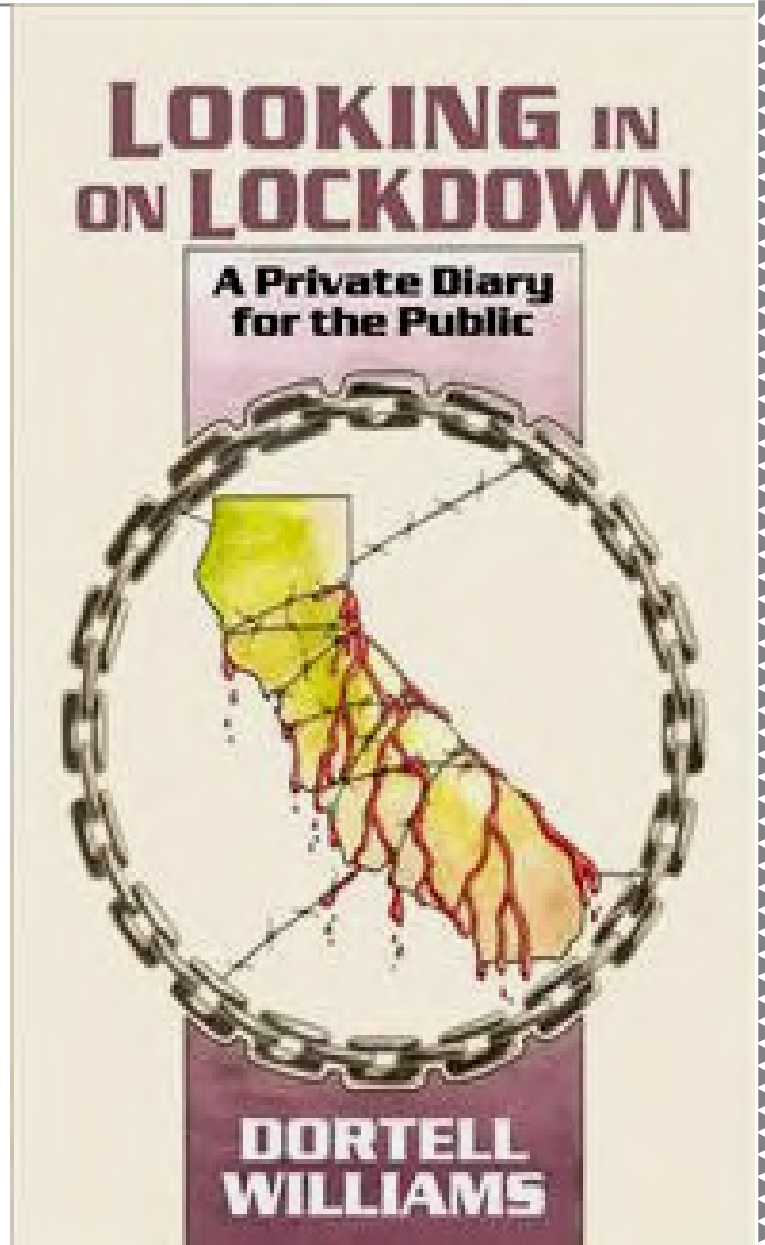
Lois

'Looking in on Lockdown'

By Dortell Williams

Price: \$14.95

Here's where you can buy the book: <http://www.buybooksontheweb.com/product.aspx?ISBN=0-7414-5814-4>



Abstract:

In response to an invite to participate in a prison diary writing program by the Anne Frank Center, USA (based in New York, N.Y.), Williams immediately began a daily diary fashioned after Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl.

Anne Frank, a spunky, precocious Jewish teen wrote her diary while hiding in Amsterdam during World War II. She died after seven months in a German concentration camp at the tender age of fifteen. She named her diary "Kitty," and Williams followed her style of personification by naming his diary friend "Lourdes."

Families Dare To Speak, Dare to Resist



I stand on the shoulders of our heroes and
roar.

‘THREE STRIKES’ LAW WOULD BE UNJUST – AND EXPENSIVE

I write to speak out against the habitual offenders - or "Three Strikes" - bill currently in conference committee at the Massachusetts Statehouse. This bill is ill-conceived and goes too far. While the bill aims to be "tough on crime", it is instead "tough on taxpayers" and constitutes cruel and unusual punishment in the case of many offenders.

At this present moment, there is only one crime (first degree murder) that mandates a life sentence without parole. But if the "Three Strikes" bill becomes law, 22 different crimes will force the judge to hand down a sentence of life in prison without parole. The judge would have to hand down a sentence of life in prison without any room for discretion - without having a chance to "make the punishment fit the crime".

California has a "Three Strikes" law which has contributed to overfilling its prisons and bankrupting the state. My fear, along with many other members of the clergy and people of faith across the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, is that a "Three Strikes" law here would turn our prisons into expensive nursing homes as criminals who committed their third crime many years in the past grow old and sick and die in prison. This is exorbitantly expensive, as well as inhumane.

At present, it costs \$47,000 per year for each person imprisoned in Massachusetts. Medical costs can add a great deal to this figure (perhaps \$100,000 per inmate). In the meantime, many of the commonwealth's cities and towns struggle to get state funding for schools, infrastructure, firefighters, and police.

I was one of 100 Unitarian Universalist ministers in Massachusetts who signed a petition against the "Three Strikes" bill recently, joining a growing chorus of religious leaders across traditions. It is my hope that our leaders will stop this injustice before it is too late.

Rev. M. Lara Hoke

Unitarian Universalist Congregation Andover

<http://www.eagletribune.com/opinion/x2136340318/Letter-Three-Strikes-law-would-be-unjust-and-expensive>

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Academic & Social Failures Drive-Up Prison Cost

Richard “Tut” Carter, Sr.,
Delco Native Son & Widener University
Student pursuing his Master Degree in Criminal Justice

On Friday, March 9, Human Rights Coalition (HRC) members and another one hundred people attended a seminar at the University of Science and Technology in Philadelphia McNeil Science and Technology Center that was titled, ***“The Nexus Between Public Health and Criminal Justice,”*** and hosted by the Pennsylvania Prison Society, Mayes College of Healthcare Business and Policy, Department of Health Policy and Public Health and LaSalle University. Apart from the fact that this seminar attract people like myself who are struggling to develop effective re-entry services for people returning home from prison; while at the same time concerned about what goes on inside prisons in preparing inmates for successful reintegration --- this event also attracted families of prisoners and, ex-prisoners.

One of the keynote speakers was Secretary of Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, John Wetzel, who began his presentation by saying – “after years of doing things wrong ***we now get it,***” we can no longer work the way we have in the past. In fact, according to Mr. Wetzel -- last year Governor Corbett declared that the Pennsylvania prison system is broken and he halted plans to build more state prisons; favoring instead ways to better prepare inmates for successfully reintegrating back-to-society. Wetzel pointed out that the governor is looking for more ***“offender workforce development”*** programs where inmates are trained to perform in labor markets that require skills they can learn while serving their sentences. These programs stress enhancing the education of prisoners where they can learn to perform in job markets where they’re required to operate computerized programming systems.

Mr. Wetzel made it certain that we can not intelligently talk about improving conditions of prison confinement without talking about changing prison culture at the same time. This means according to the secretary including in the discussion such topics as improving the education of inmates as correctional- priority. Pointing out that, when children drop-out of school and find themselves without marketable job skills many find themselves involved with crime and end up in prison. The cost to take care of each of those that drop-out of school and end up in and out of prison according to Mr. Wetzel is more than \$200,000 (per/person). Another way of seeing this cost for academic and social failure can also be stated like so; “for every citizen that doesn’t join the workforce they deprives us of about \$200,000 in tax revenue; in addition to the extra inmate-costs.

Another speaker at this seminar was Sherry H. Snyder, Director, Division of Eastern Operations PA Office of Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services, who pointed out that, we can not expect people to be successful after prison without housing – in order to even form a mentality for the successful re-entry people need a place to lay their head.

On the same subject of housing for ex-inmates, keynote speaker Estelle Richman, Acting Deputy Director for US Department of Housing and Urban Development informed the audience that, twenty-five percent of America’s homeless are ex-offenders. Adding that, last year HUD changed its policies regarding ex-offender’s and public housing. However she added that those policies are being applied differently based on local policies of public housing authorities. Rebecca L. Hicks, LCSW of the Philadelphia Veterans Medical Center’s Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist spoke about the Philadelphia Veteran Court which offers diversionary services for US military veterans who are first-time offenders facing non-violent charges. Those veterans are given an opportunity to resolve charges by agreeing to participate in a unique kind of community-base system. Ms. Hick’s said that the veteran is given structural program plan to follow and when successfully completed they do not end up in prison and their records are expunged. They receive treatment,

(Continued on page 15)

The HomeFront: Serving Our Community!

counseling and mentoring to aid them in preparing to find jobs and other services which reintegrates them back into society.

Another issue of concern which was also a common theme throughout the course of this seminar was that ***“policy decisions drive how offenders and ex-offender are treated.”*** Three of the speakers stated that we need political willingness on the part of legislators to change current public policy regarding today’s objectives for incarceration. Prison incarceration and re-entry are public health issues which administrators and law makers must recognize. Mr. Wetzel stated that, “17% of men and 48% of women in PA’s state prison system have serious mental health conditions.” However, other speakers stated that after prison some ex-offenders do not have access to medication for their mental health illnesses. Many of these mentally-ill ex-prisoners find themselves sleep on the couches of their family who generally represent their only source of support. This is an area according to Secretary Wetzel where community practices can pick-up the slack and see that this population of ex-offenders are effectively cared for and treated after prison.

Both Mr. Wetzel and William DiMascio, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Prison Society encouraged those in the audience to join their existing community focus groups: Wetzel points out that, “we want people in communities who are working with people returning home from prison and ex-offenders to be members of this focus group.” Why ex-offenders, you may ask?” It could be that the Secretary of the Pennsylvania DOC sees that, there are some good model ex-prisoners that know from personal experience what types of educational and vocational programs are needed inside prisons to successfully prepare people for after prison?

I am urging community activists and progressive ex-prisoners to consider joining one of those focus groups. Imagine we form a system where we can use our experiences to help those failing out of school and soon to fall out of society. We can also develop new and better ideas for inmates and work to improve rehabilitation programs and, tap into lifer organization – where they can assist us in creating peer-counseling programs. We can work together to create projects which aim to reduce recidivism rates by increasing educational accomplishments of inmates. Anyway, this can serve as a new conversation-piece regarding what “we can do” to improve avenues that lead to freedom from mis-education, freedom from social failure and, freedom from life-inside prison. ***CAN YOU THINK OF OTHER NEW AND DIFFERENT IDEAS FOR THE SECRETARY?***

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Is Innocence Irrelevant?

As you read, ask yourself if justice is being served by the judicial system when it criminally tries and convicts individuals while knowing of their innocence, while prosecutors are not held accountable for their illegal misconduct at individuals trials, and while the courts and intentionally deny fair trials to others.

Do you think that Jeffrey Dawkins was wrongly convicted of this crime?

Jeffrey Dawkins
SCI-Dallas #GX-0748
1000 Follies Road
Dallas, PA 18612

WILL YOU PLEASE JOIN THE CRUSADE IN FIGHTING FOR THE INNOCENT? TRUST IN UNITY, AND WE CAN AND WILL ACCOMPLISH IT!

At twenty six years old, I am presently serving a LIFE SENTENCE without the possibility of parole. With an utter sense of urgency I am reaching out to you and the free world seeking some form of assistance from anyone willing to aid me in defending myself against an imbalanced judicial system that desires to choke the life out of me before I've even had an opportunity to live.

Trust me, I can only imagine the volume of letters you have read or even heard about that ring the familiar bell of innocence; however, I am full prepared to prove to you and anyone else that I'm 100% innocent of the crime I've been convicted of. I proclaim this message out to the whole world in desperation that I catch the eye of anyone and show them that I'm innocent and it can be proven. I pray that after viewing this letter you will be touched enough to at least want to give my situation a further look. While American seemingly has the best judicial system in the free world, it also has its own set of flaws. The contradictions between theory and practices are as blaring as motor bikes and I as that you ride with me for a moment as I tell my story.

