

Special Edition!
America's Human Rights

FAILURES

See **World Report** page 6

**Prisoners won't be
silenced !**

**Overturn PA SB 508
page 18-23**

**The truth about U.S.
Racism & torture - in this
issue ! Page 14**

Is Water a Human
Right? page 12

THE MOVEMENT

Winter 2014
Issue #25

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

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

“ALL HUMAN BEINGS ARE BORN FREE AND EQUAL IN DIGNITY AND RIGHTS”

UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS



Photo from: Amnesty International

From The Desk of The Editor . 3

America's

Human Rights Abuses

World Report -USA
By: Human Rights Watch. . . 6-11

Is Water a Human Right?
By: Food and Water Watch . . . 12-13

Prison Conditions & Practices violate
all international treaties which the
U.S. has signed . . .
By: Bonnie Kerness, MSW . . 14-17

Abolitionist Law Center files lawsuit
against censorship statute
By: Bret Grote . . . 18-19

In Defiance of SB508

David Lee . . . 20

Bryant Arroyo . . . 22

Larry Stephenson . . . 23

Nate Butler . . . 23



Americas'
Corporate
Human
Rights Vio-
lations . . .
26-29

All Power To The People

One Perfect Tweet Calls Out
HYPROCRISY . . 30

Public Health as a Model for
Effective Change
By: Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D.
. . . 32-33

Who cares about prison violence,
By: Ronnie Polaneczky . . 34

(LET'S NOT FORGET!)
Lynne Abraham, 'Queen of Death'
. . . 35

Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist

Greetings By: Mary Anna . . . 36
Commissary Spending
By: Mama Patt . . . 37



What's The News? . 38-41

Writings of Multiplicity 42-45

Decarcerate PA! . . 46-51

THE MOVEMENT

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COVER PHOTO COMPLIMENTS OF: Suzy Subways, Jhalil Adams, and Ali Braxton.

From The Desk of The Editor

Welcome to **THE MOVEMENT** - the Human Rights movement in America

The struggle for human rights in America has been 50 years in the making. Beginning in 1964 with Minister Malcolm X's call for elevating the civil rights struggle to the higher level of human rights and taking the case of Black people before the United Nation's charter of human rights, it was followed by the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call to expand the civil rights movement to that of human rights. Since that moment in time Black people have methodically struggled to build a human rights movement in America.

In the 1970's radical black groups like the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense went to the U.N. to charge the United States with violating Black people's collective human rights.

During the 1980's and 90's a coalition of Black organizations led by the group N'COBRA took the case of Black people to the U.N., charging the United States with genocide and demanding reparation for the injuries of 300 years of forced slave labor and 150 years of post-slavery's sharecropping indentured slave system, penal slavery, lynching, and other terrorist atrocities, and for the government-sanctioned American apartheid system.

In 1996 a core group of revolutionary Black prisoners in the Pennsylvania state prison system decided to transform the National Prison Movement of the 1960's into the National Human Rights Prison Movement [and] to transform the civil rights struggle in society into a human rights struggle, by establishing human rights coalitions nationally and internationally to bring about a new political dynamic.

The 21st Century would see the spirit of Minister Malcolm X's and the Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s call for Black people to struggle for human rights made fresh.

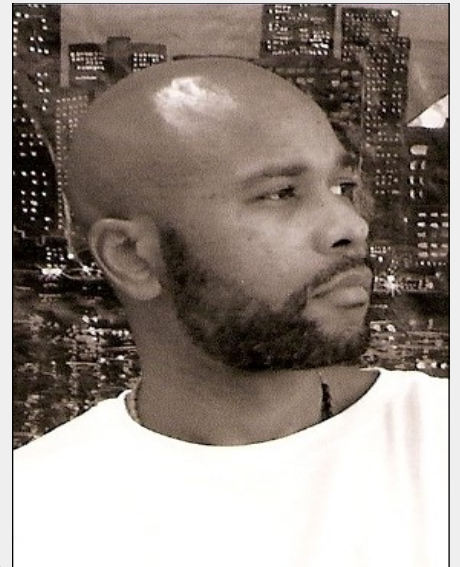
In 2005, the Black residents of Mossville, Louisiana and Mossville Environmental Action Now organization filed a petition to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) against the United States for environmental racism of discharging toxic substances in close geographic proximity to Mossville.

In 2012, California state prisoners in Pelican Bay SHU-Short Corridor teamed up with the Center for Human Rights and Constitutional Law, and filed a petition to the United Nation's Human Rights Council against the United States of America and the State of California under international laws of human rights for degrading treatment and torture of over 4,000 prisoners held in solitary confinement.

In 2013, the Malcolm X Center for Self-Determination submitted a list of issues regarding America's political prisoners at the United States Compliance with the International Convention on Civil and Political Rights 107th Session of the Human Rights Committee in Geneva, Switzerland, and demanded the immediate release of scores of political activists whom the U.S. governments' COINTELPRO operation criminalized, subjected to "show-trials", and forced to languish in prisons for the past thirty-five to forty plus years.

In November 2014, a group of activists from Chicago of the organization We Charge Genocide presented a report titled 'Police Violence Against Chicago's Youth of Color' to the United Nations Committee Against Torture 53rd session in Geneva, Switzerland. We Charge Genocide maintains that abuses and violations perpetuated by Chicago police violate the Articles of the U.N. Convention Against Torture.

In 2014 Black and White residents of Detroit, Michigan loudly protested in the streets over the city shutting off water to thousands of people, shouting "WATER IS A HUMAN RIGHT!" A U.N. Special Rapporteur issued a scathing indictment of all levels of government for violations of international human rights in allowing massive shut-offs to take place in the city of Detroit.



Bro. Shakaboona, Co-Editor
Email: Shakaboona41@gmail.com

(Continued on page 4)

In 2014 people from the Midwest part of the United States participated in a “FOOD IS A HUMAN RIGHT” People’s Assembly on August 16th at the Dominican University in Chicago.

The Malcolm X Grassroots Movement released a report titled ‘Operation Ghetto Storm: 2012 Annual Report on the Extrajudicial Killings of 313 Black People by Police, Security Guards, and Vigilantes’ which details institutional racial discrimination by police departments and genocide against Black people in America. The report provides proof of the U.S.’s violation of international laws of human rights.

Amnesty International USA recently released a report on human rights violations suffered during protests in Ferguson, Missouri documented in ‘On The Streets of America: Human Rights Abuses in Ferguson’. The report raised a range of human rights concerns in Ferguson about the right to life, the use of lethal force by police, the right to protest, and the right to freedom from institutional racial discrimination.

Africans in America are entering a new phase of struggle; a struggle for human rights. In the spirit of Minister Malcolm X and Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. let us educate ourselves about human rights, international laws of human rights, international bodies of the U.N., international judicial rules, procedure, and judicial remedies. Lets struggle to win!

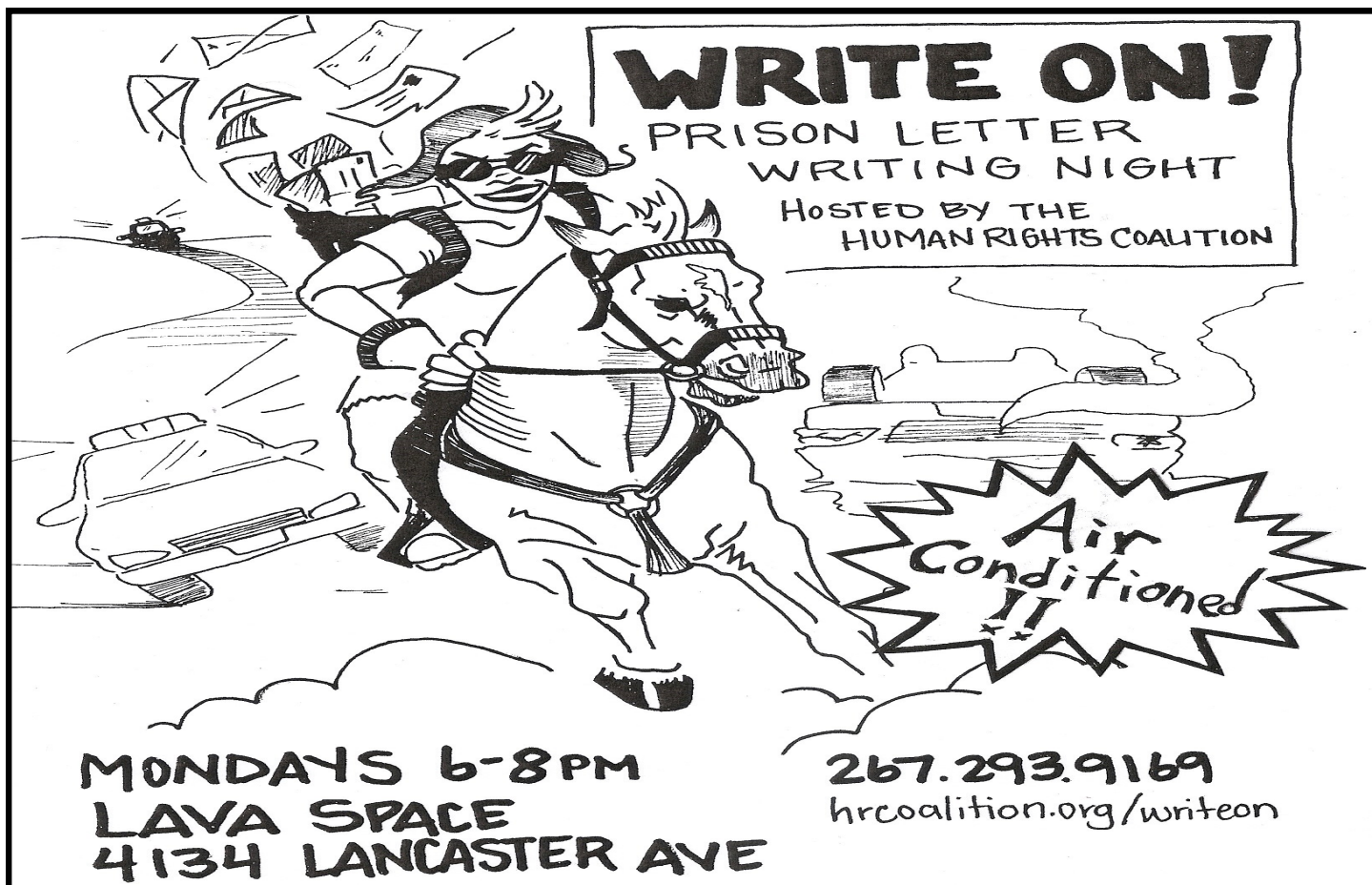
Kerry “Shakaboona” Marshall, Co-Editor
Box A/ #BE-7826
Bellefonte, PA 16823

THE SIX MAJOR HUMAN RIGHTS TREATIES

The United States human rights foreign policy “claims” to promote all major aspects of international human rights law. It has been observed that the following six human rights treaties, that include the chief principles of collective rights as it concerns minorities, are most often referred to by scholars when dealing with the concept of human rights in general. These are:

1. **International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR)**
2. **International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR)**
3. **Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights**
4. **Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide**
5. **International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (ICERD)**
6. **Convention on the Non-Applicability of Statutory Limitations to War Crimes and Crimes Against Humanity**

All six have been signed but not ratified by the United States.



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THE MOVEMENT

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PAGE 5

Winter 2014 (ISSUE # 25)

WORLD REPORT

2014 By Human Rights Watch

United States

The United States has a vibrant civil society and media that enjoy strong constitutional protections. Yet its rights record is marred by abuses related to criminal justice, immigration, national security, and drug policy. Within these areas, victims are often the most vulnerable members of society: racial and ethnic minorities, immigrants, children, the elderly, the poor, and prisoners.

Revelations in 2013 of extensive government surveillance and aggressive prosecutions of whistleblowers raised concerns about infringement of privacy rights and freedom of expression, generating a firestorm of international protest against US practices.

Federal policymakers proposed reforms to harmful longstanding immigration and sentencing laws and policies. The outcome of these initiatives was uncertain at time of writing.

A renewed commitment by President Barack Obama to close the Guantanamo Bay detention facility remained unfulfilled. Lack of transparency made it impossible to assess the implementation of promised reforms to the practice of “targeted killings” abroad, including through use of unmanned aerial drones; new information on individual strikes found instances of violations of international humanitarian and human rights law.

Harsh Sentencing

The US has the largest reported incarcerated population in the world, and by far the highest rate of imprisonment, holding 2.2 million people in adult prisons or jails as of year-end 2011. Mass incarceration reflects three decades of harsh state and federal sentencing regimes, including increased use of life and life without parole sentences, high mandatory minimum sentences, and “three strikes” laws. The Sentencing Project reported that one in nine US prisoners are serving a life sentence.

The growing number of elderly prisoners poses a serious challenge to correctional authorities: as of 2011, the latest year for which complete numbers are available, 26,136 persons aged 65 and older were incarcerated in state and federal prisons, up 62 percent in five years.

In a positive step, the US Department of Justice in August announced revisions to its rules for reviewing requests for compassionate release of elderly or disabled prisoners, making more federal inmates eligible for this rarely used mechanism.

Also in

August, US Attorney General Eric Holder instructed federal prosecutors to try to avoid charges carrying mandatory minimum sentences

for certain low-level, nonviolent drug offenders. Though welcome, this policy change still leaves many drug offenders subject to disproportionately long mandatory sentences. Legislative efforts to grant judges more discretion in such cases are under debate.

In 2013, Maryland joined 17 other states and the District of Columbia in abolishing the death penalty, but 32 states still allow it. At time of writing, 34 people had been executed in the US in 2013. North Carolina repealed its 2009 Racial Justice Act, which allowed death row prisoners to appeal their sentences on the basis of racial discrimination.

Racial Disparities in Criminal Justice

Whites, African Americans, and Latinos have comparable rates of drug use but are arrested, prosecuted, and incarcerated for drug offenses at vastly different rates. For example, African Americans are nearly four times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than whites, even though their rates of marijuana use are roughly equivalent. While only 13 percent of the US population, African Americans represent 41 percent of state prisoners, and 44 percent of federal prisoners serving time for drug offenses.

Because they are disproportionately likely to have criminal records, members of racial and ethnic minorities are more likely than whites to experience stigma and

(Continued on page 7)

Human Rights Violations Report

legal discrimination in employment, housing, education, public benefits, jury service, and the right to vote. In August, a federal court found that the “stop and frisk” policy of the New York City Police Department (NYPD) violated the rights of minorities. A disproportionate share of people “stopped and frisked” under the policy are African American or Latino, and the New York Civil Liberties Union reports that 89 percent of those stopped are innocent of any wrongdoing. The NYPD appealed the ruling.

Drug Policy Reform

In recent decades the US has spent hundreds of billions of dollars to arrest and incarcerate drug offenders in the US. Its heavy reliance on criminal laws for drug control has had serious human rights costs, including infringement of the autonomy and privacy rights of those who simply possess or use drugs.

In a welcome shift, the US Department of Justice announced in August that it would not interfere with states’ legalization of marijuana so long as states comply with certain federal priorities, such as prohibiting sale of drugs to children or transport of drugs across state lines. It also noted that a robust state regulatory approach to marijuana may prevent organized crime from benefiting from the illicit marijuana trade.

Washington and Colorado moved forward with implementation of state ballot initiatives to legalize the recreational use of marijuana, as well as to regulate its production, sale, and distribution. Twenty other US states have legalized marijuana for medical purposes.

Prison Conditions

September 2013 marked the 10-year anniversary of the passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA), which resulted in the development of national standards to detect, prevent, and punish prison rape. Implementation remains a challenge: approximately 4 percent of state and federal prison inmates and 3 percent of jail inmates report having experienced one or more incidents of sexual abuse in 2011-2012, and many incidents continue to go unreported. Transgender prisoners continue to experience high levels of violence in detention.

Many prisoners and jail inmates—including youth under age 18—are held in solitary confinement, often for weeks or months on end. In July, an estimated 30,000 inmates in California’s prison system engaged in a hunger strike

to protest conditions, including the use of solitary confinement. Prolonged solitary confinement is considered ill-treatment under international law and can amount to torture.

Poverty and Criminal Justice

Poor defendants across the country languish in pretrial detention because they are too poor to post bail. The most recent data indicates 60 percent of jail inmates—at a cost of \$9 billion a year—are confined pending trial, often because they lack the financial resources to secure their release. In 2013, the chief judge of New York supported legislative reforms that would begin to reduce the pretrial incarceration of indigent defendants.

Extremely high court fees and surcharges are also increasingly common, as cash-strapped counties and municipalities often expect their courts to pay for themselves or even tap them as sources of public revenue. The impact on poor defendants is particularly harsh.

Practices that exacerbate and even punish economic hardship are increasingly common. In Arkansas, tenants who fall behind on their rent face criminal prosecution. In states across the US, courts put hundreds of thousands of misdemeanor offenders on probation with private, for-profit companies that charge local authorities nothing for their services but collect tens of millions of dollars in fees each year from the offenders they supervise.

In August, a decade after a group of inmates’ families filed a petition challenging the exorbitant rates charged for interstate jail and prison phone calls, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) voted to cap the cost of the calls.

In cities throughout the US, homeless people are targeted and arrested under laws that prohibit loitering, sitting, and occupying public space.

Youth in the Criminal Justice System

In nearly all US jurisdictions, substantial numbers of youth offenders are tried in adult court and sentenced to serve time in adult jails and prisons.

The widespread practice of sentencing youth offenders to life without the possibility of parole is changing as states grapple with how to comply with recent US Supreme Court decisions. Separate decisions have held

(Continued on page 8)

that the sentence cannot ever be mandatory for youth offenders, nor can it be imposed on youth offenders convicted of non-homicide crimes. The Supreme Court has not yet abolished application of the sentence to juveniles, however, and youth offenders continue to receive life without parole sentences for homicide crimes. In 2012, Human Rights Watch reported that of 500 youth offenders serving life without parole, nearly every one reported physical violence or sexual abuse by inmates or corrections officers.

Youth are also sentenced to other extreme prison terms that are the functional equivalent of life without parole because the sentence exceeds an average lifespan. In September 2013, California passed a law creating a review process for youth sentenced to adult prison terms, requiring the parole board to provide a meaningful opportunity for release based on the diminished culpability of youth as compared to adults. In many cases this will mean earlier release.

Federal law requires jurisdictions to register juveniles convicted of certain sexual offenses on a national, publicly accessible online registry. Registration impacts youth offenders' access to education, housing, and employment.

The Rights of Noncitizens

There are approximately 25 million noncitizens in the US, nearly 12 million of whom are in the country without authorization.

The vast network of immigration detention centers in the US now holds about 400,000 noncitizens each year. At any given time, hundreds of detainees are held in solitary confinement. In September, US Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) announced it would limit but not ban the use of solitary confinement.

The criminal prosecution of immigration offenses, which historically had been largely dealt with through deportation and other non-criminal sanctions, continues to increase. In 2012, immigration cases constituted 41 percent of all federal criminal cases; illegal reentry is now the most prosecuted federal crime. Many of those prosecuted have minor or no criminal history and have substantial ties to the US such as US citizen family members they were seeking to rejoin when arrested.

In 2013, after years of inaction, the US Congress began debating a major overhaul of the US immigration system. In June, the Senate passed a bill that would create a path to citizenship for millions of unauthorized immigrants and allow for greater consideration of the right to family unity in some deportation decisions. If enacted into law, the bill would better align immigration enforcement and detention practices with human rights requirements, including eliminating a one-year filing deadline for asylum applicants, though it would continue to mandate the automatic deportation of noncitizens with criminal convictions, even for minor offenses. The bill calls for an additional \$47 billion to be spent on enforcement efforts along the US-Mexico border, including a major increase in federal prosecutions of immigration offenses and substantial increases in penalties for illegal entry and reentry.

"Secure Communities" and other federal programs involving local law enforcement agencies continued to play an important role in deportations. The federal government has portrayed these programs as focused on dangerous criminals, but most immigrants deported through Secure Communities are non-criminal or lower level offenders. These programs also exacerbate distrust of police in immigrant communities.

Connecticut and California, along with the cities of Newark and New Orleans, have joined a growing number of states and localities that have placed limits on local law enforcement participation in Secure Communities, largely by declining to hold people without charge for federal immigration authorities if they have no or minor criminal history.

At time of writing, the House of Representatives had not made any serious progress on comprehensive immigration reform.

Labor Rights

Hundreds of thousands of children work on American farms. The 1938 Fair Labor Standards Act exempts child farmworkers from the minimum age and maximum hour requirements that apply to other working children. As a result, child farmworkers often work 10 or more hours a day and risk pesticide exposure, nicotine poisoning, heat illness, injuries, life-long disabilities, and death. Seventy-five percent of children under 16 who died from work-related injuries in 2012 worked in agriculture. Federal protections that do exist are often not enforced.

(Continued on page 9)

Congress has still not closed a legal loophole allowing children to do hazardous work in agriculture starting at age 16; hazardous work is prohibited in all other jobs until age 18.

Millions of US workers, including parents of infants, are harmed by weak or non-existent laws on paid leave, breastfeeding accommodation, and discrimination against workers with family responsibilities. Inadequate leave contributes to delaying babies' immunizations, postpartum depression, and other health problems, and causes mothers to stop breastfeeding early. In 2013, several federal bills were introduced to improve national work-family policies; Rhode Island joined California and New Jersey in establishing state paid family leave insurance; and several cities adopted paid sick day laws.

In September, the Obama administration issued a regulation ending the exclusion of certain homecare workers from minimum wage and hour protections. These workers, most of whom are women, including many immigrants and minorities, provide essential services to people with disabilities and the elderly.

Health Policy

Sixteen states have refused to expand Medicaid services under the Affordable Care Act, impeding the right to health for the poor, African Americans, and other groups with limited access to medical care.

HIV infections in the US continue to disproportionately affect minority communities, men who have sex with men, and transgender women. Many states continue to undermine human rights and public health through restrictions on sex education, inadequate legal protections for HIV-positive persons, resistance to harm-reduction programs such as syringe exchanges, and failure to fund HIV prevention and care. Harmful criminal justice measures include laws that target people living with HIV for enhanced penalties and police use of condom possession as evidence of prostitution.

The Rights of Women and Girls

In February, Congress renewed the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA), the primary federal law providing legal protection and services to victims of domestic and sexual violence and stalking. The new law includes enhanced protections for immigrant victims; lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) victims; and victims on tribal lands.

In January, a Human Rights Watch report detailed the inadequacy of police response to sexual assaults in the District of Columbia, leading to reforms in that police department's approach to these cases.

Emergency contraception became available without a doctor's prescription to customers of all ages in 2013. According to the Guttmacher Institute, states adopted 43 restrictions on access to abortion in the first half of 2013. These restrictions took a variety of forms, including requiring that abortion providers have admitting privileges at local hospitals, that patients undergo pre-abortion ultrasounds, and banning abortion after a specified number of weeks since the woman's last menstrual period.

In January 2013, the Department of Defense lifted a longstanding ban on women serving in direct combat roles.

Military women and men continue to face high levels of sexual violence. The government estimates that 26,000 sexual assaults took place in the military in 2012, and Defense Department data suggests that 62 percent of those who report such assaults experience retaliation.

Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity

In June, the US Supreme Court invalidated two of the most egregious anti-LGBT initiatives in the country. In *United States v. Windsor*, the court struck down section 3 of the 1996 Defense of Marriage Act (DOMA), which prohibited federal recognition of state-approved same-sex marriages. In *Hollingsworth v. Perry*, the court dismissed an appeal by proponents of Proposition 8, a 2008 California state referendum that would have revoked the right of same-sex couples to marry. The court has not yet ruled on the constitutionality of state laws that prohibit same-sex marriage.

Counterterrorism and Surveillance

The indefinite detention without charge or trial of detainees at Guantanamo Bay entered its twelfth year, with 162 detainees remaining at the facility. Eighty-two of them have been cleared for transfer to home or third countries by an inter-agency task force since 2009. Though President Barack Obama renewed his pledge to close the prison at Guantanamo in May, at time of writing his administration had only transferred eight detainees from the facility since 2011. Two of them were repeat-

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riated to Algeria in August, and two more were repatriated to Algeria in December.

Early in 2013, several detainees at Guantanamo began a hunger strike; at its peak, 106 reportedly participated in some fashion, with 45 being tube-fed twice a day. Medical and human rights groups wrote letters of protest noting that force-feeding of competent prisoners was a violation of medical ethics and human rights norms.

The administration continued to use fundamentally flawed military commissions at Guantanamo to prosecute detainees. Pre-trial hearings moved slowly in the only two active commission cases: one against five men accused of plotting the September 11, 2001, attacks and another against a man accused of plotting the bombing of the USS Cole in Yemen in October 2000. The commission's inability to establish rules protecting attorney-client access and communications, among other things, hampered progression of the cases. The prosecution has announced it intends to bring charges against only seven other Guantanamo detainees.

Long after the process was set to begin, the administration began reviewing the cases of Guantanamo detainees not slated for release or facing active charges, an important step towards closing the facility. But guidelines for the reviews fail to safeguard detainees' basic rights—including access to classified information where such information provides the basis for their detention, the right to be present throughout proceedings, and meaningful access to counsel.

In late 2012, the Senate Select Committee on Intelligence completed a comprehensive study of the CIA's post-September 11, 2001 secret detention and interrogation program, which ended in 2009. At time of writing, the report remained classified.

In May, President Obama announced a policy for targeted killings abroad requiring that the target be a continuing, imminent threat to US persons and that there should be near certainty that no civilians would be harmed in the strike. President Obama said the US government preference is to detain rather than kill. The full policy remains classified and no information on compliance has been provided. The administration has also not provided the full legal basis for its targeted killings under US and international law.

In August, Secretary of State John Kerry stated that drone strikes in Pakistan would end "very soon," though he provided no exact timeline.

Classified documents leaked to journalists by former National Security Agency (NSA) contractor Edward Snowden showed that the US has secretly used surveillance powers, granted by Congress to prevent terror attacks, to systematically capture huge streams of data, including emails, Internet searches, phone call information, and other records, from companies and communications nodes located both in the US and abroad, sometimes with the assistance of foreign governments. Most of what it intercepts comes from people not suspected of any wrongdoing, and the government retains substantial amounts of data for various periods of time. Judicial and congressional oversight of the surveillance is minimal and secretive.

People in the US have some legal protection of their privacy interest in the contents of their communications, but not in the "metadata" or details of communications usually shared with companies or other third parties (such as date, time, location, sender, and recipient). US officials assert that collection of communications does not invade privacy until the data is examined, or "queried." US law on surveillance offers little or no privacy protections for non-Americans outside the United States.

Disclosures in 2013 revealed that US officials may also be systematically undermining international encryption standards and security practices adopted by Internet companies, weakening the online security of all Internet users.

Prosecutors filed charges against Snowden under the Espionage Act. US law does not provide adequate legal protections or defenses for whistleblowers who disclose national security or intelligence information to the public, even on matters of pressing public importance. The Obama administration tried to block attempts by Snowden to obtain asylum in various countries. Snowden ultimately obtained temporary asylum in Russia.

In August, a US court martial sentenced Pfc. Chelsea (previously Bradley) Manning to 35 years in prison on Espionage Act and other charges for leaking hundreds of thousands of secret government records to Wikileaks for publication, including some that showed evidence of wrongdoing or possible war crimes. Before the trial,

(Continued on page 11)

Manning had already pled guilty to charges amounting to 20 years' imprisonment.

In January, US lawmakers discussed whether to send military assistance to Syrian opposition forces in that country's civil war. In February, the administration said that it would begin sending non-lethal aid, including food and medical supplies, to the opposition. In September, the US appeared ready to conduct strikes against Syria in response to the Syrian government's use of chemical weapons near Damascus that killed more than 300 people. Obama had previously indicated that use of chemical weapons in Syria constituted a "red line" that would prompt US action in the conflict.

Obama sought congressional authorization for US military engagement in Syria, but a United Nations Security Council-supported agreement to place Syria's chemical weapons under international control indefinitely delayed a congressional vote.

Burma became an important part of Obama's "pivot" toward Asia, with Burma seeking to lessen its reliance on China. The US promoted greater political reform in the country and encouraged US investment in Burma, subject to human rights reporting requirements that went into effect in May. In September, the US restricted military assistance to Burma in light of child soldiers concerns.

Following the July overthrow of President Mohammed Morsi in Egypt, the US condemned the interim military government for declaring a state of emergency and for violations against civilians, including Muslim Brotherhood supporters. In October 2013, the US suspended some military and economic assistance but did so because the interim government was failing to move the country toward democracy, not because of the ongoing abuses or lack of accountability.

The US continued to play a pivotal role in mobilizing the UN Human Rights Council to respond to egregious human rights violations, including in Sri Lanka, Iran, and North Korea.

Human Rights Watch
350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor
New York, NY 10118-3299 USA
Tel: 1-(212) 290-4700

Charles & Linda Switzer

Also thank you to those who volunteer your time to label, pack and mail. Peace & Blessings to you All.

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Yes We Can: Why Obama Must Put Human Rights First and Sup- port the Right to Water

Background: The Human Right to Water

For more than a decade, water justice groups have been calling for legal recognition of the human right to water at the United Nations (UN) — as well as at national and local levels — in order to ensure access to safe water for billions of people.

Nearly two billion people live in water-stressed areas and three billion have no running water within a kilometer of their homes. Every eight seconds a child dies of a water-borne disease that would be preventable with access to safe water and adequate sanitation. According to a recent World Bank report, by 2030, global demand for water will exceed supply by 40 percent.

A UN declaration on the human right to water would give all people equal access to “sufficient, safe, acceptable, physically accessible and affordable water for personal and domestic uses.”

International norms set by UNICEF and the World Health Organization define this as a 20 liter daily minimum (5.2 gallons), increased to 50 liters per day when including bathing and laundry needs.

Why is the Right to Water So Controversial?

In order to protect the quality of life and guide policies of equality and social justice, the UN legally recognizes certain inalienable rights; for example, the rights to food and shelter.

Passing a UN resolution on the right to water would establish the framework for valuing water in the context of human, social and cultural rights, rather than as a commodity. It would set an example for state governments to replicate in national laws—a critical precedent for a world facing population growth, climate change and a growing middle class, all factors that strongly impact water usage.

No one should ever be denied water for basic living needs because of an inability to pay. Without a formal recognition of the right to water, it will continue to be treated as a commodity to be bought, sold, and managed for private gain instead of public good.

It is often incorrectly assumed that recognizing water as a human right forces governments to provide free water to its

citizens or to the citizens of other countries.

Why Has the U.S. Government Not Supported the Right to Water?

The U.S. has not supported the human right to water, and has a history of voting against social and cultural rights when they conflict with economic interests. The government argues that General Comment 15, which provides guidelines on the interpretation of the right to water under Articles 11 and 12 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, is not legally binding and therefore does not constitute UN recognition of water as a human right.

The U.S. stood alone in opposition to the Rights of Children and the Right to Development. Likewise, in the 2007 vote on the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, 143 Member States voted in favor, 11 abstained and four — Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the United States — voted against the text.

At every World Water Forum — the largest global water event held every three years — a ministerial resolution is produced by consensus. The 2009 forum concluded without consensus because of a language debate over inclusion of the human right to water. Bolivia, Uruguay, Spain and several other countries lobbied strongly for inclusion, only to be blocked by the U.S., Canada, Egypt and Brazil.