It all started when I was arrested on October 8, 2004 at the age of 18 by Philadelphia detectives who knew I didn't commit this crime, and subsequently prosecuted by a prosecutor who also knew I was innocent of this crime. I know these are some bold accusations, but please understand; I was **WRONGFULLY ARRESTED, PROSECUTED, AND CONVICTED** of this crime. See despite the fact that the Commonwealth Justice System is suppose to be the vanguards of justice, they used whatever shrewd tactics available to undermine the judicial process and convict an innocent kid. Now this is where it gets interesting, I set in prison until March 8, 2005 when after seven court hearings attempting to connect me to this crime and producing absolutely nothing, and failure to meet the Must Be Tried order issued by the Honorable Judge Benjamin Learner, of Courtroom 306, located at the Criminal Justice Center at 1301 Filbert Street, Philadelphia, PA 19107, **DISMISSED ALL CHARGES WITHOUT PREJUDICE, AND I WAS ALLOWED TO RETURN HOME TO MY FAMILY.** MUST I REPEAT IT AGAIN, on March 8, 2005, the charges were DISMISSED and I was allowed to return home to my family.

To my horror on July 25, 2005, five months after my release, Philadelphia detectives came to my home and re-arrested me! Based solely on the testimony of an individual whom I never emphatically never seen in my life. At my preliminary hearing, they put this so-called witness on the stand, and he state to the court that I Jeffrey Dawkins committed this murder on March 28, 2004. Mind you I had been to court seven different times and not once did this guy come forward. Nevertheless his statement was given enough deference to make me stand trial and defend myself against his unfounded accusations.

My trial began on December 11, 2006 and truth be told was one of the most nervous/stressful days of my life. Myself, my family, and friends knew I was innocent, however I was up against a system that is know for putting kids away for a lifetime without a care in the world. During the entire trial there was not one shred of evidence presented to support a conviction, contradictory statements were used, no weapon was ever found, there was no forensic

(Continued on page 17)

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(Continued from page 16)

evidence that linked me to the crime, and even the testimony of officers and crime scene experts revealed how poorly this case was investigated, revealing how they recovered bloody hats, jerseys, and shirts without testing it for DNA samples and they also revealed how they never recovered the tape which was recording the whole incident in this crowded night club where this murder occurred.

The State only produced three witnesses from a club that was holding close to 100 people; wow, right? And at the trial none of these three witnesses testified as they were expected and the Prosecutor asked the court that these witnesses be deemed hostile witnesses. The first one to stand (same one who got me re-arrested) asserted his Fifth Amendment right to self incrimination out of fear that his testimony would be used against him. The second would not adopt this statement, it was the coercive tactics used by detectives during their interrogation that made him feel he had no choice but to sign whatever they put in front of him or he will be charged. The last alleged witness testified that he was under the influence of narcotics when he gave the statement to police and stated that he could not recall anything. Please also know that at the time these witnesses gave these statements, all three were already in custody for violent crimes, and are willing to assist me in any way they can. Remember absolutely no one testified at trial that they witnessed me shooting or participating in this crime.

What has happened in my case isn't justice, it isn't the law, it isn't fair, and it isn't right. The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has failed to meet any burden of proof and my trial judge abused her discretion by allowing such a verdict to stand. I'm now twenty-six years old, a high school graduate, with absolutely no prior criminal record, and one night out on Philadelphia's crime soaked streets has put a hold on my dreams and goals for life. I'm blessed to have the support of a honest loving hardworking mother, three beautiful sisters, two loving adorable nieces, and my soul reincarnated in the person of my loving son Jaylen Love Dawkins who is now eight years old. Together we're doing all that we can to bring justice to the light, but we're fighting against the wealth of the state and have all but exhausted our resources. I am in dire need of assistance...any assistance.

So that it is clearly understood, I completely empathize with the family of the victim of this crime. See the murder rate in Philadelphia is high and whenever such is the case it puts pressure on the Mayor who puts pressure on the Police Commissioner to cut costs, and the Commissioner puts pressure on the subordinates; the result is "SHABBY" investigations (or no investigation); this manifest negative effects.

I love the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; however I was set up and convicted of a murder that I DID NOT COMMIT. I feel for the victim of the crime, but I am 100% innocent. Many people in the general public assume, well if he had a trial and was found guilty, he must be guilty; however reality shows and proves that some people have set on Death Row for half their lives only to be cleared by DNA evidence (or a witness finally admitting that they lied) decades later. CNN and the USA Today newspaper has ran countless feature stories of innocent men and women, black and white, who were convicted and sentenced to LIFE in prison and finally cleared after countless years have passed by. Picture all of the innocent that have actually died on Death Row, or murdered in prison (but was actually innocent).

At present I'm on appeal and waiting on a decision. Still I cry out to the whole world for any assistance you may deem me worthy of, be it legal research, detective work, letter writing, phone calls, or just simply writing me with moral support. I have every page of my trial transcripts and my whole discovery and am willing to share everything with anyone interested in assisting me and my family in this struggle. If you cannot help please direct me to someone who think can and will. I will end my story with hopes and prayers that I hear from you. Someone once said to me that the best of us in faith is the one who sees injustice and changes it with his own hands, if he cannot change it with his hands, then speak out against it, if he cannot speak out against it he, at least, despise it in his heart.

(Continued on page 18)

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(Continued from page 17)

Let's fight for justice for those deprived of it – INJUSTICE IS NEVER FINAL. WITH ALL THAT IS IN MY HEART I WILL LIKE TO THANK YOU FOR READING THIS LETTER, MY GOD BLESS YOU AND ALL THAT YOU HOLD DEAR. VICTORY IS NEAR.

Want to help? You may contact Jeffrey Dawkins at the address below:

Jeffrey Dawkins
SCI-Dallas #GX-0748
1000 Follies Road
Dallas, PA 18612



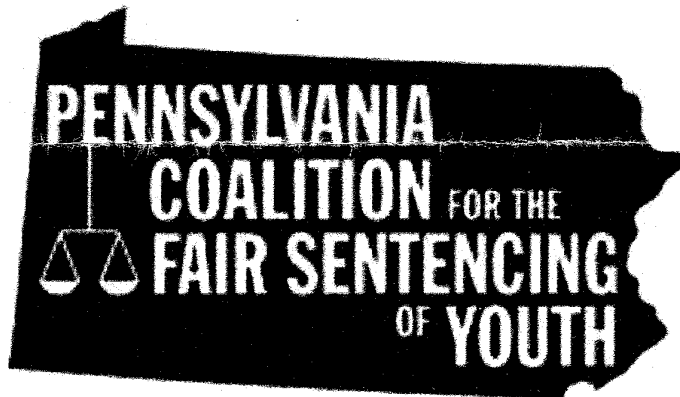
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WHO WAS SENTENCED AS A JUVENILE TO
LIFE IN PRISON WITHOUT PAROLE?**

YOU ARE NOT ALONE!



The Pennsylvania Coalition for the Fair Sentencing of Youth (PACFSY) is a group of individuals and organizations dedicated to ensuring a fair chance for all of Pennsylvania's children. PACFSY's goal is to organize individuals and organizations from across the state to work toward the abolition of life without parole sentences for young people under 18 (JLWOP). JLWOP occurs when a child below the age of eighteen is sentenced to life in prison with no possibility of parole. Our coalition believes that this practice is ineffective, costly, and inhumane.

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“Private Prison Industry”....

By Leslie Berestein

May 11, 2008

At the beginning of the decade, the private prison industry was in a tailspin. After several profitable years in the 1990s, companies contracting prison beds to public corrections agencies were losing revenue at an alarming rate.

Capital earned during the 1990s had been poured into a speculative prison-building boom that backfired. State corrections agencies, a mainstay of what was then a relatively new industry, had begun pulling inmates out. There were too many prison beds and too few prisoners.

“They basically had overbuilt,” said Anton Hie, an analyst in the Nashville office of Jefferies and Co. who covered industry leader Corrections Corporation of America and its closest competitor, the GEO Group, for several years through the end of 2006. “There was a lot of promise of new inmates that never came. ... It kind of all came crashing in.”

Then, in early 2000, CCA announced a lucrative new contract. The Immigration and Naturalization Service was to house 1,000 detainees at the company’s San Diego Correctional Facility in Otay Mesa, built as part of the late-1990s construction boom. The agency agreed to pay a per diem fee of \$89.50 for every person held.

In a news release at the time, a company principal heralded the San Diego agreement as “one of the largest contracts ever to be awarded to the private corrections industry.”

It was one of a series of federal contracts that experts credit with saving the private prison industry, and at the same time marking a turning point in the way that immigrant detainees – illegal immigrants, asylum-seekers, legal residents appealing deportation and others – are held.

“The private prison industry was on the verge of bankruptcy in the late 1990s, until the feds bailed them out with the immigration-detention contracts,” said Michele Deitch, an expert on prison privatization with the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin.

As increasingly tough immigration laws have called for the detention and deportation of ever more immigrants, the demand for bed space by immigration authorities has helped turn what was once a dying business into a multibillion-dollar industry with record revenue and stock prices several times higher than they were eight years ago.

In San Diego, CCA is in the permitting process to build a nearly 3,000-bed facility that the company hopes will be used by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement, or ICE. It would hold more than four times the detainees held in San Diego now.

Federal contracts from three agencies – ICE, the U.S. Marshals Service and the Bureau of Prisons – account for 40 percent of the 2007 revenue of CCA, which controls almost half of the private prison beds in the United States. Thirteen percent of the company’s revenue, which hit a record of nearly \$1.5 billion last year, comes directly from ICE. The company reported a net income of \$133 million last year.

The competing GEO Group, formerly known as Wackenhut Corrections Corp., credits the three agencies for 27 percent of its operating revenue last year, with ICE responsible for 11 Percent. The company, which earned total revenues of

(Continued on page 21)

(Continued from page 20)

\$1.2 billion in 2007, runs the Western Regional Detention Facility in downtown San Diego, a U.S. Marshals Service prison from which ICE rents short-term space.

Other prison players that have benefited from immigration-detention contracts include the Cornell Cos., based in Texas, and Management and Training Corp., a privately held Utah company that in 2006 opened what is now the nation's largest ICE facility, a set of tentlike structures in Willacy, Texas, that holds 2,000 people and will soon hold more. A 1,086-bed expansion was completed in March.

Detention contracts are not the only ones fueling the recent growth of prison companies, which have benefited from other federal contracts while enjoying a resurgence in demand for state prison beds.

However, it's the federal contracts that pay best, experts say. Housing federal detainees typically brings in more per "man-day," an industry term for what is earned per detainee. Companies also house immigrants for other federal agencies. CCA and GEO Group, for example, contract with the Bureau of Prisons to house foreign-born inmates under a federal "criminal alien" program. Both companies contract extensively with the U.S. Marshals Service, which receives federal funding to hold a growing number of immigrants being prosecuted for illegal re-entry after deportation.

"The federal system over the last five to seven years has been by far the largest-growing part of the (private prison) system, and it is because of the immigrant-detainee population," Deitch said.

For the federal government, the appeal of contractors is obvious: According to ICE, the agency spent \$119.28 per day on average last year to house a detainee at an agency-run facility, compared with \$87.99 per day at a contract detention facility.

EMPTY BEDS TO RICHES

The private prison industry as it exists today dates to the 1980s, when state governments were grappling with overcrowding. Tougher sentencing guidelines created demand for more prison space, but many states lacked the funds and political support to build it.

The industry did well meeting this demand for several years, but it was almost done in a decade later by overexpansion and other problems. By the end of the 1990s, the industry was in "capital destruction mode," said Hie, the analyst.

"They were victims of their own success," Hie said. "They had so much money to spend on new prisons that they went out and did it."

At the same time, the industry was rocked by a series of highly publicized escapes, riots and other scandals, among them a 1996 videotape showing inmates in a now-defunct firm's Texas prison being kicked by officers and attacked by dogs, which prompted an FBI investigation.

"Many states started learning that they were not saving money, and more importantly, that there were a lot of liabilities associated with privatization," Deitch said. "A lot of states stopped contracting."

CCA's stock value took a dizzying tumble, falling from a high of \$70.13 on Jan. 1, 1998, to \$1.15 on the same date three years later. In 2000, the company reported a net loss of \$253.7 million.

Rival Wackenhut's stock price, while not nearly as high, dropped to less than a third of its value between early January 1998 and 2001. Some smaller companies went out of business, Deitch said.

(Continued on page 22)

(Continued from page 21)

Fortunately for the industry, the federal government began seeing a surge in demand around this time, fueled by federal drug-sentencing laws that had created more inmates and tougher 1996 immigration laws that made more immigrants deportable.

In 2000, the federal Bureau of Prisons entered into an agreement with CCA to house foreign-born convicts in a California City prison, initially built on speculation in the late 1990s to house state prisoners that didn't arrive.

The same year, CCA announced its immigration-detention contract in San Diego.

Since then, new immigration policies that focus on detaining and removing deportable immigrants have become commonplace, leaving federal immigration authorities with insufficient space to house them.

The industry leaders' stock prices have rebounded. Since 2001, CCA shares have split twice and multiplied tenfold, closing recently at \$26.17. The GEO Group, which changed its name from Wackenhut Corrections in 2003, has also completed two stock splits and seen its stock value jump from roughly \$2.50 a share in early January 2001 to \$26.76 recently.

Meanwhile, the industry has broadened its political influence, spending more to lobby agencies such as the Department of Homeland Security and the Bureau of Prisons. CCA alone boosted its federal lobbying expenses from \$410,000 to \$3 million between 2000 and 2004, according to the Center for Public Integrity.

Immigration-detention contracts can make or break quarterly profits. In its fourth-quarter 2007 financial data, the Cornell Cos., which had flat revenue last year, partly blamed a \$2 million loss on the withdrawal of ICE detainees from a troubled facility in Albuquerque, N.M.

CCA, meanwhile, credited part of its success last year to revenue from ICE moving into a Georgia prison on which construction began in 1999 but was suspended a year later for lack of clients.

A NEW BUILDING BOOM

Now, as in the late 1990s, the industry is on a building spree. CCA is building or expanding nine facilities around the country for federal, state or undetermined customers. This does not include the company's planned megaprison in San Diego, which has yet to obtain county approval.

In October, the GEO group announced it would add 1,100 beds to its ICE contract facility in Aurora, Colo. According to its most recent financial report from 2006, the company opened or expanded half a dozen facilities that year.

Unlike a decade ago, analyst Hie said, there is more demand to support the latest building boom. Strong demand also helps companies push terms favorable to them. "Take or pay" arrangements such as the one at San Diego, where ICE must pay for a set occupancy level even if beds go unfilled, are commonplace.

The demand from ICE is staggering: Last year, all of the agency's 3,619 new detention beds were contracted.

Agency officials said there are no plans to build any more federally run detention centers, leaving contractors to fill the void.

(Continued on page 23)

During the February conference call, CCA executives told investors that ICE was planning to privatize three of its detention centers in California and Arizona. The agency has three facilities in these states – in El Centro, San Pedro and Florence.

“We estimate the capacity is somewhere at 11,000 beds,” said CEO John Ferguson.

Asked about this claim, ICE spokeswoman Pat Reilly in Washington, D.C., replied in an e-mail that the contractor was in error and no such plans were imminent. However, she added, “privatization is always an option.”

Downloaded from Alex Jones' www.infowars.com

Young Faces In Old Places!!!

It's a monstrous hurt to know and see the multitude of young
Black males occupying the alleys of prison ways
My heart snatched from my chest while entertaining neither
future nor better days
But what can we do to reverse the possible indefinite stays?
Must we play cards, sports, and fantasize about the sweet
smell of our heavenly street days
I turn over in myself while watching the young faces peer out
the ever locked doors
And it is this fact which causes the writing of my sores
These writings are truly puss that no one wants to see or hear
For they would rather keep reality locked in the distant rear
The young faces are brought here in droves
With very heavy sentences and very few clothes
Young faces, Young faces, what shall you do?
Talk about the latest styles or the avenue
Young faces, Young faces, do you know what to do?
Will you rock with your partner and style with your crew?
When you have entered a place that is as cold as a zoo
Caged by animals who are watching you
Time is not something that you have to waste
Do not understand this now and you are dead standing in place

Do you think that things occur out of the clear blue sky?
Or even know that your fight is the center of your eye?
Let's look at your thoughts, one line at a time
Magnify your brain and highlight your mind
You need to know where you stand in this place called a hole
And what is your ladder to reach your goal
I feel for you in the most sincere way
And in this vein I do not play
Get your mind right young face and come out of that daze
Strengthen your soul and calculate your plays
This is not a game where nothing is lost
Your life is the issue and you are not your own boss
Young faces Young faces; you are young and very new
But as time goes on you will become old too
Old like this place that you find yourself in
A part of the scenery trapped within
You will become like those who were once young too
And who are now stuck because they did not know what to do
You must learn from them and do the opposite of that
And if you are successful I will take off my hat
Young faces, Young faces, what will you do?

By: Stephen Hakeem Fulton, Reconstruction Member

Proposed Immigrant Detention Centers Draw Criticism From Residents, Immigrant Groups

WASHINGTON -- Proposed immigration detention facilities in Florida and New Jersey will be ringed with barbed wire and house people against their will -- but don't call them jails or prisons.

"ICE has instituted reforms to address the vast majority of complaints about its immigration detention system," Barbara Gonzalez, an Immigration and Customs Enforcement spokesperson, said in response to criticism that the new facilities are essentially prisons. "The new facilities are specifically designed to meet the unique needs of ICE's immigration detention population which is not a penal system."

Advocacy groups are pushing back against proposed for-profit detention centers in New Jersey and Florida, arguing federal immigration authorities should come up with alternatives to detention rather than build additional facilities.

"One concern is just the expansion of numbers," said Silky Shah, field director of advocacy group [Detention Watch Network](#). "Having more beds is just going to equal more people in detention."

The Department of Homeland Security currently has seven pending detention centers, including facilities in Texas, Illinois, California and Georgia. But the most contentious have been proposed centers in Essex County, N.J., and Broward County, Fla. The detention centers' backers are pointing to the sagging economy to argue that locking up immigrants will mean jobs for locals, but local residents and immigrant rights groups are encouraging a less detention-based immigration policy.

The for-profit prison industry sees such policies as a threat to its companies' bottom line, as the Geo

Group, a major for-profit prison company, noted in a [recent filing](#) with the Securities and Exchange Commission:

The demand for our correctional and detention facilities and services [...] could be adversely affected by changes in existing criminal or immigration laws, crime rates in jurisdictions in which we operate, the relaxation of criminal or immigration enforcement efforts, leniency in conviction, sentencing or deportation practices, and the decriminalization of certain activities that are currently proscribed by criminal laws or the loosening of immigration laws.

A filing by the Corrections Corporation of America -- its [2010 annual report](#), known as a 10-K -- is nearly identical:

The demand for our facilities and services could be adversely affected by the relaxation of enforcement efforts, leniency in conviction or parole standards and sentencing practices or through the decriminalization of certain activities that are currently proscribed by our criminal laws. For instance, any changes with respect to drugs and controlled substances or illegal immigration could affect the number of persons arrested, convicted, and sentenced, thereby potentially reducing demand for correctional facilities to house them.

Both companies have insisted their facilities boost local economies.

But in New Jersey and Florida, immigrant rights groups have enlisted the support of local residents concerned about a detention facility being stationed in their communities.

"I moved out here because I thought I would be right up against the Everglades, not a prison," Pembroke Pines resident Betsy Blume [said at a town hall meeting](#) earlier this month.

Immigrant rights groups argue that building more detention centers, even if they are less prison-like than current facilities, will merely exacerbate the problems that occur as a result of mass detention.

(Continued on page 25)

"The controversy really stems from in 2009 when [Immigrations and Customs Enforcement] released this idea of detention reform and completely backtracked on all of it," Shah said. "They promised more oversight that they still don't have."

In October 2009, Dora Schriro, a former director of the Office of Detention Policy and Planning, [reviewed the immigrant detention system](#) and found that immigrant detainees -- some of whom have never committed a crime -- are functionally treated the same as convicted criminals. Immigration violations are civil, not criminal, cases.

Detention facilities are often surrounded by barbed wire and have few outdoor areas. At the time of the report, most were former prison buildings. Schriro wrote in the [report](#) that more detention centers should be operated by Immigration and Customs Enforcement, rather than private companies, to allow for greater oversight.

Two years later, half of immigrant detainees are still held in for-profit detention centers. "They've basically told themselves that these facilities are not jails, but it's very, very clearly a jail," Shah said.

The new facilities are to be built primarily by for-profit prison and detention companies, such as Corrections Corporation of America.

"There's something innately wrong with having for-profit prisons, because when they cut corners, you're talking about people's lives," said Kathy Bird, a community organizer with the Florida Immigrant Coalition. "The reality is someone is going to get really rich off of this."

Corrections Corporation of America flatly denies that it cuts corners as part of its business practice, arguing it would be bad business to deliver a low-quality product to the government.

"We know from 30 years experience that to be successful we have to operate safe, secure facilities," Steve Owen, Corrections Corporation of America spokesman, said. "Treating the detainees and the inmates that are entrusted to our care is also a priority for us. We treat them with dignity and we treat them with respect."

Bird and the Florida Immigrant Coalition created a phone bank to talk to Broward County residents about the proposed detention center in their community. They found that many residents were unsure about having a detention center in the area, which is somewhat rural, Bird said. "This goes completely against what their lifestyle is," she said.

Bird has been trying to tell residents that detention centers are run largely by for-profit corporations who support harsh immigration enforcement so they can make money. Her group presented an area town council with a petition with more than 150 signatures asking them to reconsider the project.

"The narrative that we've been trying to get out is that [enforcement] programs like Secure Communities and laws like the Arizona copycat bills are the reason that these companies keep their detention centers full," she said, referring to Arizona's harsh SB 1070 immigration law.

In New Jersey, immigrant rights groups [staged a rally](#) in opposition to the proposed facility there earlier this year.

New Jersey immigration advocates have focused on educating the community about injustices in the detention system, such as a lack of access to counsel. They argue that instead of detention, the Department of Homeland Security should focus on alternatives, such as ankle bracelet monitors for immigrants slated for deportation.

"A lot of people are really taken aback when they hear about the lack of due process in the immigration system," New Jersey organizer Amy Gottlieb said. "We can't let the building or the expansion of detention centers go on without highlighting the human rights violations that are going on."

From: HUFF POST POLITICS
http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/08/25/immigrant-detention-centers-florida-new-jersey_n_935430.html

The Economics of Incarceration

By: Nile Bowie
February 6, 2012

For anyone paying attention, there is no shortage of issues that fundamentally challenge the underpinning moral infrastructure of American society and the values it claims to uphold.

Under the conceptual illusion of liberty, few things are more sobering than the amount of Americans who will spend the rest of their lives in an isolated correctional facility – ostensibly, being corrected.

The United States of America has long held the highest incarceration rate in the world, far surpassing any other nation. For every 100,000 Americans, 743 citizens sit behind bars. Presently, the prison population in America consists of more than six million people, a number exceeding the amount of prisoners held in the gulags of the former Soviet Union at any point in its history.

While miserable statistics illustrate some measure of the ongoing ethical calamity occurring in the detainment centers inside the land of the free, only a partial picture of the broader situation is painted.

While the country faces an unprecedented economic and financial crisis, business is booming in other fields – namely, the private prison industry. Like any other business, these institutions are run for the purpose of turning a profit. State and federal prisons are contracted out to private companies who are paid a fixed amount to house each prisoner per day.

Their profits result from spending the minimum amount of state or federal funds on each inmate, only to pocket the remaining capital. For the corrections conglomerates of America, prosperity depends on housing the maximum numbers of inmates for the longest potential time – as inexpensively as possible.

By allowing a profit-driven capitalist-enterprise model to operate over institutions that should rightfully be focused on rehabilitation, America has enthusiastically embraced a prison industrial complex.

Under the promise of maintaining correctional facilities at a lower cost due to market competition, state and federal governments contract privately run companies to manage and staff prisons, even allowing the groups to design and construct facilities.

The private prison industry is primarily led by two morally deficient entities, the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) and the GEO Group (formerly Wackenhut Corrections Corporation). These companies amassed a combined revenue of over \$2.9 billion in 2010, not without situating themselves in the center of political influence.