U.S. Citizens Support the Right to Water

In contrast to the anti-rights position of the U.S. government in international forums, U.S. municipalities have begun enacting right to water resolutions at the local and state level. In 2006, the Detroit City Council passed a resolution declaring the right to water and preventing water shut-offs for low-income people. Numerous cities and states have passed laws preventing water shut-offs for low-income or elderly residents, particularly during winter months.

Both Massachusetts and Pennsylvania have explicitly recognized the right to water in their state constitutions. In 2009, California passed a right to water bill that Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger vetoed.

While municipalities and states in the U.S. are increasingly moving to pass resolutions recognizing the human right to water, the federal government continues to block them in global forums. It is time for the Obama Administration to break from the unjust and narrow policies of previous administrations and bring its policies into alignment with the American people.

Conclusion

Without support from the U.S. government, the international community is unlikely to reach a consensus on the human right to water. President Obama, who was elected into office on the motto, “Change We Can Believe In,” has the opportunity to be a human rights leader by swinging his administration’s support behind a resolution. More and

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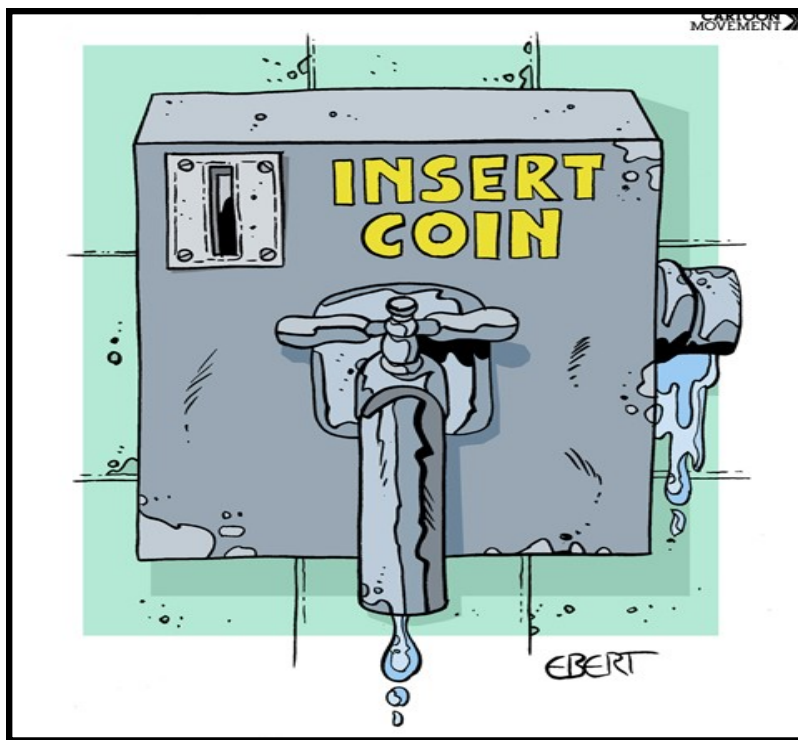
(Continued from page 12)

more people are recognizing that water is not a commodity, but rather a valuable engine for human development in an increasingly water-stressed world.

While the establishment of water as a human right is necessary and critical, it is also insufficient in providing water for all. Beyond formal recognition, countries must work towards public water systems that are transparently and democratically managed and include citizen participation at all levels of service.

There is absolutely enough water in the world to meet human requirements for health and safety. The only thing missing is the collective political will.

From: Foodandwaterwatch.org



Artwork By: Enrico Bertuccioli

Water Privation

Is drinking water a fundamental human right? Nestlé, currently the leading producer of bottled water, argues that water is a food product with a market value.

International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights

Article 11

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for himself and his family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to the continuous improvement of living conditions. The States Parties will take appropriate steps to ensure the realization of this right, recognizing to this effect the essential importance of international co-operation based on free consent.
2. The States Parties to the present Covenant, recognizing the fundamental right of everyone to be free from hunger, shall take, individually and through international co-operation, the measures, including specific programmes, which are needed:
 - (a) To improve methods of production, conservation and distribution of food by making full use of technical and scientific knowledge, by disseminating knowledge of the principles of nutrition and by developing or reforming agrarian systems in such a way as to achieve the most efficient development and utilization of natural resources;
 - (b) Taking into account the problems of both food-importing and food-exporting countries, to ensure an equitable distribution of world food supplies in relation to need.

Article 12

1. The States Parties to the present Covenant recognize the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
2. The steps to be taken by the States Parties to the present Covenant to achieve the full realization of this right shall include those necessary for:
 - (a) The provision for the reduction of the stillbirth-rate and of infant mortality and for the healthy development of the child;
 - (b) The improvement of all aspects of environmental and industrial hygiene;
 - (c) The prevention, treatment and control of epidemic, endemic, occupational and other diseases;
 - (d) The creation of conditions which would assure to all medical service and medical attention in the event of sickness.

More found at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CESCR.aspx>

Human Rights Violations Report

The conditions and practices that the imprisoned testify to are in violation of The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Convention Against Torture and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination – all international treaties which the US has signed.

By Bonnie Kerness



By Bonnie Kerness, MSW
Coordinator, American Friends Service Committee
Prison Watch Program
Princeton University
Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs/Bernstein Art Gallery
Princeton, New Jersey

My early observations of oppression in this country began when I was 12 watching television and seeing children of African descent my age in the South being hosed by police and bitten by dogs for trying to go to school. I spent ten years in the civil rights movement, then moved north and began working with the American Friends Service Committee, the social action arm of the Religious Society of Friends, the Quakers, who have a 300-year history of commitment in dealing with human rights issues with prisoners. I serve as a human rights advocate on behalf of men, women and children in prison throughout the US, coordinating Prison Watch for the AFSC in Newark. Many of the men, women and children that I take testimony from call their imprisonment “the war at home”.

In the criminal justice system, the politics of the police, the politics of the courts, the politics of the prison system and the politics of the death penalty are a manifestation of the racism and classism which governs the lives of all of us. Every part of the US criminal justice system falls most heavily on the poor and people of color, including the fact that slavery is mandated and institutionalized in prisons by the 13th Amendment of the US constitution, which reads “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States”. While most of us don’t give this amendment a second thought, it is at the core of how the labor

(Continued on page 15)

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

(Continued from page 14)

of slaves was transformed into what people in prison call neo-slavery. The use of prison labor occurs throughout the country and is an integral part of what we have come to know as the “Prison Industrial Complex”. If you call the NJ Bureau of Tourism you are likely talking to a prisoner at the Edna Mahon Correctional Institution for Women who is earning 23 cents an hour. Involuntary forced labor in prisons is every day real for the more than 2 million men and women.

African descended, Latino and Aboriginal young people tell us that the police feel like an occupation army in their communities. They speak about school systems being used to feed young people of color into youth detention, jails and prisons where those bodies are suddenly worth a fortune. People have said to me that the criminal justice system doesn’t work. I’ve come to believe exactly the opposite – that it works perfectly, just as slavery did, as a matter of economic and political policy. How is it that a 15 year old in Newark who the country labels worthless to the economy, who has no hope of getting a job or affording college – can suddenly generate 20 to 30 thousand dollars a year once trapped in the criminal justice system? The expansion of prisons, parole, probation, the court and police systems has resulted in an enormous bureaucracy which has been a boon to everyone from architects, to food vendors – all with one thing in common – a pay check earned by keeping human beings in cages. The criminalization of poverty is a lucrative business and we have replaced the social safety net with a dragnet.

There is no contradiction that prisons are both hugely expensive and very profitable. Just like with military spending, the cost is public and the profits are private. Privatization in the Prison Industrial Complex includes companies which run prisons for profit while at the same time gleaning profits from forced labor. In the State of New Jersey, food and medical services are provided by corporations with a profit motive. One recent explosion of private industry is the partnering of Corrections Corporation of America with the federal government to detain close to 1 million undocumented people. Using public monies to enrich private citizens is the history of capitalism at its most exploitive.

I want to share the voice of one young woman who said, “I was 12 so they put me in isolation. I heard children screaming. I saw boys get strung out on meds. They make you take sleeping stuff in needles. They used pepper spray on this girl who was fighting directly in her mouth and she couldn’t breathe. They kept hitting her. We told them that she had asthma, but they wouldn’t listen”.

The US spends less than any other industrialized nation on nurturing its children. In spite of dismal poverty rates, vio-

lent juvenile crime has been declining for years. Yet at least 43 states have passed laws making it easier for children to be tried as adults. We can’t escape the similarities with chattel slavery here as well. Not only are these mostly black and brown children taken from their families, they lose any chance for a future of their own choosing.

The voices of adult prisoners are haunting: a social worker at Utah State Prison wrote “John was directed to leave the strip cell and a urine soaked pillow case was placed over his head like a hood. He was walked, shackled and hooded to a different cell where he was placed in a device called “the chair”....he was kept in the chair for over 30 hours, being forced to urinate and defecate on his own hands which were tucked under him”.

Women who contact the AFSC describe conditions of confinement which include enduring sexual abuse by staff with one woman saying, “That was not part of my sentence to perform oral sex with officers”. Some of the most poignant letters I get are from prisoners writing on behalf of the mentally ill – like the man in California who spread feces over his body. The guards’ response to this was to put him in a bath so hot it boiled 30% of the skin off him.

These past years have been full of complaints from prisoners and their families, describing inhumane conditions including cold, filth, callous medical care, extended isolation often lasting years, use of devices of torture, harassment, brutality and racism. I have received vivid descriptions and drawings of four and five point restraints, restraint hoods, restraint belts, restraint beds, stun grenades, stun guns, stun belts, spit hoods, tethers, and waist and leg chains. Often the worst torment people testify to is the psychological assault of “no touch torture” which can include humiliation, sleep deprivation, sensory disorientation, extreme light or dark, extreme cold or heat, extended solitary confinement including other forms of intentional placement situations. This is a systematic attack on all human stimuli.

In the mid 80’s the American Friends Service Committee received a letter from Ojore Lutalo who had been placed in the Management Control Unit at Trenton State Prison. He asked what a control unit was, why he was in there and how long he would have to stay. Some of the answers to those questions would unfold over the next quarter of a century that we monitored and advocated on behalf of Ojore.

“How do you describe desperation to someone who is not desperate?” began one letter to me from Ojore, who went on to depict everyone in the Control Unit being awakened by guards dressed in riot gear holding barking dogs at 1 a.m. every other morning. Once awakened, the prisoners were forced to strip, gather their belongings while feeling the dogs straining at their leashes snapping at their private parts. He described being terrorized, intimidated, and the

(Continued on page 16)

humiliation of being naked not knowing whether the masked guards were male or female. If we think back to slavery and to images of the civil rights movement we know that dogs have been used as a device of torture for hundreds of years in the US.

Ojore spent 22 years day after day, week after week and year after year in NJ State Prison's Management Control Unit, without being charged with any infraction. I challenge my intern students to spend four hours in their bathroom, and they don't make it. Ojore not only made it, he managed to create, mentor and teach through what he called "propaganda", which he would send out to me to share. His social and political commentary on prisons, what was happening to him, and his refusal to be silenced by the horror of his circumstances taught all of us. Ojore's process of creating collages was to assemble headlines, pictures and graphics from what few newspapers, magazines and catalogues he was allowed. No scissors were permitted in his cage, so he folded, tore and glued the pieces of paper that formed his commentary.

Prolonged solitary confinement in the form of control units, security threat group management units, special needs units and communications management units, etc. has been a long time concern for many prison activists, on both sides of the walls. Control units surfaced during the 70's when many in my generation genuinely believe we were free to dissent politically. It was during these tumultuous years of the civil rights era when large numbers of activists found themselves in US prisons. Sensory deprivation was used with imprisoned members of the Black Panther Party, Puerto Rican Independentistas, members of the American Indian Movement, the Chicano movement, white anti-imperialists, civil rights activists and members of the Black Liberation Army. In later years, we found jail house lawyers, Islamic militants and prisoner activists placed in extended isolation.

Current efforts to expand the solitary confinement population involve the alleged spread of gang problems in the US. The AFSC began receiving letters from people in street organizations placed in units called Security Threat Group Management Units, complaining of extreme isolation, brutality and racial profiling. The physical and chemical abuse in gang units is infamous to those of us who monitor the torment that these young people of color experience daily. The progression of the use of isolation is most recently known as "Communications Management Units", which are specifically designed to restrict the communications of imprisoned Muslims with their families, the media and the outside world. This treatment of Islamic prisoners is replicated in US secret prisons throughout the world where almost all of those kept in such places are people of color.

The transition from slavery to Black Codes to convict leasing to the Jim Crow laws to the wars on poverty, and political activism has been a seamless evolution of political and social incapacitation of the poor and people of color. The sophisticated fascism of the practices of stop and frisk, charging people in inner cities with "wandering", driving and walking while black, zip code racism – these and many other de facto practices all serve to keep our prisons full. In a system where over 60% of those who are imprisoned are people of color, where 58% of African youth are sent to adult prisons; where black and brown women are 69% more likely to be imprisoned, the concept of color blindness doesn't exist. Over 40 years ago, George Jackson noted: "The ultimate expression of law is not order – it's prison. There are hundreds and hundreds of prisons, and thousands and thousands of laws, yet there is no social order, no social peace....the law and everything that interlocks with it was constructed for poor, desperate people like me". Despite years of legislative work, laws have changed nothing for the better. We now have more repressive laws, more societal surveillance and more tyrannical prisons.

In a system where 95% of prisoners return to our communities, the impact of these practices is felt far beyond prisons. Dealing with these issues of cruelty aren't just a matter of human decency. Serious public health issues concerning prisoners coming out abound with mental and physical issues, including Hepatitis C, Tuberculosis, HIV, mental illness and symptoms related to post traumatic stress disorder. For more than 25 years, I have counselled people re-entering society from prisons, jails and youth detention facilities. The prognosis for staying out of prison is poor with over 60% of people returning. Prisons are often traumatizing places in the lack of feeling, concern and opportunities for self-improvement. Complex issues of reunification of families at the same time as learning how to build a life make re-entry an incredibly difficult period. How do you teach someone to rid themselves of degradation? How long does it take to teach people to feel safe, a sense of empowerment in a world where they often come home emotionally and physically damaged and unemployable? There are many reasons that ex-prisoners do not make it – paramount among them is that they are not supposed to succeed.

The conditions and practices that the imprisoned testify to are in violation of The UN International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the UN Convention Against Torture and the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination – all international treaties which the US has signed. US prison practices also fit the United Nations definition of genocide, which with this country has a long history. If we dig deeper into US criminal justice practices, the political function they serve is inescapable. Police, the courts, the prison system and the death penalty

(Continued on page 17)

all serve as social control mechanisms. The economic function they serve is equally chilling. Just as in the era of chattel slavery, there is a class of people dependent on bodies of color as a source for income. The Department of Corrections is more than a set of institutions. It is also a state of mind. That state of mind led to Abu Ghraib, Bagram, Guantanamo, and what is going on in US prisons right this moment. You cannot give me a reason for the testimonies of the men, women and children that come into my life every single day. You cannot give me a reason for what happened to Ojore. It has been one of the privileges of my life to know both Ojore and Judy Vazquez who had the courage to reach outside the prison walls to testify what was happening to them.

I've been part of the struggle for civil and human rights for over 45 years. My soul is haunted by what I read in my daily mail. We need to alter the very core of every system that slavery, white supremacy and poverty has given birth to, especially the criminal justice system. The US must stop violating the human rights of men, woman and children. We need to decriminalize poverty, mental illness and in

many cases, homosexuality. We must alter the 13th Amendment and change the racial and economic profiling of arrest and sentencing practices, and stop the use of "no touch", physical and chemical torture.