(Continued on page 27)

The number of people imprisoned under state and federal custody increased 772% percent between 1970 and 2009, largely due to the incredible influence private corporations wield against the American legal system. Because judicial leniency and sentencing reductions threaten the very business models of these private corporations, millions have been spent lobbying state officials and political candidates in an effort to influence harsher “zero tolerance” legislation and mandatory sentencing for many non-violent offenses.

Political action committees assembled by private correctional corporations have lobbied over 3.3 million dollars to the political establishment since 2001. An annual report released by the CCA in 2010 reiterates the importance of influencing legislation:

“The demand for our facilities and services could be adversely affected by the relaxation of enforcement efforts, leniency in conviction or parole standards and sentencing practices or through the decriminalization of certain activities that are currently proscribed by our criminal laws.

For instance, any changes with respect to drugs and controlled substances or illegal immigration could affect the number of persons arrested, convicted, and sentenced, thereby potentially reducing demand for correctional facilities to house them. Legislation has been proposed in numerous jurisdictions that could lower minimum sentences for some non-violent crimes and make more inmates eligible for early release based on good behavior.

Also, sentencing alternatives under consideration could put some offenders on probation with electronic monitoring who would otherwise be incarcerated. Similarly, reductions in crime rates or resources dedicated to prevent and enforce crime could lead to reductions in arrests, convictions and sentences requiring incarceration at correctional facilities.”

Considering today’s private prison population is over 17 times larger than the figure two decades earlier, the malleability of the judicial system under corporate influence is clear. The Corrections Corporation of America is the first and largest private prison company in the US, cofounded in 1983 by Tom Beasley, former Chairman of the Tennessee Republican Party.

The CCA entered the market and overtly exploited Beasley’s political connections in an attempt to exert control over the entire prison system of Tennessee. Today, the company operates over sixty-five facilities and owns contracts with the US Marshal Service, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Bureau of Prisons.

The GEO Group operates 118 detention centers throughout the United States, South Africa, UK, Australia and elsewhere. Under its original name, the Wackenhut Corrections Corporation was synonymous for the sadistic abuse of prisoners in its facilities, resulting in the termination of several contracts in 1999.

The political action committees assembled by private prison enterprises have also wielded incredible influence with respect to administering harsher immigration legislation.

The number of illegal immigrants being incarcerated inside the United States is rising exponentially under Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), an agency responsible for annually overseeing the imprisonment of 400,000 foreign nationals at the cost of over \$1.9 billion on custody-related operations.

(Continued from page 27)

The agency has come under heavy criticism for seeking to contract a 1,250-bed immigration detention facility in Essex County, New Jersey to a private company that shares intimate ties to New Jersey's Governor, Chris Christie. Given the private prison industry's dependence on immigration-detention contracts, the huge contributions of the prison lobby towards drafting Arizona's recrementitious immigration law SB 1070 are all but unexpected.

While the administration of Arizona's Governor Jan Brewer is lined with former private prison lobbyists, its Department of Corrections budget has been raised by \$10 million, while all other Arizona state agencies are subject to budget cuts in 2012's fiscal year.

Perhaps the most disturbing aspect of this obstinate moral predicament presents itself in the private contracting of prisoners and their role in assembling vast quantities of military and commercial equipment.

While the United States plunges itself into each new manufactured conflict under a wide range of fraudulent pretenses, it is interesting to note that all military helmets, ammunition belts, bulletproof vests, ID tags, uniforms, tents, bags and other equipment used by military occupation forces are produced by inmates in federal prisons across the US.

Giant multinational conglomerates and weapons manufacturers such as Lockheed Martin and Raytheon Corporation employ federal prison labor to cheaply assemble weapons components, only to sell them to the Pentagon at premium prices. At the lowest, Prisoners earn 17 cents an hour to assemble high-tech electronic components for guided missile systems needed to produce Patriot Advanced Capability 3 missiles and anti-tank projectiles.

In the past, political mouthpieces of the United States have criticized countries such as China and North Korea for their role in exploiting prisoner labor to create commodity products such as women's bras and artificial flowers for export. Evidently, outsourcing the construction of the military equipment responsible for innumerable civilian casualties to the prisons of America warrants no such criticism from the military industrial establishment.

In utter derision toward the integrity of the common worker, prison inmates are exposed to toxic spent ammunition, depleted uranium dust and other chemicals when contracted to clean and reassemble tanks and military vehicles returned from combat. Prison laborers receive no union protection, benefits or health and safety protection when made to work in electronic recycling factories where inmates are regularly exposed to lead, cadmium, mercury and arsenic.

In addition to performing tasks that can result in detrimental illnesses, prison labor produces other military utilities such as night-vision goggles, body armor, radio and communication devices, components for battleship anti-aircraft guns, land mine sweepers and electro-optical equipment.

While this abundant source of low-cost manpower fosters greater incentives for corporate stockholders to impose draconian legislation on the majority of Americans who commit nonviolent offenses, it's hard to imagine such an innately colossal contradiction to the nation's official rhetoric, i.e. American values.

(Continued on page 29)

Furthermore, prison labor is employed not only in the assembly of complex components used in F-15 fighter jets and Cobra helicopters, it also supplies 98% of the entire market for equipment assembly services, with similar statistics in regard to products such as paints, stoves, office furniture, headphones, and speakers.

It is some twisted irony that large sections of the workforce in America's alleged free-market are shackled in chains. Weapons manufactured in the isolation of America's prisons are the source of an exploitative cycle, which leaves allied NATO member countries indebted to a multibillion-dollar weapons industry at the behest of the U.S. State Department and the Pentagon.

Complete with its own trade exhibitions, mail-order catalogs and investment houses on Wall Street, the eminence of the private prison industry solidifies the ongoing corrosion of American principles – principles that seem more abstract now, than the day they were written.

Predictably, the potential profit of the prison labor boom has encouraged the foundations of US corporate society to move their production forces into American prisons. Conglomerates such as IBM, Boeing, Motorola, Microsoft, AT&T, Wireless, Texas Instrument, Dell, Compaq, Honeywell, Hewlett-Packard, Nortel, Lucent Technologies, 3Com, Intel, Northern Telecom, TWA, Nordstrom's, Revlon, Macy's, Pierre Cardin, Victoria's Secret, and Target have all begun mounting production operations in US prisons.

Many of these Fortune 500 conglomerates are corporate members of civil society groups such as the Council on Foreign Relations (CFR) and the National Endowment for Democracy (NED). These think tanks are critical toward influencing American foreign policy. Under the guise of democracy promotion, these civil societies fund opposition movements and train dissent groups in countries around the world in the interest of pro-US regime change.

With naked insincerity, the same companies that outsource the production of their products to American prisons simultaneously sponsor civil societies that demanded the release of Myanmar's Aung San Suu Kyi from house arrest – an overly political effort in the on-going attempts to install a compliant regime in that country.

The concept of privatizing prisons to reduce expenses comes at great cost to the inmates detained, who are subjected to living in increasingly squalid conditions in jail cells across America.

In 2007, the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) was sent to a West Texas juvenile prison run by GEO Group for the purpose of monitoring its quality standards. The monitors sent by the TYC were subsequently fired for failing to report the sordid conditions they witnessed in the facility while they awarded the GEO Group with an overall compliance score of nearly 100%.

Independent auditors later visited the facility and discovered that inmates were forced to urinate or defecate in small containers due to a lack of toilets in some of the cells. The independent commission also noted in their list of reported findings that the facility racially segregated prisoners and disciplined Hispanics for speaking Spanish by denying their access to layers and medical treatment.

It was later discovered that the TYC monitors were employed by the GEO Group. Troublingly, the Walnut Grove Youth Correctional Facility (WGYCF) operated by the GEO Group in Mississippi has been subject to a class-action lawsuit after reports that staff members were complicit in the beating and stabbing of a prisoner

(Continued on page 30)

who consequently incurred permanent brain damage. The official compliant authored by the ACLU and Southern Poverty Law Center also highlights cases where the administration turned a blind eye to brutal cases of rape and torture within the facility.

The first private prison models were introduced following the abolishment of slavery after the American Civil War from 1861 to 1865, which saw expansive prison farms replace slave plantations.

Prisons of the day contracted groups of predominately African-American inmates to pick cotton and construct railroads principally in southern states such as Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi. In 2012, there are more African-Americans engrossed in the criminal-justice system than any point during slavery.

Throughout its history, the American prison system has shared little with the concept of rehabilitation. Like the post-Civil War prison farms, today's system functions to purport required labor, largely on a racially specific basis. African-Americans consist of 40% of the prison population and are incarcerated seven times more often than whites, despite the fact that African-Americans make up only 12% of the national population.

Once released, former inmates are barred from voting in elections, denied educational opportunities and are legally discriminated against in their efforts to find employment and housing.

Few can deny the targeting of underprivileged urban communities of color in America's failed War on Drugs. This phenomenon can largely be contributed to the stipulations of its anti-drug legislation, which commanded maximum sentencing for possession of minute amounts of rock cocaine, a substance that floods poor inner-city black communities.

Unbeknown to the vast majority of Americans, the US government has been actively taking steps to modify the legal infrastructure of the country to allow for a dramatic expansion of the domestic prison system at the expense of civil rights.

On December 31st, 2011, Barack Obama signed into law the National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) H.R. 1540. Emulating the rouge military dictatorships the US Government has long condemned in its rhetoric, the NDAA introduces a vaguely worded legislation that allows for US citizens to be arbitrarily detained in military detention without due process – might they be predictably deemed radical, conspiratorial or suspected of terrorism.

In a climate of rising public discontent, the establishment media has steadfastly worked to blur the line between public activism and domestic extremism. In addition to the world's largest network of prison facilities, over 800 located detainment camps exist in all regions of the United States with varying maximum capacities.

Facing economic stagnation, many Americans have been detained in responder camps as a consequence of publically demonstrating in accordance with the Occupy Wall Street movement launched in New York City.

Under the guise of protecting Americans from a largely contrived and abstract threat of fundamentalist violence, citizens have been denied the right of peaceful assembly and placed in detainment apparatuses, managed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Documents have been released by the American Civil Liberties Union detailing the Pentagon's widespread monitoring of public demonstrations and the targeting of individual activists under threat of national security.

(Continued on page 31)

Co-authored by Senator Joe Lieberman, the Enemy Expatriation Act (HR 3166) gives the US government the power to detain nationals and revoke their American citizenship under suspicion of behavior perceived as terrorism.

This legislation becomes increasingly more dangerous as citizens can be labeled domestic extremists based on their constitutionally protected activism or personal political leanings.

In January 2006, a contract to construct detention facilities for the Department of Homeland Security worth a maximum of \$385 million was awarded to KBR, a subsidiary of Haliburton. Following the signing of NDAA earlier in 2012, leaked documents reveal that KBR is now seeking to staff its detention centers and award contracts for services such as catering, temporary fencing and barricades, laundry and medical services, power generation, and refuse collection.

It would be reasonable to assume that these facilities could be managed in partnership with private corporations such as the GEO Group or the CCA, as many federal and state penitentiaries privatize sections of their facilities to privately owned companies.

Declassified US Army documents originally drafted in 1997 divulge the existence of inmate labor camps inside US military installations. It is all but unexpected that the relationship between the upper echelons of government and the private prison enterprise will grow increasingly more intimate in the current climate of prison industrial legislation.

The partnership between the United States government and its corporate associates spans various industries however, they all seek the common pursuit of profit irrespective of the moral and ethical consequence – the human consequence.

The increasing influence of the Prison Industrial Complex towards official legislation and economic undertakings signifies a reprehensible threat to basic human rights. Perhaps the issuance of government legislation that leads offenders into detainment for the benefit of private shareholders is the purest embodiment of fascism, as cited in Mussolini's vision of a Corporate State.

Perhaps we all (this author included) fail to grasp the seriousness of these legislations and their implications on our lives.

Mumia Abu-Jamal has spent over three decades on death row in the throngs of the American prison system. Prior to his conviction in 1981 for the murder of a white police officer, Jamal was a political activist and President of the Philadelphia Association of Black Journalists.

Critical evidence vindicating Jamal was withheld from the trial prior to the issuance of the death penalty. Forensic experts believe he was denied a fair trial. On December 7, 2011, the Philadelphia District Attorney announced that prosecutors would no longer seek the death penalty for Jamal. He remains imprisoned for life without parole and continues his work as a journalist from his jail cell in Pennsylvania.