The AFSC has always recognized the existence and continued expansion of the penal system as a profound spiritual crisis, one that allows children to be demonized. It is a crisis which legitimizes torture, isolation and the abuse of power. It is a crisis which extends beyond prisons into school and judicial systems. I know each time we send a child to bed hungry that is violence. That wealth concentrated in the hands of a few at the expense of many is violence, that the denial of dignity based on race, class or sexual preference is violence. And that poverty and prisons are a form of state-manifested violence. *Until we recognize that the system's bottom line is social control and creating a business from bodies of color and the poor, there can be no societal healing from what many consider this domestic war. We need to rekindle a national movement against torture and prisons among people who dare to believe that over 2 million men, women and children need not be imprisoned to make the rest of us feel safe.*

International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination

Article 2.

States Parties condemn racial discrimination and undertake to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating racial discrimination in all its forms and promoting understanding among all races, and, to this end:

- (a) Each State Party undertakes to engage in no act or practice of racial discrimination against persons, groups of persons or institutions and to end sure that all public authorities and public institutions, national and local, shall act in conformity with this obligation;

Article 5.

In compliance with the fundamental obligations laid down in article 2 of this Convention, States Parties undertake to prohibit and to eliminate racial discrimination in all its forms and to guarantee the right of everyone, without distinction as to race, colour, or national or ethnic origin, to equality before the law, notably in the enjoyment of the following rights:

- (a) The right to equal treatment before the tribunals and all other organs administering justice;
- (b) The right to security of person and protection by the State against violence or bodily harm, whether inflicted by government officials or by any individual group or institution;

Article 6.

States Parties shall assure to everyone within their jurisdiction effective protection and remedies, through the competent national tribunals and other State institutions, against any acts of racial discrimination which violate his human rights and fundamental freedoms contrary to this Convention, as well as the right to seek from such tribunals just and adequate reparation or satisfaction for any damage suffered as a result of such discrimination.

... More found at: <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CERD.aspx>

Lawsuit seeks to invalidate outgoing PA Governor's censorship statute

*Prisoners, human rights advocates, scholars, and media sue to prevent enforcement of
"Silence Mumia Law"*

Bret Grote, Legal Director, Abolitionist Law Center

On November 8, 2014, a lawsuit challenging a Pennsylvania censorship law intended to silence Mumia Abu-Jamal and others convicted of personal injury crimes was filed, less than one month after outgoing Governor Corbett signed the bill into law as part of his failed re-election campaign. The law was promoted and passed with the explicit intent of silencing Mumia Abu-Jamal, though the terms of the new statute are so broad as to encompass anybody convicted of a personal injury crime.

The Abolitionist Law Center, Amistad Law Project, and the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center are representing Mumia Abu-Jamal, Prison Radio, Educators for Mumia Abu-Jamal, Kerry "Shakaboona" Marshall, Robert L. Holbrook, Donnell Palmer, Anthony Chance and Human Rights Coalition in a lawsuit against Attorney General Kathleen Kane and Philadelphia District Attorney Seth Williams that was filed in the Middle District of Pennsylvania.

Senate Bill 508 (which has now become 18 P.S. § 11.1304) allows the Attorney General, county District Attorneys, and victims of personal injury crimes to bring a lawsuit in civil court against the person convicted of the personal injury crime to enjoin conduct that "perpetuates the continuing effect of the crime on the victim". The actions that could prompt a lawsuit include "conduct which causes a temporary or permanent state of mental anguish."

The law violates the U.S. Constitution in multiple ways:

- It is overbroad in violation of the First Amendment since it encompasses a substantial amount of lawful speech could cause "mental anguish" and therefore be censored under the law;
- It is void for vagueness, as it provides no guidance as to what type of conduct or speech may violate the law, in violation of the Fourteenth Amendment's due process clause;
- It discriminates against speech based on the identity of the speaker in violation of the First Amendment;
- It censors speech based on its content, when that content causes "mental anguish," also in violation of the First Amendment;

It places standard-less, discretionary authority in those who have been victims of personal-injury crimes as to when a lawsuit may be filed, and the same standard-less discretionary authority in a judge as to when an injunction may be issued, which enables arbitrary censorship in violation of the First Amendment.

The law was passed as a response to Mumia Abu-Jamal giving a prerecorded commencement speech to a graduating class at his alma mater, Goddard College. Abu-Jamal has spent 33 years in prison, 30 of which were in solitary confinement on death row after being convicted at a 1982 trial that Amnesty International said "failed to meet minimum international standards safeguarding the fairness of legal proceedings."

On October 16th, days after Mumia Abu-Jamal's prerecorded commencement speech was played for graduates at Goddard College in Vermont, the Pennsylvania House passed Senate Bill 508 by a unanimous vote of 197-0. The bill was passed in the Pennsylvania Senate the next day (37-11) and Governor Corbett signed it into law on October 21st, 16 days after Abu-Jamal's commencement speech. More than 95% of the state legislature made themselves willing lap dogs for the Fraternal Order of Police, obediently surrendering their votes for a flagrantly unconstitutional law because the FOP snapped their fingers.

Maureen Faulkner, the widow of the Philadelphia police officer whose murder Abu-Jamal was framed for, staged a media campaign in support of the legislation, making it clear that she wants to take away Abu-Jamal's constitutional rights

(Continued on page 19)

altogether. “The only thing I would want to hear from Mumia Abu-Jamal is him admitting and confessing to my husband’s murder,” she told the press. “Thirty-two years later the Faulkner family, my family, and I, have to endure the pain of him being able to speak in public and having rights. Having a murderer, a radical, and someone who hates America to speak with them I think is so wrong.”

These statements make clear that Faulkner suffers “mental anguish” simply by Abu-Jamal speaking in public and having rights, and that she would readily use this statute to censor Abu-Jamal because he has maintained his innocence, and is a political dissident.

Contrary to her wishes, however, there is no “remorselessness exception” to the First Amendment.

“How can the state’s legislators pass and politicians sign the recent law described as the ‘Muzzle Mumia Act’?” said Mumia Abu-Jamal. “They can’t. At least not constitutionally. In order to do so they had to knowingly and willingly violate both the U.S. and state constitutions and their very oaths of office.”

“This is not the first time Pennsylvania has tried to silence Mumia,” said Noelle Hanrahan of Prison Radio. “The Department of Corrections has punished Mumia for speaking publicly and eliminated in-person broadcast media visits with all prisoners in response pressure from the Fraternal Order of Police.” In November 1996, the DOC responded to FOP pressure by eliminating in-person broadcast media visits with all prisoners.

In May 1994, a regular series of commentaries by Abu-Jamal were planned for broadcast by National Public Radio program All Things Considered. NPR fired Abu-Jamal after having its funding threatened on the floor of the U.S. Senate. The Department of Corrections punished Abu-Jamal for violating a prison rule that forbade prisoners from conducting a business or profession. The Third Circuit found that enforcing the rule against Abu-Jamal would cause him irreparable harm under the First Amendment.

“The Pennsylvania legislature has targeted Mumia Abu-Jamal and in the process swept up a whole host of people in prison and people who have come home,” said Nikki Grant, Policy Director of Amistad Law Project. “The fact that this bill is even on the books makes it less likely that people who have been convicted of personal injury crimes will speak out publicly. These are the people who are already most marginalized in our society.”

Plaintiffs Robert Saleem Holbrook and Kerry Shakaboona Marsahall are both imprisoned child lifers and Human Rights Coalition members who are regular contributors to *The Movement*. Articles written by or quoting Holbrook have been published in the *Philadelphia Sunday Sun*, *Impacto Latin Newspaper*, the *Philadelphia City Paper*, the *Philadelphia Metro*, the Philly Independent Media Center, the *Las Vegas Weekly*, the *San Francisco Bay View*, *The Guardian*, the *Philadelphia Tribune*, and *The Defenestrator* online newspaper. Shakaboona has become a regular contributor to Prison Radio, recording more than a dozen radio commentaries this year.

Under the new censorship law, both Saleem and Shakaboona could face arbitrary censorship, be forced to pay the other side’s attorney fees, and be targeted for criticizing the widespread, systemic human rights violations within the criminal legal and prison systems.

The Human Rights Coalition, another plaintiff to the lawsuit, is consistently critical of human rights violations within the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and is comprised of prisoners, prisoners’ family members, formerly incarcerated people, and community activists. “Human Rights Coalition utilizes the voices, input, and leadership of people in prison in all of our work,” said Patricia Vickers of Human Rights Coalition. “We also document prison abuse and are concerned that this law will make people fearful of reporting abuse.”

This latest attack on the constitutional rights of former and current prisoners occurred in the wake of the August uprising against police terrorism and the murder of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri. It should be understood in that context as well. The Fraternal of Police are once again attempting to use Mumia Abu-Jamal to further a national agenda, this time to reset the propaganda line that police are law-abiding and just enforcers of a fair social order who are dedicated to protecting the public from violent criminals. Increasingly, people are not buying it, and the role of the police as front-line enforcers in a system of American apartheid is being challenged in waves of escalating protests.

This latest effort to silence Mumia and intimidate those who speak out against police terrorism has met with pushback, as we beat them into court and used this latest attack to mobilize people inside and outside the prisons in Pennsylvania and beyond. As a generation of young people take to the streets to challenge a system that is sinking deeper into an irrevocable crisis of legitimacy, the contributions from those held captive in the prisons of this empire are more crucial than ever, and we will continue to resist and defeat any attempts by the police state to silence them.

Rights of the Condemned

Recently I read the article written by Dom Giordano in the *Philadelphia Daily News* (10/15/14) in reference to the radio broadcast of Mumia Abu Jamal's commencement address for Goddard College. In response to this program, Pennsylvania State Representative Mike Vereb introduced legislation to further reduce the first amendment and human rights of those of us imprisoned in Pennsylvania. It appears as if Mr. Giordano has been living in some sort of twisted fantasy world over the last thirty years of the massive prison build up in the United States. I say this because there have been many informative and insightful books written to cause a fair-minded person to understand why first amendment and human rights are so germane, even for those of us who have been convicted of crimes and condemned in the eyes of those unable to view our situation with an unbiased mind. Many people who have unfortunately been convicted of crimes are actually innocent, but due to many disadvantages presented to impoverished and politically disconnected criminal defendants in this country, thousands of people languish in prison. Many of these condemned souls are here because of reasons not of their own making. Again, many books have been written to prove this point, however, some people just refuse to open their eyes to this agonizing truth.

Books like *Convicting the Innocent* (by Brandon Garret), *No Equal Justice* (by David Cole), *The New Jim Crow* (by Michelle Alexander), *Race to Incarcerate* (by Marc Mauer), *Final Report of the Pennsylvania Supreme Committee on Racial and Gender Bias in the Justice System*, *The Perpetual Prisoner Machine* (by Joel Dyer), and *Actual Innocence: When Justice Goes Wrong and How to Make it Right* (by Barry Scheck, Peter Neufeld, and Jim Dwyer) are just a few which have explained how ineffective legal representation, as well as economic, political, class, and race-related issues have distorted the pursuit of justice. Ergo it is vitally important for those of us condemned (in the eyes of prejudiced people) to maintain our human right to voice our pain. Mr. Giordano also suggests that every time that Mumia Abu Jamal speaks that it revictimizes Mrs. Maureen Faulkner, the widow of slain police officer Danny Faulkner. Well, if he is going to be honest then it is safe to suggest that there are many instances in which she is exposed to painful issues by people not in prison. Do you silence those voices too? Moreover, listening to the broadcast com-

mencement address at Goddard College is optional; people who do not wish to listen, do not have to listen. Furthermore, Mumia has maintained his innocence throughout the entire process, and many facts have been presented to suggest that he is in fact innocent. But due to political reasons those issues are not given the same considerations that a police officer would get if he/she were even charged with killing a Black man. Additionally, what about Mumia's family – do they count? They are subjected to painful rhetoric as well, but who is speaking about their pain?

Now let us look at this situation from a reverse standpoint: what if a police officer had killed Mumia and 33 years later this officer was presented with an opportunity to speak on the radio. Does any honest person believe that this would raise an issue for Mr. Giordano? Would he care about how Mumia's family felt about the program being aired with the police officer responsible for killing Mumia? Does he care about all those family members of the thousands who have been convicted of crimes and have spent years, even decades, in prison for crimes they did not commit, before being

In defiance of Pennsylvania's SB 508 law, David Lee exerts his right to freedom of speech

found to be innocent and released? Or the thousands who are innocent, but sadly lack the resources to prove their innocence? Or the thousands in prison for taking deals because they're afraid of being over-

prosecuted by overzealous and uncaring prosecutors. These victims do not count in the minds of those working to smash the voices of the wretched beings in the nation's prisons whose real crime is mere underdevelopment and poverty.

I guess only a certain class of victims is deemed to be essential in the eyes of Mr. Giordano, and those who support his parochial-minded positions. The pain which our families must endure while reading his asinine opinions do not mean anything because they obviously do not fit within the class of special victims. In addition, he mentioned issues of our first amendment rights possibly being represented in court battles by organizations like the ACLU; however, these issues are much bigger than that because we're talking about our human rights, our God-given rights to decent and humane treatment, and the right to voice our anguish. But in American society, it is always a safe bet to vent your absurdity on the most vilified and powerless segment of this country: prisoners! We, for the most part, are powerless to fight back. Sadly, in the minds of some people, it is

(Continued on page 21)

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okay to further trample upon our human rights because we've been condemned and demonized by those who view us as outside the special class of human beings.

Also in the minds of some people, if you are someone who reads the works of people like the late Howard Zinn, then you are being indoctrinated and are trying to run down the country – WOW! So you cannot even read books that Mr. Giordano considers to go against his narrow views without being vilified as well. Of course the students at Goddard College are not intelligent enough to determine if they're reading something of value. I guess they're not allowed to have a voice either, because some might just disagree with some of Mr. Giordano's nonsensical rants. It appears as though the students at Goddard College have been condemned by some people in this country the same as those of us trapped in prison. Condemned for going to college and daring to challenge themselves to think outside of the box presented by Mr. Giordano. It is amazing that Mr. Giordano does not even feel any compassion for the family of the late Professor Howard Zinn. Again, I guess you have to be in a special class to possess feelings, so it is okay to disparage Professor Zinn and not care about how his family might feel. I guess Professor Zinn's crime was that he wrote history books with the viewpoint of the people of this nation whose voices have been crushed by the powerful. I cannot help but to cogitate in regards to how Giordano might feel about all the Black men being killed by cops around this country. Are the cops allowed to have a voice and to go onto the internet and raise hundreds of thousands of dollars to defend themselves and to elevate their standard of living in the process? Are these takers of human life deemed worthy of having a voice? According to some people, only certain types of people accused of killing someone are allowed to speak. We the condemned masses filling up the nation's prisons have no such rights. We must be silent while we're being persecuted because some people might get upset with us for challenging their lunacy.

I am an impoverished Black man who has spent close to three decades in prison for a crime I did not commit and my human rights are stepped on every day of my existence in Pennsylvania's cages of despair and agony. I could care less about Mr. Giordano's foolishness, but he seems to represent enough people to force me to speak on this issue. We prisoners and our families can ill afford to allow people like this to just continue to walk over our rights to live as human beings. We must organize our voices too! We have a right to voice our pain! I do have compassion for those who have lost loved ones to senseless violence, but placing inno-

cent people in prison does nothing to assuage your pain. Justice cannot be about throwing people into these cages and allowing them to just waste away. And if we're going to speak about victims, what about all those victimized by the criminal justice system, some of whom have spent decades in prison for crimes they did not commit? Do we have any say in this matter?

Most of those able to overturn their cases do so through DNA evidence, but what about those of us who do not have DNA evidence available to prove our innocence? What about all those people who have been time barred by unjust laws and cannot even raise vital issues in court? We must understand that we too have rights, and we must continue to organize and fight in order for our rights to be respected and honored. We cannot continue to allow venomous people to silence us due to our status. We must exercise our voices at every possible opportunity because we have no other weapons available to us. We must resist attempts of anyone who wishes to further strip us of our humanity. These are our God-given rights, and we must protect them with a profound passion, or lose them due to others' fears and insanity.

David Lee #AS3041
SCI Coal Township
1 Kelley Drive
Coal Township, PA 17866

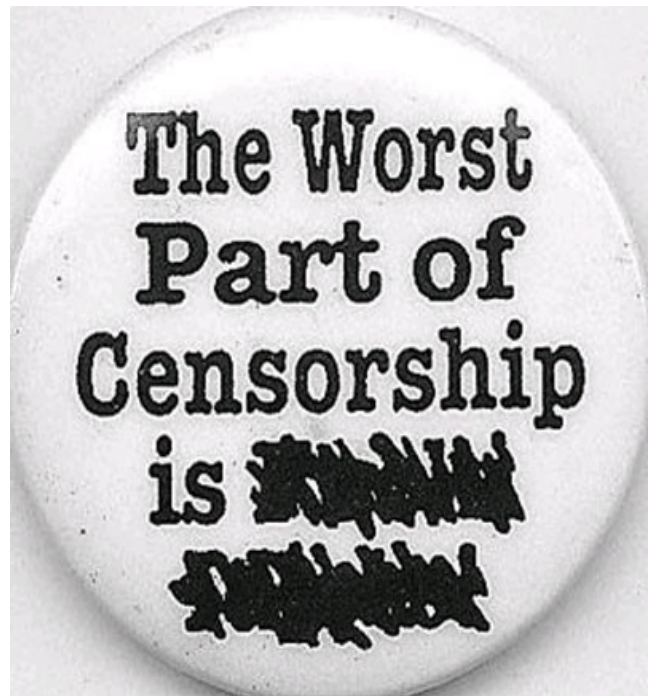


Photo from: <http://royaldutchshellplc.com20101228shell-on-human-rights-freedom-of-speech-spin-vs-reality.jpg>

In defiance of Pennsylvania's SB 508 law, Bryant Arroyo exerts his right to freedom of speech!

2nd Class Citizens Assert 1st Amendment Rights

In the dead of the night Gov. Tom Corbett huddled with the choir of the legislature and the rest of his cronies (FOP) who introduced an invidious, unconstitutional 'Chilling Effect' tantamount to a 'civil choke-hold'. Gov. Corbett signed both HB2533 & SB508 on Oct. 21, 2014, which is legally unprecedented and has far-reaching implications that specifically target and impact former and current prisoners in the State of Pennsylvania. The Victim Crimes Act will subject every former and current prisoner from publicly speaking about their cases under the constitutional provisions of 'freedom of speech' under our 1st Amendment.

Meanwhile, most of us who were born in the land of the free —United States of America — we were told and taught throughout our formal education that all along the 1st Amendment of the United States Constitution guarantees the basic freedom of speech, the press, etc. The 1st Amend. of the Constitution, as a "right" cannot be forced into a 'Hobson's Choice' to accept such an unconstitutional amendment (Victims Crimes Act HB2533 & SB508) which unequivocally creates a Chilling Effect, categorically violating our personal freedoms to express, share and write the facts about our cases publicly through different mediums which would also be held bound to civil-penalties for assisting us to gain exposure and access to the free-world.

Our Forefathers created the constitution with the intention to protect 'ALL' of its citizens, not just one particular group over the other. More importantly, these bills subject and victimize the 'actually-innocent' individuals who remain in prison fighting tenaciously every waking day/night to prove their 'actual-innocence' to be exonerated one day... Obviously, the legislative act HB2533 & SB508 was designed for both former and current prisoners in an attempt to demonize us for the purposes of stripping us from our 1st Amendment Constitutional rights.

Gov. Corbett literally hi-jacked the budget of \$400 Million Dollars from the (PA) state's education fund and misappropriated this outrageous sum of \$400 Million Dollars to build and construct two new prisons, i.e., Phoenix I & II. As of right now, both Phoenix I & II has serious deficiencies in the foundation the prisons were built on and the structure is actually sinking everyday and has not been able to pass the basic inspection and remains with vacant calls—unpopulated while the costs keeps on adding-up placing a strangle-hold on the hard-working tax-paying citizens. Most likely, there will be additional costs upward to the toll

of \$25 to \$50 Million Dollars or more to structurally fix the foundation and stop Phoenix I & II from sinking altogether! Gov. Corbett has introduced both HB2533 & SB508, as a 'red-herring' which is a political ploy used to deflect the citizens' attention away from the real victims in the State of Pennsylvania which are the children without schools to attend to get their formal education. Gov. Corbett has abandoned ALL of the children in the State of Pennsylvania by leaving them without an education only to provide them with their final destination to end up in Phoenix I & II, as the final future lot in life. Does Gov. Corbett really care about any of the alleged victims sponsored by the Victim Crimes Act? Gov. Corbett's actions bespeak a dismal future designed for our children by investing his priorities on building prisons, instead of schools. Gov. Corbett has constructed a direct 'pipeline to prison' for our future progeny... The innocent are the real victims in the political quagmire Gov. Corbett has created and left for the incoming Gov. Wolf to attempt to resolve... Gov. Corbett's actions are outright perverse, unconscionable and criminal to say the least!!! I'm certain he wouldn't leave his children without an education and or schools to attend too?... What a bigoted hypocrite!!!

These two House Bills, i.e., HB2533 & SB508 are outright on their faces, unconstitutional and without a doubt will get reversed... Whatever you do, as citizens who uphold and whole-heartedly believe in the 1st Amendment of our constitution, don't fall for the old 'bait & switch'. Gov. Corbett has made an anemic disappointing attempt to pull the wool over your eyes by inventing this new law to circumvent our constitutional 1st Amendment rights. This reminds me of the old adage: "He who invented the law—Invented the trap"... Looks like Gov. Corbett has trapped himself in a constitutional 'legal Gordian-Knot' which will inevitably be unsuccessful and defeated, at the conclusion of this legal-battle that has ensued.

Our community is like a ship; we must take it by the helm and stand to fight for our 1st Amendment Constitutional rights and not allow Gov. Corbett and his cronies to take away our voices to freely express ourselves, publicly! What is a man or woman without the right to share his or her story with the citizens of the free world?. This is a man or woman without a face and voice... To invalidate men/women's 1st Amendment rights, is to strip them of their human existence. There is no stronger man or woman in the world is him or her who stands alone. Stand up! Fight for your 1st Amendment rights and refuse to be treated like a 2nd class citizen!!!

Bryant Arroyo, #CU-1126, at SCI-Frackville

For Prison Radio—The Voice & Face Inside the Nation of prisoners...

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

In **defiance** of Pennsylvania's **SB 508 law**, Larry Stephenson exerts his **right** to freedom of speech!



The recent legislative act, to silence the voices of prisoners, serves no real purpose, but to deny society the opportunity to hear the truth about what goes on behind prison walls and prison gates.

People in this nation gave their lives fighting for the right of free speech. To have that right taken away by a few individuals for their personal political agendas is a travesty of justice—not only to prisoners, but to those courageous, now deceased freedom fighters from America's early years.

What if Dr. Reverend Martin Luther King, Jr.'s: "Letter From The Birmingham County Jail," wasn't allowed to reach the news media because of censorship on prisoners' voices, back in the sixties? Many people today would have lost out on some historic and supreme wisdom that helped change this nation's civil rights laws.

If citizens allow the Constitutional Rights of prisoners to be unjustly violated by a few disgruntled people for personal reasons, how long will it be until some other unpopular group of Americans have their Constitutional Rights taken away?

A little more than three-quarters of a century ago, the Reverend Martin Niemoller, a leading German protestant who Hitler sent to a concentration camp, said: "In Germany, they first came for the Communists and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the Trade Unionists and I didn't speak up, because I wasn't a Trade Unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up, because I was a Protestant. Then they came for me. But, by that time, there was no one left to speak up." Think about this!

By : Larry Stephenson

In **defiance** of Pennsylvania's **SB 508 law**, Nate Butler exerts his **right** to freedom of speech!



“Lynch Law Through Due Process”

“We hold these truths to be self evident . . .”

When the founding fathers drafted the declaration and the constitution, those documents weren't meant to include the poor Blacks, as we were identified as property, not human beings. Therefore, the Black man has no rights that a white man is bound to respect.

I was at the law library here at SC-Coal Township Prison and stumbled across the article inside the newspaper called 'Muzzle Mumia Abu-Jamal'. Exterminate, then fecundate, standing as living lies. Once again the state of Pennsylvania is showing us they don't honor law at all. The courts are necessary to legitimize empire's rule over the poor people. The ideal of justice characterized as a woman is an attractive and seductive concept that appeals to the mind of the dispossessed; however we all understand that justice for the poor in America is a game.

Back in 2006 when I was housed at SCI-Houtzdale slave plantation I was being taught the basics of the law by a very sharp and intelligent brother named Comrade Muti.

Well, anyway, he told me a quote that I never forgot to this day. He said, "Law do not change the attitudes of people. It is the people's attitude that creates the law." District Attorneys win elections by sending poor and innocent people to jail for life. Most poor defendants lack the money or resources to present a good defense. Inside Mumia Abu-Jamal's book called, 'Jailhouse Lawyers' it tells you that prosecutorial decisions are susceptible to political influence, largely but not solely because most prosecutors are re-elected. One must worry that political influence will enter into the decisions prosecutors make and that they may deal harshly or gently with political individuals for political reasons. What we are seeing with this new law is just not the muzzling of Mumia, it's about muzzling all the powerful voices of those who hold political views against the establishment. Most states already enacted laws making it illegal for convict authors to receive money from their writings.

The establishment is at war with anyone who has 'radical views'. They cannot allow those of us prisoners who they consider the ills of society to have access to the media or public at large. So to them political prisoners must be isolated and silenced. We must understand the courts, the lawyers, District Attorneys, are not unconnected; they do not operate aside or separate, they are different parts to the same rotten machine.

(Continued on page 24)

THE MOVEMENT

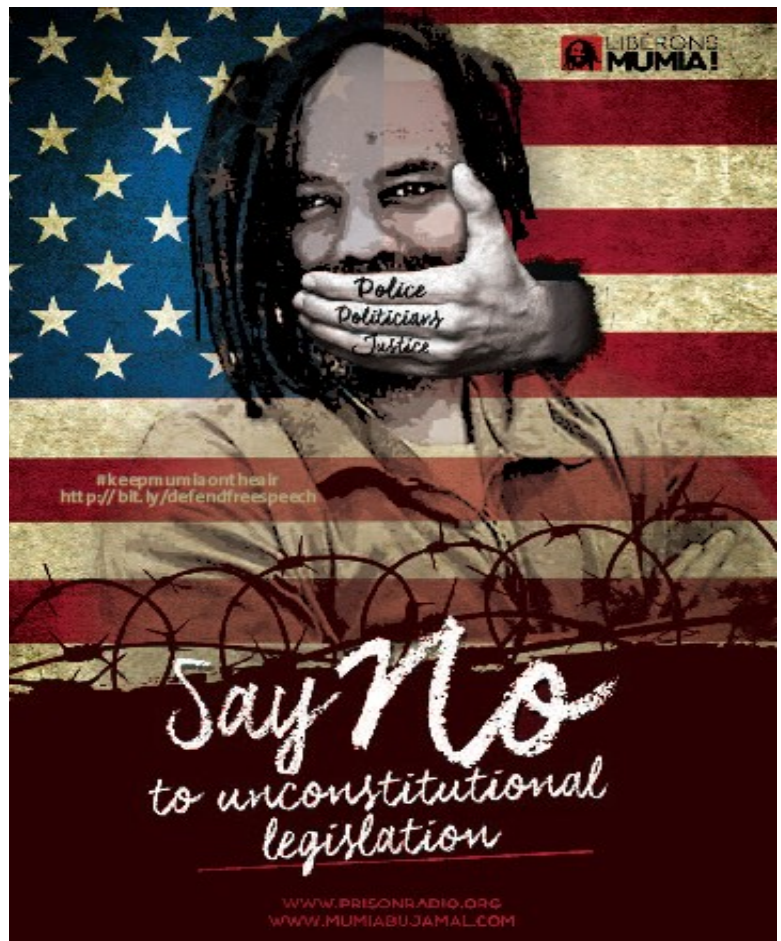
www.hrcoalition.org

When I say lawyer, I am talking about the Public Defender who works for the courts and not against them. The District Attorneys have tremendous power inside the court rooms; he or she has all the resources, all the funds, and the legislatures behind them. We the poor who are not well-connected are given a fucked-up hand. All the freedom fighters who study the law and are trying to liberate yourself from the clutches of the Department of Corrections should ask yourself this question: If you play the “law game” like you play the “card games”, who stacked the deck and dealt us these cards?

The United States Constitution and the laws of this land were built on the foundation of white supremacy. The *police*, the *courts*, and the *prison system* are the manifestations of this foundation.

In closing, “A man stripped of the right to defend himself is a man being prepared for slavery. Every person who goes to prison as the result of incompetent or indifferent legal representation, in a situation where he or she had no wish for the attorney representing them to conduct the case, has been reduced to a slave.”

Mr. Nate Butler
#BQ-9013 / SCI-Coal Township
1 Kelley Drive, Coal Township, PA 17866-1021



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Moderate Samurai Sudoku Puzzle No. 21 - Answers on page 11

THE MOVEMENT

Senses of Freedom

By Sundiata Acoli

Freedom FEELS sublime
like a slow Sunday morn in the springtime
of your lover.

The kids are outside
delighting in the new turn of the tide
and each other.

Children are priceless again,
women are liberated.
All races are respected
and the people placated.

SOUNDS of a Sax Supreme,
riffs of laughter, Salsa and Country themes
all syncopate with the Trane.
Indigenous drums toll:
“The Long War’s Over” as soft wind chimes
knoll
in matching refrain.

No “Shots fired!” today.
No mother crying for her child.
No stroll thru the morgue tonight.
Just the best night’s sleep in a long while.

Aromas of fine wines
and SCENTS of baked breads draw the
masses to dine
outdoors in the street.

The Haves share freely
with the Nots now as both have equally
when they meet.

No need for snatching, grabbing
or fighting to be first.
There’s enough for all now
in this wisely-shared universe.

A TASTE honey
on earth, sweeter than the sweetest pastry,
milk, or sugar tea.
People living free,
controlling their own lives and destiny,
as it should be.

Looking back, SIGHTING
ahead to a legacy of lightings
delayed by theft.
But back on path at last,
seeking keys from the present past
to the age old mysteries of LOVE & JOY,
LIFE and DEATH

Sundiata Acoli
August 31, 2014
FCI-Cumberland MD

America's Corporate Human Rights Violators

Top 10 Corporate Criminals List

2014 Introduction

Many corporations are complicit in violating human rights and the environment. As the free trade market continues to push forward the global economy, holding corporations accountable for their poor practices becomes difficult. Unfortunately, corporations are working harder than ever to cover abuses instead of preventing them.

This does not have to be the reality.

People can use their purchasing power to endorse Fair Trade and pressure companies and boycott those that violate human rights and the environment. In doing so there is potential to pressure these companies to put people ahead of profits.

Global Exchange has compiled a list of the top ten "most wanted" corporations of 2014 based on issues like unlivable working conditions, corporate seizures of indigenous lands, and contaminating the environment, just to name a few.