Note: The figure of six million people cited in the first paragraph of this article represents all people in juvenile detention and adult facilities, in addition to those who have passed through the prison system and are now being subjected to some form of parole or probation, i.e. correctional supervision.

Nile Bowie is a freelance writer and photojournalist based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia.

National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)

TORTURE IS A MORAL ISSUE

Dear Friends,

As the [New York Times](#) reported this week, a growing number of states are recognizing that reliance on prolonged solitary confinement is not only ineffective and destructive, it's expensive. The National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT) is encouraged to see growing national debate about the abuse and immorality of prolonged solitary confinement and a growing number of faith-based [state campaigns](#) to end prolonged solitary confinement. Now is a crucial time for you to raise the issue with your congregation. NRCAT has a new resource for you to do just that.

NRCAT created a 20-minute film, [Solitary Confinement: Torture in Your Backyard](#), as a resource for congregations to learn about the destructive use of prolonged solitary confinement and to engage people of faith to call for an end to prolonged solitary confinement in their state. The film features several former prisoners discussing the mental harm they endured as a result of being held in solitary confinement. Sarah Shourd, one of the three hikers captured in Iran, who spent 14 months in solitary confinement also describes her experience. The film also highlights how the religious community in Maine helped secure a seventy percent reduction in the number of Maine prisoners held in solitary confinement.

We urge you to [organize a screening of Solitary Confinement: Torture in Your Backyard](#). Use our faith-based discussion guides to facilitate a discussion about solitary confinement after the film. The DVD order form, a petition version of NRCAT's Statement Against Prolonged Solitary Confinement, fliers to advertise your congregation's screening, and faith-based discussion guides are all available at www.nrcat.org/backyard. ...

Help us meet our goal to have 500 showings of the film in 2012 and give a voice to the tens of thousands of prisoners held in solitary confinement cells across the country.

Sincerely,



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Prison Facts

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Working to End Drug War Injustice

How did the United States become the world's leading jailer?

In the midst of the prosperous 1980's the federal government enticed state and local governments to adopt 'tough on crime' policies. New policing tactics and sentencing schemes led to an increase of a million prisoners in less than a decade. Today there are over 7 million people in prison or some form of law enforcement control.

People living in areas of persistent, historical urban poverty were imprisoned at rates that rival no other era or country. The expansion of prisons was far-reaching, involving every state and the federal government. With almost no public scrutiny, millions of people were arrested and imprisoned.

[Debt to Society](#), from *Mother Jones Magazine*

[Prison Policy Initiative](#)

[The Sentencing Project](#)

[United States Sentencing Guidelines](#), [An Experiment That Has Failed](#), from *The American College of Trial Lawyers*

[Drug Offenders in Prison](#); from *Drug War Facts*

-- [More](#)

Has the war on drugs caused the prison construction boom?

Get 'tough on drugs' slogans led to laws that weren't smart. These 20-plus-year-old laws are unconstitutional, and were largely written with little thought to future oversight and accountability. Fiscally, drug laws have drained resources away from social programs that were more effective than prisons.

The drug war intensified under The Sentencing Reform Act (SRA) of 1984 that gave law enforcement officials virtually unchecked power to enforce federal drug sentencing laws. New laws handed this power to the police and prosecutors, but Congress failed to formalize effective legal procedures for monitoring the new sentencing system. States adopted the same or portions of the federal experiment called 'sentencing reform.'

Long prison sentences for nonviolent drug offenders are the single greatest multiplying factor behind the monumental increase of US prison populations in the last 20 years. The book *Lies, Damned Lies, and Drug War Statistics*, the only scientific analysis of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) budget, proves a 30-year, steady increase in incarceration and its spiraling costs due to thoughtless and punitive drug war laws.

The US Sentencing Commission can't monitor and review over 90% of the hidden policing-process anchored in drug-targeted communities by snitching and informant systems. Police and prosecutors, who have traditionally worked hand in hand, nowadays have the power to charge and power to sentence, defying 'checks and balances' principles honored from our nation's foundation.

The power to punish -- power that can't be scrutinized -- leads defense attorneys to counsel defendants to plead guilty; the government wins about 97% of drug cases brought to trial. The role judges play at sentencing has been limited by legislators responding to a 'moral panic' driven by fear-mongering media and politicians, fueled by wealthy conservatives intent on more policing and imprisonment of lower class people.

These methods of sentencing are under new scrutiny in higher courts, but the prison industrial complexes continue growing because the drug war rages on.

[The November Coalition](#); Working to end drug war injustice

[Drug War Facts](#), from [Common Sense for Drug Policy](#) (CSDP)

[StopTheDrugWar.org](#); featuring [The Drug War Chronicle](#), the "world's leading drug policy newsletter".

[The Can-Do Foundation](#), advocates Clemency for All Non-violent Drug Offenders. Founded by former prisoner [Amy Ralston](#).

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What other detrimental effects do prisons have on our democracy?

Census takers don't use an imprisoned person's home address; they use the prison address. Even though most prisoners can't vote, state and federal lawmakers count them as residents of their district when drawing legislative maps.

US prison expansion grows into mostly-white, rural regions, but these rural lockups soon fill with people of color from distant urban areas.

Political power shifts and democratic values are at risk when concentrations of people who cannot vote bring undeserved, extra power to political leaders who live in districts where prisons are sited.

Every dollar transferred to a 'prison town' is money that won't be spent in the incarcerated person's hometown.

When court dockets are consumed with punishing crime, civil cases go unheard. Our culture's progress has long been dependant on the courts. Historically we have used litigation to determine how civil our society should be. Opportunities for progressive change via the courts languish when justice and cherished legal principles are set aside.

[The New Landscape of Imprisonment: Mapping America's Prison Expansion](#); from *The Urban Institute* (.pdf)

[Economic Impacts of Rural Prisons](#); from CO Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

[Prisoners of the Census](#)

-- [More](#)

What are some alternatives to prison expansion?

Our country must address the root causes of poverty. Today we build prisons instead of schools. We pay guards more than we do our young children's teachers.

In Washington State, about half of the people imprisoned are mentally ill.

These imprisoned need compassionate mental health care in a hospital setting, or community outpatient support. We must stop criminalizing mental illness.

Another large category of imprisoned people is non-violent drug offenders. To get a given amount of illegal drug consumption reduction, treatment costs 25 cents to every dollar of law enforcement cost. We can afford to expand treatment, not prisons.

Many lawbreakers turn to crime because they're not educated, lack job skills, and have no employment experience. An alternative sentence could include meaningful community service that teaches marketable job skills. Education costs far less than paying for another stay in prison.

People returning home from prison need one: Access to citizenship, family, jobs, housing and food, not the present barriers that doom them to repeat their failures of the past should be restored to people after prison

[Alternatives to Incarceration in the State of Wisconsin](#); from *University of Wisconsin at La Crosse* (.pdf)

[Drug Treatment](#); from *Drug War Facts*

[Drug Courts](#); from *Drug War Facts*

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What relationship do prisons have with race and class distinctions?

Affluent communities don't build prisons in their back yards. Prisons, public and private are started and expanded into mostly impoverished rural areas.

Affluent people are more likely to avoid arrest, trial and imprisonment.

Although only 8% of Washington State's population are African Americans, nearly 20% of our prison population is black. Nationwide, racial disparities are even more shameful. Federal prisons are 70% African American, but only represent 13% of the population.

As prisons expand in impoverished rural areas, they fill with the poor from urban cities -- historical and new regions of persistent poverty are further diminished.

[Race and Prison](#); from *Drug War Facts*

[Thirty Years of Sentencing Reform: The Quest for a Racially Neutral Sentencing Process](#); from *National Criminal Justice Reference Service*

[Fifteen Years of Guidelines Sentencing](#); from *US Sentencing Commission*

-- [More](#)

Do prisons have an effect on public health?

Mental health issues aside, a new or expanding prison in your area will put extra burdens on local emergency and hospital services. Insurance-company restrictions on reimbursement inhibit local regions' ability to expand or improve local medical services, while sub-standard care can lead to costly litigation. Personal abuse and medical neglect flourish in prisons.

Communicable diseases can flourish in prisons, too. There are documented, high rates of preventable tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and hepatitis infections discovered in many prison populations. Local authorities should know and monitor the health of released prisoners, but it's a seldom-practiced, though routine, procedure. Adding to wider contagion possibilities, guards return home after their eight-hour shift inside prison.

If you are a person who agrees it's impossible to separate environmental sustainability from public health, we think you will oppose prison expansion.

[The Hidden Costs of a Cruel and Unusual Prison Health Care System](#); from *BioEthics Forum*

[Arizona's Prisons Facing Public Health Crisis](#); from *American Friends Service Committee*

[Hep B Rate High In Rhode Island Prisons, Study Shows](#); from *Science Daily*

[World Health Organization in Prisons Project](#)

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Philadelphia Prisoner Advocacy Summit*

**Saturday
April 21st 2012
9am – 4pm
Community
College
Of Philadelphia**

Plenary Speakers:

PA State Senator, Shirley Kitchen

Former Political Prisoner, Laura Whitehorn

Community Activist, Butch Cottman

Workshops include:

- Overcoming Obstacles to Movement Building
- Creating a Voting Power
- Strategy for Statewide Movement-Building
- Legislative Advocacy
- Effective Broad-based Coalition Building
- Organizational Development & Sustainability
- Using Social Media For Movement-Building
- Fundraising
- Mobilizing Families & Networks Against Prison Abuse
- Beyond Re-entry
- Developing Youth Leadership

*This Summit would not be possible without the generous support of Pennsylvania State Senator Shirley Kitchen. A convening group comprised of representatives from 23 local human rights activist organizations is planning this Summit.

**Join fellow activists for
a full day filled with
opportunities
to collaborate and actively
participate in educating,
empowering,
and fortifying our collective
work!**

Space is limited; Pre-registration is advised. Complete your registration online!!! **Lunch provided to the first 150 persons to register!**

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Trayvon Martin: a killing too far

Outrage at the death of Trayvon Martin is finally lifting the lid on the US's racist underbelly

Wednesday 21 March 2012

'Black children are dispensable. Violence is expected to happen in these communities.' Photograph: Brian Blanco/EPA

The second world war had a civilizing influence on Buford Posey, a white man raised in the Deep South during the Depression. "When I was coming up in Mississippi I never knew it was against the law to kill a black man," he says. "I learned that when I went in the army. I was 17 years old. When they told me I thought they were joking."

Some 70 years later it's clear not everybody got that memo. Three weeks ago in Sanford, Florida, a neighborhood watch captain, George Zimmerman, shot dead an unarmed black teen, Trayvon Martin, as he walked home from the store. Zimmerman, who is Latino, called the emergency services because he thought Martin, 17, looked "suspicious" and then, against the advice of the dispatcher, followed him. The two men fought. Martin died. Zimmerman emerged, bleeding from the nose and the back of his head, claiming he shot Martin in self-defense because he was in fear of his life.

Zimmerman was neither charged nor arrested. Under Florida's "stand your ground" statute, deadly force is permitted if the person "reasonably believes" it is necessary to protect their own life, the life of another or to prevent a forcible felony. Zimmerman weighs 250lbs and had a 9mm handgun; Martin weighed 140lbs and had a packet of Skittles and a can of iced tea. Being a young black male, it seems, is reason enough.

One can only speculate as to Zimmerman's intentions. Efforts to create a crude morality play around this shooting in which Martin is sanctified and

Zimmerman is pathologised miss the point. Zimmerman's assumptions on seeing Martin may have been reprehensible but they were not illogical. Black men in America are more likely to be stopped, searched, arrested, convicted and executed than any other group. With almost one in 10 black men behind bars there are more of them in prison, on probation or on parole today than were enslaved in 1850. To assume that when you see a black man you see a criminal is rooted in the fact that black men have been systematically criminalized. That excuses nothing but explains a great deal.

Add to this lax gun laws, entrenched segregation, deep economic inequalities and a statute that endorses vigilantism, and a murder of this kind is inevitable. Indeed what makes Martin's case noteworthy is not that it happened but that it has sparked such widespread indignation beyond his immediate community. It is not at all uncommon for young black men to leave the world in a shower of bullets followed by deafening silence.