The Top Ten Corporate Criminals list is a guide to learn about what companies like Gap, PepsiCo, Carnival, and others you might have heard less about are doing to undermine human rights and the environment so that you can get informed and involved in combating the injustice. The more you know, the less corporations can continue to act unfavorably in the public eye. Share the list with friends, family, and co-workers. Email CEO's, call executives directly, and network with other non-profit organizations doing work on the issue.

President: Joseph S. Blatter

FIFA Development Office USA:

The List

1. **Alpha Natural Resources** for pollution of rivers, streams, and groundwater; violation of the Clean Water Act; destruction of forest and wildlife habitats; and devastation of Appalachian communities.

Chairman & CEO: Kevin S. Crutchfield

Corporate Headquarters:

One Alpha Place

P.O. Box 16429

Bristol, VA 24209

Phone: (276) 619-4410

2. **Bayer** for manufacturing and using bee-killing pesticides, pinning the bee crisis on other causes, exposing farmers to harmful pesticides, and working to monopolize drug prices.

Chairman & CEO: Dr. Marijn E. Dekkers

Bayer USA:

100 Bayer Boulevard

P.O. Box 915

Whippany, NJ 07981

Phone: (862) 404-3000

3. **Carnival Corporation** for dumping sewage pollution into oceans, use of cheap, air-polluting fuels, tax evasion, and unfair labor wages.

Chairman & CEO: Micky Arison

Carnival Corp USA:

3655 NW 87th Ave

Doral, FL 33178

Phone: (305) 599-2600

4. **FIFA** for forced evictions from homes and stores, damaging local business, tax evasion, labor abuse, corruption, and violating human rights including: right to adequate housing, right to free movement, right to work, right to protest, and right to labor protection.



(Continued from page 26)

1800 Purdy Ave
Miami Beach, FL 33139
Phone: (786) 453-2125

5. **Gap Inc.** for refusal to sign "Accord of Fire and Building Safety in Bangladesh," refusal to compensate victims' families, workers' rights violations, and unsafe building conditions.

Chairman & CEO: Glenn K. Murphy
Global Headquarters:
2 Folsom St.
San Francisco, CA 94105
Phone: (650) 952-4400

6. **Ghirardelli Chocolate Company** for refusal to use Fair Trade labor and continuing to support child labor, using labor that violates human rights standards, and creating environmental destruction and poverty.

CEO: Martin E. Thompson
VP of Quality Assurance: Steve Genzoli
Corporate Headquarters:
1111 139th Ave
San Leandro, CA 94578
Phone: (800) 877-933

7. **Glencore Xstrata** for dumping of toxic tailings, tax evasion, police brutality, destruction of communities, human rights violations, and environmental degradation.

CEO: Ivan Glasenberg
Chairman: Anthony Hayward
Headquarters:
Baarermattstrasse 3
CH-6340 Baar
Switzerland
Phone: +41 41 709 2000

8. **HSBC** for money laundering, financing conflict palm oil producers, and destruction of land.

CEO: Stuart Gulliver
Chairman: Douglas Flint
USA Headquarters:
452 5th Ave
New York, NY 10018
Phone: (212) 525-5000

9. **Koch Industries** thwarting public policy; forcing policies on funded politicians, judges, and organizations; working to destroy minimum wage, unions, and social security; re-segregation of public schools; toxic pollution.

Chairman & CEO: Charles Koch
Executive VP: David H. Koch
Headquarters:
4111 E 37th St N
Wichita, KS, 67220
Phone: (316) 828-5500

10. **PepsiCo** for deforestation, destruction of peatlands, species extinction, greenhouse gas emissions, commodification of water, use of GMOs and prevention of labeling GMO foods, and privatization of public services.

Chairman & CEO: Indra Nooyi
Headquarters:
700 Anderson Hill Rd
Purchase, NY 10577
Phone: (914) 253-2000

Repeat Offender: Monsanto

Chairman & CEO: Hugh Grant
Headquarters:
800 N Lindbergh Blvd
St Louis, MO 63141
Phone: (314) 694-1000

Abuses: harmful toxic chemical creation and use, GMO manufacturing, refusal to label products, monocropping, bankrupting small farms, seed patenting, monopolization of global food markets.

Monsanto has been featured as a Corporate Criminal before, and now returns to the list as our first-ever "repeat offender." This is a brief explanation of the company's crimes and an update on its latest offenses.

Beginning as a chemical company producing (and hiding the health risks of) DDT and Agent Orange, Monsanto has become a multinational agrochemical and agricultural biotechnology powerhouse specializing in genetically engineered (GE) seeds and herbicides, including the weed killer Roundup. Monsanto's GE seeds are inserted with generic material, altering the seeds to repel pests and endure herbicide use. Monsanto then patents its GE seeds to give the company extensive legal rights allowing it to easily sue farmers for violations of the patent. In the United States, 93% of soybeans and 80% of corn is grown from Monsanto-patented GE seeds. Farmers cannot save leftover seeds for re-use and Monsanto can visit the farmer's land whenever it pleases. Ultimately Monsanto's control over seeds harms farmers, the environment, and the global economy.

Monsanto's development of genetically modified organism (GMO) crops is linked with the need for farmers to use dangerous pesticides while the crops are growing. Overuse of pesticide-resistant GMO crops in combination with pesticides like Roundup is creating uncontrollable "superweeds" that are plaguing U.S. farmland. Regular spraying is causing growing resistance, and now Monsanto is starting to pair GMO crops with stronger and more dangerous chemicals. These stronger pesticides pose an even greater risk to consumers, farmers, and the environment as these chemicals have severe health risks. Monsanto's chemical use is so harmful, that the Environmental Protection Agency has labeled 5 Monsanto-owned facilities as some of the most hazardous toxic sites in the country.

Further, Monsanto has been fervently working against campaigns for GMO labeling on food products. As consumers increasingly demand to know what is in their food, Monsanto has been resistant about transparency. Monsanto and other creators of GMO Answers (a website designed to spread misinformation about GMOs) has committed to spend millions more annually for several more years to

(Continued on page 28)

(Continued from page 27)

keep GMO labels off of food products, as campaigns grow at the U.S. state level. Spending \$8.1 million, Monsanto was the largest contributor toward the defeat of California's Prop. 37 in 2013, keeping labels off of GMO foods in CA. Now as propositions to label GMO foods continue to appear on ballots in more states, including Oregon, Monsanto continues to fight to keep American consumers in the dark about their food.

TAKE ACTION! via [Millions Against Monsanto](#) and [Food & Water Watch](#)

Corporate Criminals Alumni

Bank of America

Abuses: funding the environmentally harmful coal industry, excessive campaign contributions. Coal is a primary reason for our current global crisis as one of the main sources of manmade CO2 emissions. . .

CATERPILLAR

Abuses: contracting with known violators of human rights, enabling house demolition, supplying equipment that kills Palestinian civilians and American peace activists

COCA-COLA

Abuses: violent killings, kidnap and torture, water privatization, health violations, and discriminatory practices □ □ Coca-Cola Company is perhaps the most widely recognized corporate symbol on the planet. The company also leads in the abuse of workers' rights, assassinations, water privatization, and worker discrimination.

FORD MOTOR COMPANY

Human rights violations: environmental degradation, climate change, fueling wars for oil. Among automakers, Ford Motor Company is the worst.

The Hershey Company

Abuses: refusing to use fair trade labor and continuing to support labor that violates human rights standards. The maker of Reeses, Kit Kats and Almond Joys has not made efforts to improve the exploitation of its workers that continues in West Africa. Chocolate is an industry dependent on cheap and forced child labor on cocoa farms in the Cote D'Ivoire and the Ivory Coast, which produces 40% of the global supply of cocoa. According to the US Department of Labor, West African cocoa farms employ children, as young as 12 – 14 years old, who have been trafficked from neighboring countries. They are often lured by traffickers with the promise of earning a much-needed income or are kidnapped from their villages. Few are actually paid salaries and many continue to work to avoid violent punishment.

Nestlé

Nestlé is well known for producing chocolate (not Fair Trade), but is in fact one of the world's largest multinational food companies producing everything from frozen meals to infant formula. Nestle executives describe the company as the "world's leading nutrition, health, and wellness com-

pany." However, it remains one of the largest controversial businesses operating in the world. Nestlé has been criticized for pushing bottled water sales in developing nations, which is not only costly for communities, but deters governments from improving water sanitation efforts locally. Similarly Nestlé has been accused of marketing infant formula to new mothers in Turkey claiming that breast milk is insufficient for infant health. Since the advertising campaign, Nestlé infant formula sales increased 15% this year. These are just some of the many examples of Nestlé's poor practices. Profit maximization comes at a higher priority than the "nutrition, health and wellness" of the people Nestlé markets to.

PHILIP MORRIS USA and PHILIP MORRIS INTERNATIONAL

Human Rights Abuse: aggressively marketing lethal products. According to the World Health Organization, tobacco is the second major cause of preventable death in the world.

Nearly five million lives per year are claimed by the tobacco industry, whose products result in premature death for half the people who use them. Among tobacco companies, Philip Morris is notorious. Now called Altria, it is the world's largest and most profitable cigarette corporation and maker of Marlboro, Virginia Slims, Parliament, Basic and many other brands of cigarettes. Philip Morris is also a leader in pushing smoking with young people around the world.

To this day, Philip Morris deceives consumers about the harm of its products by offering light, mild and low-tar cigarettes that give consumers the illusion that these brands are "healthier" than traditional cigarettes.

Although the company says it doesn't want kids to smoke, it spends millions of dollars every day marketing and promoting cigarettes to youth. Overseas, it has even hired underage Marlboro girls to distribute free cigarettes to other children and sponsored concerts where cigarettes were handed out to minors. . .

PFIZER

Human Rights Abuse: Killer price-gouging. Pfizer is one of the largest and most profitable pharmaceutical companies in the world with revenues of \$52.5 billion in 2004. In addition to Viagra, Zoloft, Zithromax, and Norvasc, Pfizer produces the HIV/AIDS-related drugs Rescriptor, Viracept and Diflucan (fluconazole).

Like other drug companies, they sell these drugs at prices poor people cannot afford and aggressively fight efforts to make it easier for generic drugs to enter the market. They have even cut off drug shipments to Canadian pharmacies that sold Pfizer drugs to patients in the United States for costs more affordable than those offered in US pharmacies.

To ensure its profits, Pfizer invests heavily in US campaign contributions. Though it can't seem to afford to offer life-saving drugs at affordable prices, it was able to scrounge up

(Continued on page 29)

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

(Continued from page 28)

\$544,900 for mostly Republican candidates in election cycle 2006 (still in progress) and \$1,630,556 in the 2004 election cycle. Drug companies' refusal to put human beings' health ahead of their own greed and profits is especially deadly for people with HIV/AIDS.

Wal-Mart

Abuses: unfair treatment of employees, use of sweatshop labor, bribery in Mexico
Within the US, Wal-Mart forces employees to work long hours with little pay. According to Wal-Mart Watch, a Wal-Mart employee makes an average annual salary of only \$15,500 or an average hourly wage of \$8.81.

This means most full-time Wal-Mart employees still live below the poverty line. It would cost Wal-Mart shoppers only 46 cents more per shopping trip to raise this hourly salary to \$12. In addition, from July 2005 to June 2011, Wal-Mart has settled around 70 state and federal cases surrounding wage and hour violations including lack of breaks allowed and failure to pay overtime, costing the company over \$1 billion.

Further studies in California, Georgia and Massachusetts have shown that Wal-Mart employees are more reliant on government assistance, costing the government an estimated \$1 billion. Just recently, Wal-Mart even stopped providing health care to part time employees. Wal-Mart has also inconsistently provided safe working environments. In January 2012, workers at NFI Industries, which transports Wal-Mart products, complained with Cal-OSHA of dangerous conditions including abnormal heat, unfair speed quotas, broken equipment posing hazards, and excessive dust and chemicals causing dizziness and nosebleeds. Wal-Mart was cited for \$257,000 on account of these violations.

Halliburton

Abuses: hydraulic fracturing, involvement in the Gulf spill, bribery in Nigeria.

Halliburton is an oilfield services company, dealing with the finding and producing of oil. Halliburton is condemned for its involvement in hydraulic fracturing, also deemed fracking, in which they inject millions of gallons of water, sand and chemicals at extremely high pressures in order to make cracks in rocks and allow gas to flow. They access these unconventional oil sources by horizontal fracking, using 1 to 8 million gallons of water in each well.

Halliburton says fracking is safe, citing that impermeable rock layers prevent toxic chemicals and water waste from getting into soil and water. These claims, nevertheless, have proved false as cracks and leaks have caused harmful substances to get into soils and drinking water sources. Methane leaking from these cracks and the overall process make, some claim, fracking the most greenhouse gas intensive form of energy (or on par with coal).

Currently, the Delaware River, a water source for over 15 million people, is at risk to be contaminated from fracking

as Halliburton and other companies are looking to use thousands of surrounding acres for gas wells. The Bush and Cheney Energy Bill, passed by congress in 2005, contains what many refer to as the Halliburton Loophole, exempting hydraulic fracturing from regulation by the Safe Drinking Water Act and allowing Halliburton to conceal the chemicals it uses in fracking.

From the editor:

Due to space constraints we are unable to print full details of corporate criminals. For more information go to: <http://www.globalexchange.org/corporateHRviolators>



One Perfect Tweet Calls Out the Hypocrisy of How the Media Talks About Black Violence

October 19, 2014

Blog by **Sophie Kleeman** [staff writer at Mic. She covers national affairs, inequality and social justice issues. A recent graduate of New York University, she's also written for Gothamist, MSNBC.com and The 6th Floor Blog.]

On Saturday night, police armed with tear gas and pepper spray were called in to contain riots that broke out during a pumpkin festival in Keene, N.H.

CNN reported that those involved — many of whom were students at nearby Keene State College — yelled expletives at police, started fires, flipped cars and tore down street signs. Video footage showed bonfires burning well into Sunday morning, as well as streets littered with broken bottles and debris. Dozens of arrests were made, and multiple ambulances reported to the area to help the injured.

"It's just like a rush. You're revolting from the cops," 18-year-old Steven French told the *Keene Sentinel*. "It's a blast to do things that you're not supposed to do." "It's (expletive) wicked," added French.

Source: YouTube

"Because of arrests (140 last year, the Sentinel reported) and injuries at past festivals, the community has held forums in recent years — inviting police and emergency room doctors as well as residents — to explore ways to mitigate the violence, vandalism and littering that come with the celebration," CNN reported.

Wait a minute: Not too long ago, the mass protests in Ferguson, Mo., captured the world's attention. Those riots, however, were treated considerably differently than the bedlam that occurred in New Hampshire — something Des Moines Twitter user Matt Weinecke summed up perfectly (**pictured to on page to the right**).

Other Twitter users pointed out this disparity as well:

They deftly point out a sad truth: The media discusses acts of violence and vandalism by primarily white college students in a starkly different manner than black youths.

Michael Brown — the unarmed black teenager killed by a police officer in August — was "*no angel*." He was a "*criminal and a thug*." He flashed gang signs. But the white teenagers involved in Saturday's riots? They were just a "*rowdy crowd*." They were "*unruly*." People simply "*got too drunk*."

Some will brush off what happened in Keene as kids being kids or as representative of a small minority of the white population — fringe behavior. But the black community doesn't have that luxury. When violence happens in the black community, it's seen as symbolic and part of a larger pattern; a disruptive few somehow represent the black community. Black people are lumped into one homogenous category, one that leaves no room for the nuance and complexity of how communities grow and thrive. In the case of New Hampshire, the media wrote off the incident as annual autumnal bacchanalia.

During a rash of rioting by surfers in Huntington Beach, Calif., Cord Jefferson satirically asked, "How long must we wait for the white community to get its act together?" A day after the protests in Keene, nowhere do we see political or media commentary that asks people in the white community to speak out, tells white parents to get their acts together or complains about the "thuggish" values of today's youth.