Eight kids under the age of 19 are killed by guns in America every day. While researching the stories of those who fell one November day in 2006 I ran across the story of Brandon Moore. Brandon was 16 when he was shot in the back in the middle of the afternoon by an off-duty cop moonlighting as a security guard in Detroit. The guard had previously shot a man dead during a neighborhood fracas, shot his wife (though not fatally) in a domestic dispute and had been involved in a fatal hit-and-run car accident while under the influence of alcohol. Brandon's death was dismissed in the city's two main newspapers in less than 200 words. They never even mentioned his name. Brandon's death was ruled to be justifiable homicide. A year later the guard was still in the police force.

"We're deemed not reportable," said Clementina Chery, who runs the Boston-based Louis D Brown Peace Institute, which assists families in the immediate aftermath of shootings and works in schools to educate people about gun violence. "Black

(Continued on page 39)

(Continued from page 38)

children are dispensable. Violence is expected to happen in these communities."

Thanks to the escalating outrage at Martin's death an investigation has now been launched by the US department of justice, and the state attorney's office will be sending it to a grand jury. It took three weeks, outrage and the mobilization of thousands of people to make that happen. Apparently the facts alone did not warrant further inquiry.

The question now is whether Martin's case can gain the attention at the highest levels of the American polity. In 2009 when a well known African American Harvard professor, Henry Louis Gates Jr, was arrested while trying to get into his own home, Obama made his views known in a clumsy intervention that ended in him staging a "beer summit" with Gates and the arresting officer.

Given how rarely Obama refers to issues of race and how much there is to refer to, it was strange that he would spend his considerable moral capital in this area to defend a tenured Harvard professor whom he knew, and who was detained for a few hours.

We'll never know if Martin could have become a Harvard professor. But it would be nice to think that his short life and brutal death would receive the same kind of presidential attention.

Campaign launched to release HRC co-founder Russell Maroon Shoatz from solitary:

Family and supporters of Russell Maroon Shoatz have launched a campaign to have him released from the torturous solitary confinement that he has been

held in for more than twenty years. A letter-writing and petition campaign has been launched and supported by the nation's leading human rights legal organizations, the Center for Constitutional Rights and the National Lawyers Guild, along with the Human Rights Coalition, the Pennsylvania-based prison abolitionist organization co-founded by Shoatz.

Russell Maroon Shoatz, a 68-year-old prisoner held at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) Greene in southwestern Pennsylvania, has been kept in solitary confinement for more than 21 years. He has been unable to hold his children or grandchildren or interact with others in a humane setting during this time, despite not having violated prison rules in two decades. He has suffered severe psychological anguish and his physical health has been worsened by the stress of prolonged isolation.

Maroon has spent nearly 40 years within the Pennsylvania prison system, 30 of those in solitary confinement. During this time he has earned a reputation amongst prison staff and prisoners as a leader because of his consistent support for human rights inside and outside the walls. Prison officials claim that Shoatz is a security threat due to past escapes and attempts, though new evidence has surfaced that his continued solitary confinement is based on secret and fraudulent evidence of a non-existent plan to takeover a prison in the 1980s. Prison officials also identified Maroon's political associations as a basis for continuing to torture him via solitary confinement.

A **petition** in support of the campaign states that supporters "are distressed and outraged that an elderly man who is nearing his 70th birthday continues to be treated in such a cruel manner based on his constitutionally-protected support for human rights and in retaliation for his expressing political opinions disfavored by the prison administration. Not having committed an infraction in more than two decades reveals that Russell Shoatz is more than ready to re-enter the general prison population."

See: <http://russellmaroonshoatz.wordpress.com/>

Hunger Strike at Frackville: Continuing Medical Neglect and Retaliation at SCI Frackville:

On Saturday March 10, 2012, several prisoners at State Correctional Institution Frackville began a hunger strike. Prisoners McKeithan, Mayo, Morales and two others were on hunger strike due to repeated incidents of food tampering, harassment, threats of violence and retaliation against themselves and other prisoners in the Restricted Housing Unit (RHU). Sergeant Wickersham and prison guard Shaffer have been repeatedly identified as the primary ringleaders, instigators, and perpetrators of the abuse, as HRC has reported several times in the past. (see PA Prison Reports from May 23, 2011; June 27, 2011; October 10, 2011) The hunger strikers were demanding that Wickersham and Shaffer be removed from their posts due to these two guards reported tampering with prisoners' food, verbal harassment, threats of violence, destruction of personal and legal property, and denying prisoners medical care, meals, showers, and yard. They have had numerous grievances filed against them from many prisoners at SCI Frackville.

As of Monday, prison officials assert that all prisoners on hunger strike have resumed eating, and that Wickersham and Shaffer continue to work in the RHU.

To support the prisoners at SCI Frackville call Superintendent Collins and Central Office and inform them that you are concerned about this abuse, and demand that Shaffer and Wickersham be removed from the RHU; that they be investigated and held accountable for any acts found to have violated prisoners' human rights.

(570) 874-4516- Frackville - ask to be connected to the Superintendent's office, request to speak with Superintendent Collins or the Superintendent's Assistant, Peter Damiter

717-975-4859- Central Office - ask to speak with Secretary John Wetzel, Deputy Secretary John Murray, or somebody from their office.

A prisoner at SCI Frackville, Alfred Mayo, continues to suffer medical neglect and his health continues to deteriorate. Mayo recently ended a hunger strike (see above story) that he and four others had initiated in protest against the abusive acts of Sgt. Wickersham and prison guard Shaffer.

When Mayo first arrived at SCI Frackville in January 2009, he was perfectly healthy. A little over a month later he caught a small cold. In response he was treated with large amounts of antibiotics. In the middle of March, Mayo began complaining about flu like symptoms and requesting sick call. His weight went from 250 pounds to 172 pounds. It wasn't until August that he had any blood work done. After his blood work was done he was immediately sent to the infirmary at SCI Mahanoy, where he was told that his kidneys were failing and it was likely that they would never function normally again. When Mayo asked what could have caused it, he was told it was the antibiotics he was previously placed on. Mayo is force to take a daily steroid to keep his kidneys from failing.

After finding out about his failing kidneys, Mayo filed grievances against the medical staff. Since filing those grievances Mayo has been issued fabricated misconducts and has been placed in solitary confinement. He is constantly retaliated against by Sgt. Wickersham and Officer Shaffer. Mayo has reported being harassed and deprived of meals. In addition to the constant retaliation, Mayo's health is getting worse, and he is not receiving the proper treatment. He is continuing to loose weight and the daily steroid he is on is impacting his mood. He is not being provided with regular blood tests to track his progress and he is not being provided with the diet necessary to improve his kidney function.

Prison Health Services, the private company who provides medical care in Pennsylvania State

(Continued on page 41)

prisons, has a history of cutting corners when it comes to medical care in order to save money. Mayo's mother and girlfriend have repeatedly called SCI Frackville and the Department of Correction's Central Office to report the retaliation and medical neglect, and to request that he be transferred to a facility with an infirmary. Despite their efforts nothing has been done. When Mayo's girlfriend spoke with staff at SCI Frackville she was told she needed evidence of the retaliation. Mayo's family has expressed that every day they see his health deteriorate, they fear more and more for his life.

Suicide of prisoner at SCI Cresson raises more questions about neglect of mental health care:

The State Correctional Institution (SCI) Cresson reported that a prisoner in their custody, twenty-four-year-old James Willett, committed suicide on March 11. The suicide is the second at SCI Cresson in less than a year. A report sent to HRC claims that Willett had a history of mental illness, including hearing voices, and that he was not being provided meaningful mental health treatment. SCI Cresson is currently under investigation by the U.S. Department of Justice for failing to provide mental health care to persons in its solitary confinement units.

Although a press release alleged that the state police will investigate this latest suicide, PA State Police have a policy of not investigating allegations of criminal conduct by prison personnel unless prison administrators request an investigation, leaving the prison tasked with investigating itself. The problem this poses is evident in the fact that the findings of the prison's investigation into the suicide of John McClellan last May in SCI Cresson's Restricted Housing Unit (RHU) appears to have been suppressed. HRC received numerous reports of guard abuse of McClellan, including encouragement of suicide, and refusal to provide mental health care,

and several prisoners reported the abuse and neglect to the Department of Corrections' Office of Special Investigations and Intelligence (OSII). Despite numerous and consistent reports, the results of the investigation have never been publicized, nor has anybody ever been held accountable

Arbitration decision orders reinstatement of suspended SCI Pittsburgh guards:

8 prison guards were suspended without pay last year pending investigations into scores of allegations of sexual, physical, and verbal abuses suffered by prisoners at State Correctional Institution (SCI) Pittsburgh. Correctional Officer Harry Nicoletti was suspended on 92 criminal charges including sexual assault, criminal oppression, and terroristic threats. The criminal complaints were filed September 27, 2010 and he was suspended without pay on January 5, 2011. The remaining guards were suspended without pay on April 1, 2011.

The Office of Special Investigations and Intelligence (OSII), which is the internal investigation unit of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, conducted an investigation into the allegations. Six other guards have been criminally charged in the scandal, though two have subsequently had the charges against them dropped. In early December, the United States Department of Justice announced that it was investigating the rape and torture scandal that has become known as Abu Ghraib on the Allegheny.

On October 28, 2011, the 8 suspended guards had a hearing with arbitrator Ronald F. Talarico. The arbitrators' decision was that all 8 of the officers should be reinstated and awarded back pay on the grounds that their due process rights were violated. Although the finding was based on the failure of the PA DOC to grant the guards a hearing in which they could confront the charges against them, it is unclear

(Continued on page 42)

(Continued from page 41)

why the arbitrator held that reinstatement-rather than a hearing on the allegations-was the appropriate course.

Despite the criminal charges and the Justice Department investigation, HRC continues to receive reports from prisoners at SCI Pittsburgh about sexual abuse and harassment at the prison, including discrimination based on sexual orientation.

Corrections Officers Earn More than Ranking Guards:

The Post Gazette found that the highest paid employee at SCI Pittsburgh this past year, because of overtime earnings, was not a high ranking official, but a corrections officer. Statistics of the average pay per employee uncovered by a Right-to-Know request to the Department of Corrections showed that sergeants, who are one rank above corrections officers, made the most money on average. The sergeants annual pay averaged \$20,000 more than captains or lieutenants, who rank higher and have more responsibility, but do not have union representation or access to overtime hours.

Overtime is the gift that keeps on giving for retired employees who earn an annual pension based on their three highest earning years. This past year, 21 of 23 employees who brought home wages of over \$100,000 were correctional officers. The prison employed 679 employees and paid a total of 31.7 million dollars in staff pay, 5.5 million of which was overtime. A total of 50 million dollars was paid in overtime by the Department of Corrections throughout the year.

A spokesperson for the Department of Corrections stated that the causes of the widespread use of overtime were vacant positions, military deployment, call offs, and long term absences. PA Senator David Argall is drafting legislation to revert the pay scale,

calling it a public safety problem. A group of Captains and Lieutenants formed the Commissioned Officers Association to organize ranking officers to address the problem. Some ranking officers have taken voluntary demotions to tap into the lucrative overtime wages. The article raised questions as to how many hours a guard could work and stay sane. Its focus was SCI Pittsburgh, which is under investigation by the justice department for official abuse of prisoners.

Governor Corbett is allocating 8.2 million to the Department of Corrections to bail out the imbalance and to boost pay for middle workers. This is in addition to maintaining state funding to corrections with deep cuts to education, health and social spending. Corbett has also approved 685 million dollars to be used to construct new prison facilities and expand others.

Occupy San Quentin News

2/20/12 (Marin IJ & ABC news)

February 21, 2012

Posted by [Liberate Oakland](#)

By Paul Liberatore

Marin Independent Journal

Occupy protesters listen to speeches under the watchful eyes of police at the main gate to San Quentin Prison.

As part of a national "day of solidarity" with inmates, about 700 Occupy demonstrators rallied peacefully outside San Quentin State Prison's East Gate on Monday in support of prison hunger strikers

(Continued on page 43)

(Continued from page 42)

protesting solitary confinement and other human rights issues.

Many of the demonstrators were from Occupy Oakland, whose members clashed with police in January, when 400 were arrested.

As San Quentin guards stared from inside the prison gate and the California Highway Patrol sealed off the roads leading into San Quentin Village, Occupy organizers stressed the importance of demonstrating peacefully.