All this over a New Hampshire pumpkin festival, possibly the whitest festival imaginable. If there was ever a study in contrasts, it's right here.



The Promise of Prevention Public Health as a Model for Effective Change

By Deborah Prothrow-Stith, M.D.

As a physician in training in a Boston emergency room in 1978, I realized that stitching people up and sending them out without addressing the violence that caused their injury violated any prevention agenda we had. Similarly, schools were suspending and expelling students and police and courts were arresting and incarcerating youth, all without attention to prevention.

Having made this connection I was intrigued in 1985, when Surgeon General Koop hosted the first conference addressing violence as a public health problem. Public health resources have been increasingly allocated to preventing violence since that conference, with remarkable results. The vision for the criminal justice system over the next 25 years has to build on what public health has learned.

We can't address the many challenges in the criminal justice system without reducing the number of people entering the criminal justice system in the first place. This means prevention must be on par with law enforcement and punishment. As a nation, we already promise to respond to violence with expensive and sometimes harsh solutions. We need a companion promise, the promise of prevention.

As a nation, we can prevent crime and violence, improve outcomes for individuals and communities, and reduce the burden on the criminal justice system through a complementary public health approach. We can save lives and money while build thriving communities. One of the contributions public health has made since the Koop conference is to evaluate prevention activities. We know what to do to prevent violence and are standing on some firm science as to what works.

Noteworthy examples:

- Public health-based programs such as CeaseFire Chicago, Baltimore's Safe Streets program, and the Urban Networks to Increase Thriving Youth (UNITY) programs have made significant impacts in violence and changed community norms. Baltimore saw a reduction in homicides of more than 50 percent, and Minneapolis showed a 40 percent drop in juvenile crime in its most violent neighborhoods in just two years after imple-

menting UNITY'S four-point, public-health based approach.

- As documented in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine in 2007, schools can reduce violence by an average of 15 percent in as little as six months through universal school-based violence prevention efforts.
- The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services reported in 2001 that the Boys and Girls Clubs and the Big Brothers Big Sisters of America programs have effectively reduced violence among youth and violence-related outcomes; evaluations show reductions in occurrences of vandalism, drug trafficking, and youth crime.
- According to the national nonprofit Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, the Nurse Family Partnership decreased arrest rates by age 15 by half. The program trains public health nurses to make regular home visits to low-income, first-time mothers.

In our efforts to prevent violence, we have learned important lessons. These can inform our efforts not only to prevent violence but also to improve the criminal justice system.

The first lesson is to invest now in prevention instead of paying much more later. In these tough economic times, costs are often cited as the reason we are unable to do something. Fortunately, we're getting more and more scientific documentation of the monies that are saved by investing in prevention. I remember a 14-year-old patient of mine whose mother wanted him to get into an after school program, but was having trouble finding one she could afford. I reflected that if he were shot his medical care would cost the state at least \$100,000 and prosecuting the shooter would double the toll. But I could not get him into a \$4,000 after school program. A RAND study of the Nurse Family Partnership mentioned above demonstrated that the program saves at least \$4 for every \$1 spent.

The second lesson is that all violence is connected. Gang violence is connected to bullying is connected to school violence is connected to intimate partner violence is connected to child abuse is connected to elder abuse. Across the country, people working on child abuse are right across the hall from people working on violence against women without working together, even though the co-morbidity of the two problems is at least 30 percent. Many young men in prison for violent behavior have witnessed significant violence during their developmental years and have been victims of violence. Effective prevention activities must reflect the

(Continued on page 33)

(Continued from page 32)

connections between the different types of violence and respond holistically.

The third lesson is that we have to offer young people an alternative to violence with healthy responses to the anger they feel about the social injustices they witness and the personal victimization they experience. Using my Violence Prevention Curriculum for Adolescents in a school in the Boston area I asked my students to list the things that made them angry. A young man said that his friend had been stabbed over the weekend and that it took the ambulance 20 minutes to get there and his friend died. His neighborhood had the longest 9-1-1 response times of any neighborhood in the Boston metropolitan area.

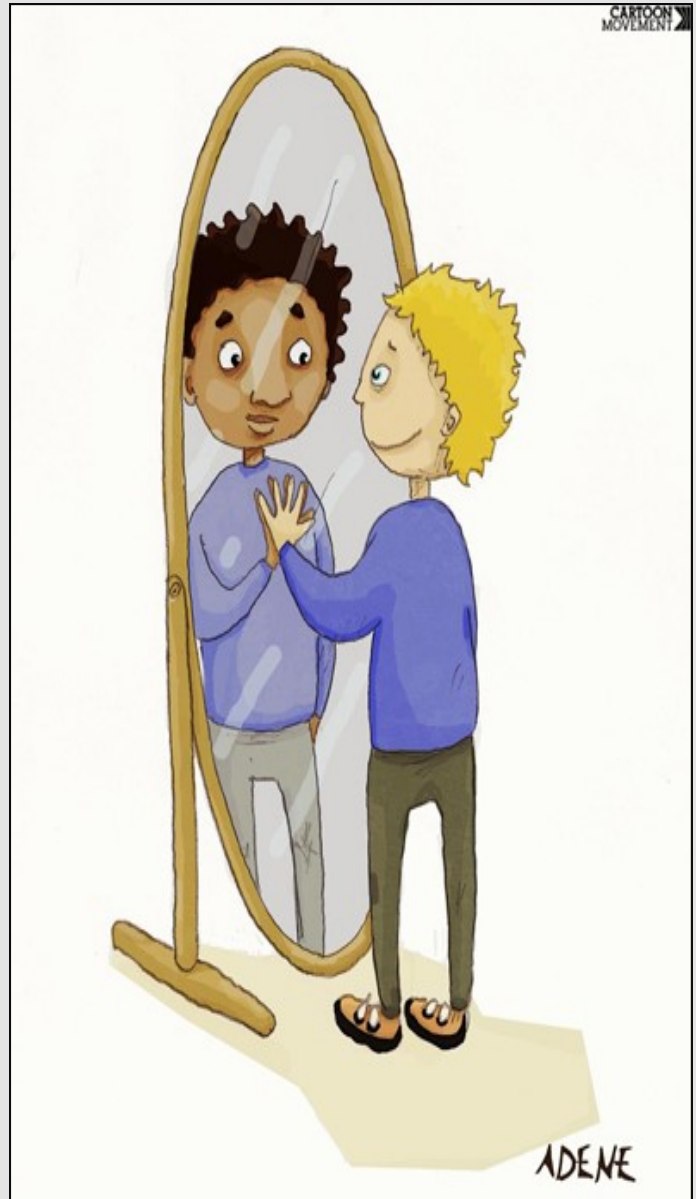
The class listed unhealthy things he could do with that anger: beat up the ambulance driver; take it out on somebody else; or, do nothing. Healthy responses included talking with someone who understands issues of race and class about it, or writing the mayor a letter. However, the depth of his anger did not seem to be adequately addressed in those responses. The class decided that he should get so angry that he decides to finish high school, become an ambulance driver, and become an ambulance dispatcher.

As a society, if this is the outcome we want, then we need a school system that will prepare him to graduate and pass the test to become an emergency medical technician. The system has to hire and promote him. Affirming the option is an important start; then we have to make it possible for him to do it.

The time is right for a national violence prevention agenda supported by criminal justice, public health, and those concerned about the expense and efficacy of overcrowded prisons. There is a growing evidence base, grounded in research and community practice that confirms that violence is preventable. Through UNITY, we have been working with cities all over the country to implement approaches informed by public health. In partnership with them, we have developed a roadmap for what it takes, and identified strategies that prevent violence before it occurs. Communities have successfully reduced violence through strategic planning and coordinated efforts by many partners and with the community. In fact, cities with the most coordination and collaboration across multiple sectors have lower rates of violence.

It is time to transform our criminal justice system and build the partnerships with public health that focus on prevention and ensures that the criminal justice system is our last resort.

Deborah Prothrow-Stith broke new ground by defining youth violence as a public health problem. She served as Massachusetts Public Health Commissioner and is a member of the Institute of Medicine. She is currently a consultant at Spencer Stuart and adjunct Professor of Practice at Harvard School of Public Health.



This cartoon is part of our Peace & Justice project and was based on a tweet: **'We will only have peace in the world if we accept one another regardless of one's race, color or tribe.'** - Abigail Matei

From: www.cartoonmovement.com/cartoon/15328?

Who cares about prison violence?

By Ronnie Polaneczky, Daily News Columnist

November 12, 2014

I CAN ALREADY hear the blowback over today's *Daily News* cover story about the use of excessive force in the Philadelphia prison system.

I'm sure you can hear it, too. Maybe you're even part of it. "If they can't do the time, they shouldn't do the crime," some will say about my colleague Dana DiFilippo's tale of inmates who died under questionable circumstances or are alleged to have suffered injuries at the hands of prison staffers.

Or, "Criminals crying over mistreatment? Too bad they didn't cry over mistreating their victims!"

Or, "It's a prison, not a resort. Criminals get what they deserve."

As if an inmate's sentence - handed down by a judge or jury, after hearing both sides of a case - somehow requires enhancement by mistreatment, neglect, terror or death. As if an unquestioned perk of any correctional officer's job is to beat down an inmate with impunity because - c'mon - if someone is stupid enough to get himself incarcerated, whatever happens to him is his own stupid fault.

Allegations of mistreatment go far beyond the Philadelphia prisons, obviously. On Monday, jury selection began for the trial of the Dallas 6, a group of inmates at Dallas State Correctional Institution in Luzerne County. In 2010, the inmates say, they staged a peaceful protest of an inmate's torture - they could hear his screams - by covering the door windows of their solitary-confinement cells.

The inmates allege they were brutally beaten by guards for bringing the torture to the attention of prison officials. Four months later, the Dallas 6 allege, when news of the assault went public, the inmates were retroactively charged with rioting in a flimsy attempt by the prison to cover up the assault.

"Most inmates do not expect corrections officers to be friendly, respectful or even cordial," says Shandre Delaney, whose son, Carrington Keys, is one of the Dallas 6. "But they do expect them to adhere to a professional code of conduct. People say that inmates have no respect for authority. That is not true. What they don't respect is the abuse of power."

What frightens me is how easily we, as a society, accept the notion of prison brutality as a given. Behavior we'd never

condone outside prison walls is given a pass when it's alleged inside. And because prisons are closed communities, there's no way for outsiders to assess the environment independently. Hell, even when reporters try to obtain information from the Philadelphia prison system, we are blocked by obstreperous authorities who act for all the world as if they have something to hide.

It took DiFilippo weeks - *weeks* - to get information from the prison, no matter how simple her requests. Given how closed prison communities are, it's outrageous that even public information is willfully being kept private.

It's as if the public is being patted on the head and told, "Who are you gonna believe - the guy doing time or the ones wearing the uniforms?" Or, just as bad, "Who are you gonna believe - the low-level guards who know how bad conditions are, or the high-ranking brass who says everything is just fine?"

It's a multilayered, complicated mess. But here is something we'd all do well to remember:

Not all convicts are doing lengthy sentences for something heinous (and even if they were, where in our Constitution is it written that prisons are permitted to subject inmates to crimes that would be prosecutable if they occurred on a city street?). Most are incarcerated for nonviolent offenses and are doing fairly short time for their crimes. Sooner than later, they will be released back into society.

So maybe you don't care, on moral grounds, whether inmates are treated with a basic degree of respect and afforded protection from violence and abuse. Can you at least agree that society's best self interests are served when they are? Prisoners subjected to violence behind bars will not emerge from incarceration as better people.

And then there's the expense of fighting lawsuits brought by inmates like the Dallas 6 and the financial settlements made to inmates or their families. As DiFilippo reported, Philadelphia alone paid out \$3.75 million to settle 121 cases involving city prisons between 2010 and 2013. That doesn't even cover the government-paid manpower needed to address the lawsuits.

I can't tell you how many of those cases involved mistreatment of inmates and how many were simple slip-and-fall accidents because the prison refused to break it down for DiFilippo.

But, either way, we have to do better than that. Whether the naysayers want to or not.

Why Philly D.A. Abraham is called 'Queen of Death'

By Betsey Piette, Philadelphia

Police Chief Bull Connor used dogs against civil rights demonstrators in Birmingham. Los Angeles Detective Mark Fuhrman manufactured evidence to try to convict O.J. Simpson. But neither has anything on Philadelphia District Attorney Lynne Abraham.

What has made Abraham so hated that she's earned the title "Queen of Death"?

Since Abraham's appointment as district attorney in 1991 by former Mayor Ed Rendell, she has put over 101 African Americans from Philadelphia on death row, more than any other city. A July 16, 1995, New York Times Magazine article labeled Lynne Abraham this country's "Deadliest D.A." Abraham's zeal to demand the death penalty has resulted in over half of Pennsylvania's death row inmates being from this city, which is also notorious for its police brutality and corruption. Over 80 percent of them are Black.

When white racists attacked Black students at George Washington High School in January, Abraham pressed charges against only the African American victims, until public outrage forced her to back down. She has refused to try as adults white teenagers accused of raping a Black child, yet she has held an African American mentally handicapped child in an adult jail.

Spawned by Rizzo

Abraham got her start in 1972, when Philadelphia Mayor Frank Rizzo appointed her to head the city's Redevelopment Authority. Rizzo, whose racist tenure as police commissioner led to a federal investigation of the city's police force, described Abraham as tough cookie." Abraham began her own rise to infamy as a homicide prosecutor in the district attorney's office, working alongside Ed Rendell. Rendell later became district attorney from 1977 to 1985, then mayor, and last summer held a brief tenure as head of the National Democratic Party.

Yet another notorious cohort was D.A. Ron Castile, who oversaw the court proceedings that cleared all officials of guilt for the 1985 police bombing of the MOVE Organization. Castile also signed the documents in support of Mumia Abu-Jamal's death sentence in the 1980s, and now sits on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. In 1999, Castile refused to recuse himself from the case when Abu-Jamal appealed to that court for a new trial.



Above photo: Lynne Abraham (LEFT) and FOP President, John McNesby, at signing of SB 508 (known as Silence Mumia Bill) on Oct. 2014. Lynne Abraham announced that she is running for Mayor of Philadelphia, PA in 2015.

Protégé of Sabo

Abraham became a judge in 1975. She learned her trade from Judge Albert Sabo, who presided over Abu-Jamal's trial and hearings in the Court of Common Pleas in 1983. It was Judge Lynne Abraham who signed the arrest warrants in 1977 that led to a police assault against a MOVE house in west Philadelphia's Powelton Village section after months of police occupation and barricade of the surrounding neighborhood. Nine MOVE members were sentenced to terms up to life for the death of a police officer who was most likely killed by a stray police bullet in that raid.

Judge Abraham's name again appears on 1985 arrest warrants for MOVE

members that led to the murderous police bombing of the MOVE house on Osage Avenue. Eleven men, women and children in the Osage Avenue house were killed by a massive land and air attack by police on May 13, 1985. Many demonstrators at Abraham's recent campaign stops have chanted "baby killer" to remind people of her role in this deadly assault. In 1981, it was Judge Abraham who went to Jefferson Hospital, where Mumia Abu-Jamal was being treated while under arrest, to arraign him personally for the murder of Officer Daniel Faulkner.

As district attorney, Lynne Abraham has gone out of her way to protect the police against victims of their brutality. Her office has failed to convict any cops for the killings of Jamel Nichols, Kenneth Griffin, Phillip McCall, Moises De-

(Continued on page 41)

Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist



I stand on the shoulders of our heroes and roar.

Greetings HRC -

I trust that all is going well with you and yours. There is so much sickness, dying and death happening to loved ones, it has become surreal. But life moves forward.