"Please, let's keep it cool," pleaded activist Jack Bryson, 50, speaking on a makeshift stage over a booming public address system. "Anything you do out here, the prisoners will be retaliated against. Lets not have the prisoners turn against Occupy Oakland."

Monday's demonstration was the first Occupy gathering at any prison.

"We want to expand the issues that Occupy Oakland is dealing with," explained Scott Johnson, a 34-year-old Oakland computer programmer. "We started talking about Wall Street. We've been talking about local police harassment. Now we want to expand it to the criminal justice system."

Because police banned parking on stretches of Sir Francis Drake and East Francisco boulevards, the main thoroughfares leading to the prison, demonstrators had to walk a mile or more to get to the noontime rally. Some arrived from Oakland on a bus, chanting, "Here comes Oakland."

As protesters streamed onto San Quentin Village's Main Street, they were greeted by the Rev. Kurt A. Kuhwald, a professor at Starr King School for the Ministry in Berkeley, who pointed the way to the East Gate. He had on a black baseball cap with "Pastor" in white letters on the front.

"The prison system clearly reflects a part of the economic disaster we're in," he said. "We are the most imprisoned country in the world. What we're saying is that we need to reorganize our priorities, because arresting people isn't making us safer. It's costing us economically and creating a new class of people who are disenfranchised."

Speakers at the three-hour-long rally included Shane Bauer, 29, Sarah Shourd, 33, and Josh Fattal, 29, the much-publicized American hikers accused of being spies and imprisoned in Iran in 2009, Shourd for 14 months, Bauer and Fattal for more than two years, including periods of solitary confinement. Bauer and Fattal staged a hunger strike to win the right to read letters from their friends and family.

"The issue of prison conditions is important to all of us," Bauer said. "We lived in prison and when we hear of people being held in solitary confinement, either in Iran or here, it's something we feel very deeply. The fact that there are so many people in solitary confinement in this country is terrible."

Demonstrators carried signs and banners with such slogans as "Stop the war on working people, jobs not jail" and "mass incarceration profits the 1 percent." They chanted, "Inside, outside, all on the same side."

Ron Greene of Greebrae, a 77-year-old former clinical psychologist who worked at San Quentin and Soledad prisons, mingled with the crowd, taking photos.

"I support the general principles of Occupy and I care about the conditions at San Quentin," he said. "That's not to say I want to release all the prisoners, but there are many who could do very well on the street."

Sixty-nine-year-old Elaine Brown, the first woman chairperson of the Oakland Black Panther Party in the 1960s, spoke last. From the stage, she looked out on

(Continued on page 44)

(Continued from page 43)

the many young faces in the crowd, estimated by police at 600 to 700.

"I am happy and proud to see all you young people," she said before belting out several verses of the gospel song "O Freedom."

Occupy movement challenges prison-industrial complex

By Betsey Piette
Philadelphia
March 4, 2012

Demonstrators chanted, "Tear down Jailhouses! Build up School Houses!" outside Heery International Inc.'s Philadelphia office as part of a national call from Occupy Oakland to Occupy for Prisoners on Feb. 20.

Organized by DecarceratePA



and endorsed by Occupy Philadelphia, the protest targeted the disparity between increased funding for prison construction while Pennsylvania Gov. Tom Corbett slashes funding for education and is pushing for more cuts.

Heery, which profits from private prison construction, was paid \$316 million in October to build a Graterford

Prison extension to house 4,100 more inmates and a new death row facility.

Political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's statement was a rally highlight. Now housed in general population at Pennsylvania's SCI-Mahanoy prison, a decades-long struggle won his December release from death row. He said of the call to Occupy for Prisoners, "It was not an especially radical call, but it was right on. Prisons have become a metaphor — the shadow-side ... of America. With oceans of words about freedom — and the reality that the U.S. is the world's leader of the incarceration industry — it's more than time for the focused attention of the Occupy Movement.

"Every state, every rural district, every hamlet in America has a prison, a place where the Constitution doesn't exist and where slavery is all but legalized. And where there are prisons, there is torture: brutal beatings, grave humiliations, perverse censorship — and even murders."

Abu-Jamal called on the Occupy Movement to support the calls for freedom for political prisoners Leonard Peltier, the MOVE 9, Sundiata Acoli, Russell "Maroon" Shoatz and others, but urged the movement to do more to stop "a destructive, counter-productive, annual \$69 billion boondoggle of repression, better known ... as the Prison Industrial Complex." He urged the Occupy Movement to build "a mass movement that demands and fights for real change," and concluded, "Down with the Prison Industrial Complex!"

Theresa Shoatz read her father's statement; Russell "Maroon" Shoatz has been held for 21 years in solitary confinement at SCI Green. Former inmates also spoke.

More than 700 people demonstrated outside San Quentin on Feb. 20, stressing, "Unless all of us are free, we are all imprisoned." Many protesters had been illegally arrested and imprisoned at Occupy Oakland.

(Continued on page 45)

What's The News!

(Continued from page 44)

Kevin Cooper, a San Quentin death row prisoner, inspired the call to Occupy for Prisoners initiated by Occupy Oakland. He urged the Occupy Movement to include prisoners in their movement for the 99%, saying, "No man or woman on death row ... is a 'have.' We are the 'have nots.' We are the bottom 1%."

Protests took place in 19 cities, including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington and Durham, N.C., where their flier noted, "Prior to incarceration, two-thirds of all prisoners lived in conditions of economic hardship, while the perpetrators of 'white-collar' crime largely go free." No Wall Street banker has been jailed for stealing billions of dollars through mortgage fraud.

Occupy for Prisoners exposed mass incarceration in the U.S. — the world's largest jailer — where more than 3 million people are behind bars.

More African Americans in prison today than enslaved in 1850

Michelle Alexander, author of "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness," says there are "more African-Americans ... in prisons or jail, on probation or parole — than were enslaved in 1850, a decade before the Civil War began." Between 1970 and 1995, the incarceration of African Americans increased seven-fold.

African Americans make up 12 percent of the U.S. population but comprise 40 percent of the prison population — a legacy of more than three decades of the so-called "war on drugs" with its "three strikes" bills, mandatory harsh prison terms and jail time for minor drug offenses.

Occupy events targeted for-profit prisons and companies like Wells Fargo, which is heavily invested in the private prison industry with 3.5 million shares in the second largest prison operator, the GEO Group. Companies make money through prison construction

and from prison labor, paying prisoners as little as \$0.23 an hour.

The disparity in funding for prisons versus education and the incarceration of juveniles as adults were common themes. The Broad Foundation says the U.S. spends \$9,644 to educate a student but \$22,600 per prison inmate. High school dropouts comprise 65 percent of U.S. prisoners.

Protesters condemned the widespread use of solitary confinement and outright torture inside U.S. prisons. Prison Legal News explains, "The kind of torture of prisoners at Abu Ghraib in Iraq ... is commonplace within U.S. prisons."

Super max prisons hold an estimated 20,000 U.S. prisoners in solitary, while thousands more are so confined in state and local prisons, including hundreds of Muslims.

Prolonged solitary confinement is recognized internationally as torture, which violates the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the U.N. Convention against Torture and the U.N. Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination.

Abu-Jamal, who spent nearly 30 years in solidarity, told Occupy for Prisoners, "Justice demands the end of solitary ... it is no more than a modern-day torture chamber for the poor."

Sudoku mp13 Answer

7	6	9	5	1	8	4	3	2
5	1	3	6	4	2	8	9	7
8	2	4	9	7	3	6	1	5
2	5	8	1	3	9	7	4	6
4	9	6	8	5	7	3	2	1
1	3	7	2	6	4	9	5	8
9	4	1	7	2	6	5	8	3
3	7	2	4	8	5	1	6	9
6	8	5	3	9	1	2	7	4

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The Babylon System -

Bab.y.lon - noun, Etymology: Babylon, ancient city of Babylonia, 14th century, a city devoted to materialism and sensual pleasure, many liken Babylon to the United States, see Revelations 17-18.

If any prisoner, family member, or community activist would like to submit an article that is "critical" of the state and county prison systems, courts, D.A. offices, police, capitalist corporate America, and the government, just forward your article to the HRC's Newsletter Department for possible printing.

PART II (CONTINUED FROM ISSUE #13)

**TO: THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK COMMUNITY
AND ITS POLITICAL ACTIVISTS**

**FROM: THE FORGOTTEN, ABANDONED, AND NEGLECTED
GENERATION OF INCARCERATED BLACK MEN**

DATE: DECEMBER 1, 2007

**RE: AN OPEN LETTER TO THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN/BLACK COMMUNITY
AND ITS POLITICAL ACTIVISTS
ADDRESSING VARIOUS ISSUES AND CONCERNS**

... In this final segment, I shall expound on the issue of the war the system is now waging against the African-American/Black community, or the Survival/Existence war. Up to this point, I have discussed the negative aspects of the system pertaining to the destruction of my generation, with emphasis on the Criminal Injustice System's impact. But, this New World Order's system constantly changes and adapts itself like a virus, and it is this latest incarnation that endangers both current and future generations of black people and our culture.

Most black people understand conventional warfare, but the warfare against us is "unconventional." War is also defined as being in state of hostility, contention, or struggle. In the modern world, war can also be waged on various fronts like culturally, psychologically, economically, environmentally, and geo-politically. The medium can be ships, planes, and bombs, or it can be more insidious like pop culture, the internet, or culture corrupting ideologies. All of those methods are currently being systematically employed to undermine the present (and our future) generations of the African-American/Black Community.

Make no mistakes about it, the system has been trying to exterminate the black man for centuries. Those of us that have survived or escaped physical death have now been incapacitated to the point of absolute pacification, and are no longer considered a "serious threat" to the system's power base. War by its very definition is perpetual in nature, and is not satisfied by merely 'containing' the black man. Instead, the system has set its sights on a new "clear and present danger" to its existence. Without them being our foundation and the true nurturer and protector of our culture, we would have perished

(Continued on page 49)

THE MOVEMENT

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centuries ago. I'm talking about the Black Woman.

The campaign is being specifically waged against young black women of reproductive ages. African-American/Blacks comprise 13% of the U.S. population. While black people are 49% of all new HIV cases, black women represent over 50% of all new HIV infections. More alarming is that black women represent 72% of all new HIV infections among young adult women ages 13 to 19, and AIDS is the leading cause of death among black women ages 25 to 44. Black women with the greatest opportunities to learn about and prevent HIV infection represent 65% of all reported AIDS cases although they comprise only 15% of the U.S. population. What do these figures confirm? They re-affirm the fact that young black women are dying.

To make matters worst, a significant portion of the black male population is afflicted with high mortality rates (genocide/suicide), homosexuality, and legal incapacitation during our reproductive years (incarceration). As a result of these unusual forces in shaping the black man, the black woman has had to resort to dating outside of her culture/race.

The system's historical interactions' with the black woman involve her being subjugated, sexually exploited, and physically conquered by the physical representations of the system, powerful white men. This was standard practice until unintended consequences prompted the system to adopt a preemptive posture. It realized that white culture was becoming diluted through mixed-raced offspring, many of whom identify strongly with black culture, and that young black women's high HIV infection rates now exposed white men to physical death. Underlying that phenomenon is the creation of a new "multicultural/multiethnic generation" who no longer cling to archaic principles, thus threatening to potentially shift the balance of power and global domination within the next century.

In accordance with the first law of nature (self-preservation), a previously underutilized method was devised and implemented to further neutralize this generations young black women, prisons. Women are the fastest-growing segment of California's prison population alone, presently numbering at 12,000. The majority of them are not a treat to public safety. Two-thirds were convicted of property or drug-related offenses and more than half have been victims of violent crimes than having been convicted of violent crimes. Each year, California spends 500 million (half a billion) dollars to incarcerate women. Now consider that many of these women were single mothers before being incarcerated. Their children are now being raised by either family members or the system. Studies show that children of incarcerated parents are more likely to follow the path of their parent, thus becoming the next generation of prisoners.

In California, 173,000 men are currently in prison along with thousands more incarcerated individuals in juvenile Detention Centers, the California Youth Authority, Women's Correctional Facilities, and County Jails. In the United States, 2.2 million people are in prison, 40% of them are black men. Black people comprise 13% of the U.S. population but account for over 50% of the U.S. prison population, 28% of the entire black population are on their way to jail/prison. Fifty percent of black high school students drop-out and 60% of them end up in jail/prison. Forty percent of the total population of

(Continued on page 50)

black prisoners' convictions are erroneous and have been overturned. Seventy percent of black babies are born to single mothers. And lastly, the leading cause of death among black men ages 16 to 29 is homicide.

In order to effectively destroy a culture/race, two conditions must be present. One, you must stop a culture from being able to reproduce itself. And two, you must stop the transmission of that culture from one generation to the next. The process of attribution ensures that the previous generation's ideals will die off. Systemic forces will ensure that next generation will be corrupted to the point where it loses all perspective and cultural identity, no longer being able to identify with their own culture or its history.

In his classic book entitled "Beyond Freedom and Dignity" psychologist B.F. Skinner spoke about the evolution of a culture. He stated that, "the greater the number of individuals who carry a species or culture, the greater its chances of survival. A culture, which for any reason induces its members to work for its survival is more likely to survive. It is a matter of the good of the culture, not the individual." For me, that speaks volumes, and I couldn't agree with him more.

This war on both our culture and our people will eventually annihilate us. All of the warning signs are flashing in our rear-view mirrors. As a people, we can no longer afford to sit idly by and do nothing. We must all come together and save our future generation before it's too late.

Ladies and gentleman of the African-American/Black Community, thank you for allowing us the opportunity to voice these serious concerns. Hopefully the community will benefit from the knowledge contained herein. While we have some solutions and ideas, the "Roadblocks of Perception" continues to impede our progress. If the whole of the black community is not ready to address embracement of its concerned prisoners whose desire it is to make a difference, and take serious heed to what we have to say, then all is truly lost.

Our communities cannot continue to disregard certain inalienable truths, such as the fact that we are at war for our very survival and existence as we know it. The hard reality is that we are losing and as a result our culture/race is dying! It's dying and we're dying and it both angers and saddens me to the point of tears because I can clearly see what's going on but I'm too powerless to stop it. So the only solution is to speak these thoughts into the consciousness of those enlightened individuals and hopefully elicit a positive response. For a culture/race who has brought such a rich history and contributions to this world, to go out like this is unconscionable. What is it going to take for my people to "WAKE UP" and see what's happening?

On a personal level, as the author of this letter I have something to say. I formally apologize to my mother, family, and the entire African-American/Black Community. I apologize for failing all of you. I apologize for my role in allowing myself to be manipulated and victimized by this "system" to the detriment of my culture/race. I apologize for not being strong enough to overcome the temptations of modern-day society, like the pursuit of ill-gotten gains, failure to stand up as a "real man", my false sense of masculinity, and the desecration of our legacy of greatness. And to my moms, words could never express the amount of love and admiration I have for you. If you could ever forgive me, someday, for having been a disappointment, please know that I'm still waiting to hear from you again one day.

(Continued on page 51)

(Continued from page 50)

Our “rebirth” into Black Men would not be complete without help from our black community. It is time we all started being solutions to the problem instead “of” the problem. As I stated in the beginning, we seek to collaborate with like-minded individuals and establish outreach via poetry, art, the written word, mentoring, etc. Give us the opportunity to show that prisoners have something to contribute back to society and our communities. Helping those who are trying to help themselves has its own rewards. Many thanks to Mr. Jakuma Sterling, CDC# T-40009, D1-148U, for his contributions to this letter. We look forward to hearing from the community. May God bless all of us. Peace.

Respectfully,

Mr. Courtney Williams
CDC# H-98875 D1-132L
Ironwood State Prison
P.O. Box 2199
Blythe, California 92226

Official HRC Chapters

Human Rights Coalition - Philadelphia Chapter

C/O Lava Space
4134 Lancaster Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19147
(215) 921-3491
www.hrcoalition.org

Human Rights Coalition - Chester Chapter CRRC

C/O Bro. Tut
419 Avenue of State, Suite 407
Chester, PA 19013
(215) 390-4114
hrcchester@yahoo.com

Human Rights Coalition - FedUp! Chapter

5125 Penn Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15224
412-361-3022 Ext.4
hrcfedup@gmail.com
www.thomasmertoncenter.org/fedup/

START A HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION (HRC) CHAPTER OR BRANCH IN YOUR AREA. Each Chapter or Branch must comply with eight requirements. These eight are:

- 1.) Respond to inquiries in a timely manner as resources permit.
- 2.) Update membership to HRC-Philly at least quarterly.
- 3.) Incorporate as a non-profit organization.
- 4.) Publish a newsletter at least semi annually as resources permit.
- 5.) Send minutes of chapter meetings to HRC-Philly.
- 6.) Establish internet video conferencing for statewide chapter meetings.
- 7.) Create a cooperative business to finance your chapter or branch to be financially independent.

Prisoners' Bill of Rights

1. We call for the right to be free from state sanctioned murder by use of the Death Penalty.
2. We call for the right of Parolees to be free of discrimination and disenfranchisement by denying those on parole the right to vote, quoting the 15th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution, section (1): "The right of citizens of the United States to vote, shall not be denied or abridged by the United States, or by any state on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude."
3. The 13th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution states: "Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for a crime whereof the party shall be duly convicted, shall exist within the United States, or any place subject to their jurisdiction."

We call for an Amendment of the clause to ensure that the language specifically prohibits slavery or involuntary servitude of any form in any land/territory subject to United States jurisdiction.

4. We assert that no one should be deprived of the fundamental right to vote whether in county, state, or federal prison, as long as they are American citizens and are of the age of eighteen or older.
5. We call for the abolition of sentencing juveniles to Life imprisonment whether with or without parole. We assert that the recent findings of neuro-psychiatry have definitively established that the frontal cortex of the brain, which is the region that governs impulsivity, judgment, planning for the future, foresight of consequences, is the last to develop and do not reach optimal functioning capacity until well into a person's early twenties of age. This scientifically fact is germane to mitigating juvenile criminal culpability.
6. We call for all juveniles sentenced as adults to be given a five year deferment of sentence, during which time the juvenile will undergo intense rehabilitation efforts. At the end of the five years, should the young adult fail the program, his/her sentence will be reinstated, unless it's a Life sentence - in which case the sentence will be commuted to a maximum sentence not to exceed his/her 40th birthday.

We assert that the United States being a signatory of the International Convention Treaties and Declarations under the United Nations rules pursuant to the Convention on the Rights of Children (C.R.C.) Article 37 (a), which states: "Neither capital punishment nor life imprisonment without the possibility of release shall be imposed for offences committed by persons below eighteen years of age." Article 40 (1), continues stating: "Parties recognized as having infringed the penal law to be treated in a manner consistent with the promotion of the child's sense of dignity and worth, which reinforces the child's respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others, and which takes into account the child's re-integration and the child assuming a constructive role in society."

7. We call for the end of the use of permanent, indefinite, and long term lock-down in solitary confinement areas within prisons. We assert that every prisoner should be given the opportunity to work their way into a less restrictive environment, as opposed to being lock-down in solitary confinement 23 hours a day on weekdays and 24 hours a day on weekends, for the rest of their natural lives or until they complete their entire sentence. Prisoners are consistently being left to perpetually languish in solitary confinement, because of the falsity and embellishment of prisoners' prison records or due to an incident that took place 10, 20, or 30 years ago.

(Continued on page 53)

8. We assert that all of the abuse, deprivations, and other human rights violations against prisoners that are systemic throughout America's prison system, will continue until prisoners are afforded a voice to collectively speak on their behalf, and therefore, we call for the formation and legalization of Prisoners' Unions.
9. We call for the reinstatement of Pell Grants for the education of prisoners. We assert that studies clearly show that for prisoners who received some college level courses, the recidivism rate dropped significantly, and this drop was directly proportionate to the degree of education received while in prison. We reject the argument of budget restraints when one knows that the allocation of funds for Pell Grants (of any state's federal budget) was only one percent of one percent.
10. We call for a mandate of every state's Department of Corrections and the Federal Bureau of Prisons, to initiate programs designed to help maintain the cohesion of the family unit of prisoners. For example, confining prisoners at prisons in the region near their homes, providing conjugal visitations for married prisoners, family/parent-children sessions, and therapy for children of the incarcerated.
11. We call for Community Service Work Furloughs as part of a re-integration program, as an act of contrition for offenses committed against the community.
12. We call for the General Assembly to revoke the Supreme Court's ruling, which held that a prisoner with an eighth grade education is sufficient enough to make him/her proficient in law, enough to represent themselves in post collateral appeals, and of which they are expected to learn in less than one year under the most adverse conditions that which every attorney within the judiciary had to study in colleges for 4-8 years in order to learn.
13. We hold for as long as the said ruling is upheld by the Supreme Court, that every county, state and federal prison must establish Para-Legal classes teaching prisoners the fundamentals of constitutional law, criminal/civil rules & procedure, legal research, and criminal appellant rules & procedure. These classes must be free to any prisoner wanting to take it.
14. We call for an equal distribution of funding for both the District Attorney Office and Public Defenders Office, so that a court-appointed attorney can properly represent his client in a criminal proceeding.
15. We assert that state's Department of Corrections must have a Community Oversight Committee, invested with the power and authority to effect change in any policy or regulation, they deem not conducive to the positive growth of prisoners or that which violate the human rights of prisoners.

We, the **Incarcerated Citizens Coalition**, representing a multitude of individuals, groups and organizations and acting as the internal division of the Human Rights Coalition make this proclamation, and call for the above enumerated tenets to be translated into legislative language to be presented as a provisional National Prisoners' Bill of Rights.

We believe that this document can/should serve as both a nexus for prisoners' solidarity and a spark to galvanize the prison movement around a National Campaign for Human Rights.

It has been said that one can determine if a society is politically advanced by observing what positions women in that society holds. Likewise, one can determine how humane and civilized a society is by observing how the society treats its prisoners.

SIGNATURES OF SUPPORT FOR AVIS LEE

We the undersigned believe Avis Lee deserves to have her life sentence commuted. Avis was the lookout during a robbery in which a man was killed. We believe that 31 years is sufficient punishment for this crime because Avis didn't pull the trigger. Because Avis committed this crime when she was 19 and this year she turned 50. Because Avis has never denied her involvement in the crime. Because Avis is sincerely remorseful. Because Avis is skilled and motivated to work to make the world a better place. We, the undersigned believe that Avis deserves a second chance.

Name	Address	From what perspective are you signing? (community member, lawyer, relation, fellow prisoner, student, church organization affiliation,...)	Phone #
Sample - Jane Doe 555 This Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15213 – Friend and Tax Payer -			412-555-1212

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

**PLEASE RETURN COMPLETED FORMS TO
CAMPAIGN FOR MEANINGFUL COMMUTATION**

3807 Melwood Avenue Pittsburgh, PA 15213 meaningfulcommutation@gmail.com
412-802-8575

THE MOVEMENT

www.brcoalition.org

LIFE SENTENCES ARE DEATH SENTENCES IN PENNSYLVANIA

Avis Lee



Avis Lee grew up in Pittsburgh. She has been in prison for thirty one years. At eighteen she was the look-out for a robbery in which someone was killed. She has taken responsibility and feels remorse. Avis has completed college degrees in Accounting and Business Management. For more than ten years she has worked as a certified braille transcriber.

Avis has an excellent record with zero misconducts for twenty years, earning her honors status housing in a progressive unit. This year Avis will turn fifty one in prison. She didn't pull the trigger. We believe she deserves a second chance.

RESTORE MEANINGFUL COMMUTATION

PENNSYLVANIA IS ONE OF ELEVEN STATES THAT SENTENCES PEOPLE TO LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE. COMMUTATION IS THE PROCESS FOR REDUCING A PRISON SENTENCE. PEOPLE SERVING LIFE SENTENCES MUST APPLY FOR COMMUTATION OF THEIR LIFE SENTENCE AS THEIR ONLY MEANS OF RELEASE. THERE IS NO SUCH THING AS PAROLE FOR LIFERS IN PA. TO BE COMMUTED YOU NEED UNANIMOUS VOTES FROM THE BOARD OF PARDONS AND TO BE GRANTED APPROVAL BY THE GOVERNOR OF PENNSYLVANIA. OVER 4,800 PEOPLE IN PA ARE SERVING LIFE THEY ARE GETTING OLDER. MEDICAL COSTS ALONE ACCOUNT FOR OVER 21 MILLION DOLLARS THIS YEAR.