For me, 2014 came in with a big bang with my grandson's trial and sentencing on January 21. At the same time my son was caught up in some he said-she said stuff that kept him locked up with a high bail for 6 months from October 18, 2013 - April 15, 2014, when the charges were finally dropped! In February a close cousin died, in March another cousin fell down his basement steps, broke his neck and died. Then on June 14 my mother's brother passed.

As you know, my mother passed away at my home on July 17. This was two months from the day (May 17) that I brought her home from the hospital. I had lots of help from family, friends, her church and in-home hospice. But watching her leaving rocked my world. (Note: on that same day, I was having a big at-home celebration for my youngest daughter who dropped out of college for 8 years, went back and finished!)

After my mother, the death train didn't stop. On October 4, it took my brother. He was 15 months older than me and my only sibling. I stayed in Baltimore with his family during the last two weeks of his life.

And now, I am taking care of my mother's 92-year old sister who Mom lived with when she moved to Philly in December 2012. She was always so lively and vivacious. No one could guess her age, until now. She too is declining right before our eyes. I have been staying between my home and hers since she came from the hospital a couple of weeks ago.

Sometimes in jest I say - STOP THE WORLD I WANT TO GET OFF. But on another level, my courage and determination has gotten stronger. Whatever challenges show up I believe I can handle them.

Speaking of challenges, going to visit my grandson at Forest is no small feat. It was made much easier by the Prison Society bus. It was a long trip though. We left at 2 AM and got back at 11 PM. It was a wonderful visit. There was a different atmosphere there. The workers were kind and less tense. In Philadelphia the searches of visitors is more invasive by making you lift your bra, tongue, and given a pat down with the guard often pulling your pantie waist. Visitors can wear jewelry, hats and head wraps. But one thing new though is that no cell phones are allowed inside. We had to leave them on the bus. There still was a wait of about two hours before we finally got to see each other.

Pat, I often think of you and the HRC group and get a lot of courage from knowing you all. Thank you for being the warm, wonderful and loving person that cares so much. You know suffering up front and close. Thank you for showing how to not only survive but thrive through it all.

I look forward to talking with you real soon.

Always,
Mary Anna

Families Dare to Speak, Dare to Resist



I stand on the shoulders of our heroes and roar.

Dear HRC Families, Friends, and Supporters -

I was surprised at the response to a request under the 'Right-to-know' law asking how much money is spent by the offender population, during 2013, on commissary products—the answer was a jaw-dropping \$39,075,755.39. In answer to the question how much money is spent on inmate telephone calls in 2013 —the answer was an astonishing \$15,125,417.62. When I looked at the, JPAY EFT Transactions and Dollar Amounts (to the right & below) that came through Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in 2013 . . . “Holy Sh_!” These figures were making my head swim. I couldn't believe that Pennsylvania prisons take in so much money on commissary. AND, this has nothing to do with the tax dollars that's deducted from our pay checks; this is money that we give freely to our loved ones.

I calmed myself down and looked at these figures again, this time I saw PEOPLE POWER. Each transaction represents someone on the outside who cares about someone on the inside. What if these were votes? What if these were the number of people at a protest rally fighting against crooked cops, lawyers, and judges; taking a stand against unfair laws; demanding an end to torture, solitary confinement and mass incarceration of our men, women, and children.

I eyeballed it once more and I saw POWER IN THE DOLLAR. Each dollar represents our money, the money that we send to our loved ones. I saw that, together, we're not as poor and insignificant as we think. What if we choose to do other things with these dollars/our dollars for just one day, or one week, or a month. This system would **CRASH**. Come visit HRC at 4134 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19104 the 2nd Wednesday of each month. I am a member of the Human Rights Coalition and I believe that, **TOGETHER**, we can turn things around in the present and our future.

Mama Patt

PA DOC – JPAY Transactions

| Month | Credit Card | Money Gram | Money Orders | TOTAL |
|---------|-------------|------------|--------------|---------|
| Jan-13 | 34,686 | 6,823 | 8,524 | 49,973 |
| Feb-13 | 39,503 | 8,001 | 5,766 | 53,270 |
| Mar-13 | 39,331 | 7,563 | 8,618 | 55,512 |
| Apr-13 | 36,933 | 7,629 | 6,455 | 51,017 |
| May-13 | 37,173 | 7,902 | 5,701 | 50,776 |
| Jun-13 | 35,111 | 7,214 | 5,248 | 47,573 |
| July-13 | 34,522 | 7,260 | 5,568 | 47,350 |
| Aug-13 | 37,451 | 7,928 | 5,381 | 50,760 |
| Sep-13 | 34,993 | 7,055 | 5,152 | 47,200 |
| Oct-13 | 37,484 | 7,754 | 5,200 | 50,438 |
| Nov-13 | 37,960 | 7,834 | 4,660 | 50,454 |
| Dec-13 | 42,317 | 7,987 | 5,350 | 55,654 |
| | | | | |
| Totals | 447,404 | 90,950 | 71,623 | 609,977 |

| Month | Credit Card | MoneyGram | Money Orders | TOTAL |
|---------|-----------------|----------------|----------------|-----------------|
| Jan-13 | \$2,439,328.39 | \$568,704.55 | \$589,593.37 | \$3,597,626.31 |
| Feb-13 | \$3,159,097.07 | \$820,004.27 | \$429,004.90 | \$4,408,106.24 |
| Mar-13 | \$3,109,813.90 | \$657,075.51 | \$681,885.65 | \$4,448,775.06 |
| Apr-13 | \$2,762,200.15 | \$663,933.06 | \$488,347.84 | \$3,914,481.05 |
| May-13 | \$2,734,032.10 | \$688,178.30 | \$430,256.61 | \$3,852,467.01 |
| Jun-13 | \$2,557,601.92 | \$639,559.81 | \$417,020.00 | \$3,614,181.73 |
| July-13 | \$2,513,012.68 | \$619,617.87 | \$421,924.64 | \$3,554,555.19 |
| Aug-13 | \$2,693,606.39 | \$659,656.66 | \$421,471.78 | \$3,774,734.83 |
| Sep-13 | \$2,522,196.80 | \$595,417.21 | \$407,061.54 | \$3,524,675.55 |
| Oct-13 | \$2,706,353.09 | \$657,949.11 | \$400,887.16 | \$3,765,189.36 |
| Nov-13 | \$2,734,917.96 | \$655,804.55 | \$364,324.01 | \$3,755,046.52 |
| Dec-13 | \$3,081,351.77 | \$681,871.94 | \$397,635.71 | \$4,160,859.42 |
| | | | | |
| Totals | \$33,013,512.22 | \$7,907,772.84 | \$5,449,413.21 | \$46,370,698.27 |

PA DOC – JPAY Dollar Amounts

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

What's The News!

New York Public Defenders Walk Out Of Court Protesting Eric Garner's Death

Dec. 17, 2014

By: Tasneem Nashrulla, from BuzzFeed



Around 100 New York public defenders staged a walkout at Brooklyn Criminal Court Wednesday, marking five months since Eric Garner died after an NYPD officer placed him in a chokehold. The movement was in response to the Staten Island grand jury's decision to not indict the officer involved in Garner's death and to call for accountability for other victims of police brutality.

The movement, which began on Dec. 10, calls for 11 days of action — one day for each time Garner told police "I can't breathe" while the chokehold was applied.

The public defenders were also protesting racism and inequality they say is prevalent in the criminal justice system.

Leah Maloney, a Legal Aid attorney, told BuzzFeed News that during her daily shift she gets at least one to two clients who have been beaten up by cops without any charges against them.

"We get clients who are beaten, assaulted, and in some cases, sexually assaulted, by cops every day," Anne Oredoko, a Legal Aid attorney and part of the Attorneys of Color Caucus within the ALAA, told BuzzFeed News.

"We are experts on the system, and we know the system is broken," Roy Wasserman, a Legal Aid attorney said, adding, "grand juries are rigged."

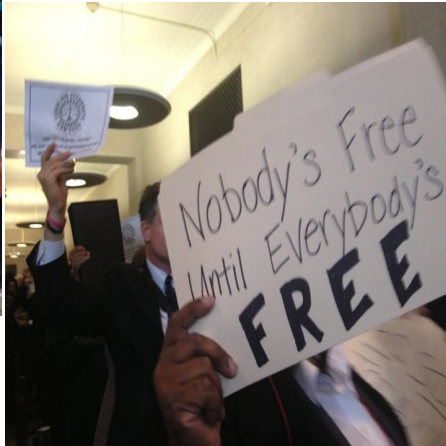
Wasserman said the police don't go to white upper class neighborhoods, but go to poor neighborhoods to keep their numbers (of ar-

rests) up."

"Instead of being reprimanded, bad cops get promoted," he said.

Several NFL players, including those from the St. Louis Rams, joined the "I Can't Breathe" protests on Sunday in memory of Eric Garner, the man who died after a chokehold by a New York police officer.

Receiver Kenny Britt wrote on his cleats the names of Garner, Michael Brown, and Trayvon Martin, whose deaths all sparked protests across the nation.



Obama commutes sentences of eight prisoners convicted on drug charges

By TIMOTHY M. PHELPS

President Obama commuted the sentences Wednesday of eight prisoners serving lengthy terms for drug charges, but it was only a fraction of the 6,561 who applied for his help. In January, the Justice Department announced an ambitious program to recruit lawyers to help drug offenders seek presidential clemency after being jailed under harsh sentencing laws. The move was in line with Atty. Gen. Eric H. Holder Jr.'s push to reduce the U.S. prison population, particularly among African Americans serving disproportionately longer sentences for crack cocaine possession. In April, the department announced fairly restrictive eligibility guidelines. Prisoners must have served at least 10 years, have no violent history and have received a substantially longer sentence than they would have received today. Some of those who have applied so far may still receive clemency, as the number officially re-

jected or otherwise processed is only in the hundreds, according to a Justice Department official who was not authorized to speak publicly.

The so-called Clemency Project 2014 group of lawyers trying to help prisoners win clemency is still processing more than 20,000 applications, according to sentencing experts.

"We can expect that until Congress acts particularly to change mandatory minimum sentences, we will not be able to address the problems of overcrowding in federal prisons through clemency," said Jeremy Haile of The Sentencing Project, a Washington advocacy group.

Haile said there are signs the Republican-led Senate may take up changes to the sentencing laws in January.

U.S. Supreme Court to hear Miller retroactivity case

December 12, 2014

The U.S. Supreme Court has agreed to hear *Toca v. Louisiana*, a case that could clarify whether the *Miller v. Alabama* decision should be applied retroactively. A retroactive decision in *Toca* potentially would allow thousands of individuals currently serving mandatory life without parole sentences for crimes committed as children an opportunity for resentencing and a second chance at life. In June 2012 *Miller* abolished mandatory life-without-parole sentences for youth. However, the Supreme Court left open the question whether its decision applies retroactively to children sentenced prior to *Miller*. The petitioner in this case, George Toca, was sentenced to mandatory life without parole in 1985 for shooting his friend during a botched robbery at the age of 17. During 30 years of incarceration, Mr. Toca has maintained his innocence, grown, and matured. He also has earned a bachelor's degree and has strong support from the victim's family, who believes Mr. Toca is innocent and wants to see him released.

The open question of *Miller* retroactivity has led to inconsistent treatment of individuals from state to state. To date, nine state supreme courts have ruled that *Miller* applies retroactively. Four states supreme courts—including Louisiana, where Mr. Toca is serving—have ruled that *Miller* does not apply retroactively.

(Continued on page 39)

THE MOVEMENT

www.hrcoalition.org

What's The News!

(Continued from page 38)

California Law Denying Good Time Credits to Gang Members in SHUs Held Constitutional

by David Reutter published in Prison Legal News December, 2014

The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals held on April 25, 2014 that a California law which denies good conduct credits to prisoners who are validated gang members held in a Security Housing Unit (SHU) does not violate the Ex Post Facto Clause.

California prisoner Manuel Francisco Nevarez received a 12-year prison sentence for robbery in 2000. Eight years later he was convicted of smuggling marijuana into prison, resulting in an additional three-year sentence. To compound his problems, on December 12, 2008, prison officials validated him as an associate of the Mexican Mafia prison gang, which resulted in an indeterminate term in the SHU at Pelican Bay State Prison.

On January 25, 2010, California Penal Code Section 2933.6 was amended to make validated gang affiliates ineligible to earn sentence reduction credits while “in the Security Housing Unit, Psychiatric Services Unit, Behavioral Management Unit, or the Administrative Segregation Unit for that misconduct.”

Prior to the amendment, Nevarez earned one day of good conduct credit for every two days served. While he did not lose the credits earned prior to the statutory amendment, he could no longer earn them while held in the SHU. He challenged the amendment as a violation of the Ex Post Facto Clause of the U.S. Constitution. His habeas corpus petitions in state courts and federal district court were denied, and he appealed.

Nevarez argued that *Weaver v. Graham*, 450 U.S. 24 (1981) and *Lynce v. Mathis*, 519 U.S. 433 (1997) [*PLN*, April 1997, p.1] made it clear that a post-conviction amendment that diminishes a prisoner's good time credits for prior conduct violates the Ex Post Facto Clause because it effectively increases the prisoner's punishment – i.e., the length of time he must serve.

The Ninth Circuit determined the facts in *Weaver* and *Lynce* were distinguishable. It agreed with a state court that found Section

2933.6 does not punish “the criminal conduct for which petitioner was imprisoned,” but instead “punishes for conduct that occurred after the commission of, or the conviction for, the punishable offense.”

The appellate court noted the only relevant question under the AEDPA is whether that analysis is an objectively unreasonable application of clearly established federal law. “It is not,” the Court of Appeals held. Accordingly, the district court's denial of Nevarez's habeas petition was affirmed. See: *Nevarez v. Barnes*, 749 F.3d 1124 (9th Cir. 2014), *petition for cert. filed*.

2015 will be the year brands take a public stand on social issues



Photograph: David Poller/Zuma Press/Corbis
2015 will be the year of the pro-social brand.

Pro-social brands are the next step for companies looking to morally engage with consumers. Driven by marketers who are moving beyond claims of sustainability and into strong stands on relevant social issues, this trend picked up momentum in 2014. It will be positively explosive in 2015.

So what's the difference between sustainable and pro-social brands?

A traditional sustainable brand expects that customers will laud and applaud it for its charitable giving and its actions on key environmental issues. It's the classic, safe, (usually) apolitical “vote with your dollars” approach: sustainable brands tell stories that cast them in the role of hero and expect audiences to simply play the role of starry-eyed hero-worshipper.

In the past, marketing based on sustainability or triple-bottom line approaches has been shown to drive a certain amount of loyalty. However, brands have also learned that they reach a point of diminishing returns.

The most ethical shoppers care about these issues, but the majority of customers hardly notice the claims of cleaner supply chains, fair trade or carbon offsetting. And even if they do notice, many have lost trust in such claims. Even much-admired one-for-one programs, such as those pioneered by Toms shoes, have lost their novelty.

This isn't to say that the era of brands striving to behave ethically is over or should end: cleaning up supply chains and pushing for fair trade are more essential than ever. But making these activities the core of a brand's promise is not enough. What's more, the failure of these sorts of marketing approaches often discourages brands from continuing these programs.

Social issues transform ethics

The pro-social trend will accelerate the urgency for ethical behavior. At the same time, it will transform how companies – and customers – live those ethics.

Pro-social brands are more politically disruptive and inspiring than basic sustainable brands. Instead of focusing on what a brand has done internally to drive a better world, pro-social brands look outward to take a stand on key moral issues.

When they weigh in, they publicly prove that these issues have reached a tipping point of acceptability – and, in so doing, they increase the rate of change. A perfect example is the issue of same-sex marriage. In 2014, the Huffington Post reported on 27 major companies that boldly came out in favor of marriage equality. Taking this position wasn't a safe stand, but it was a highly viral one.

When a brand puts a stake in the ground on a controversial topic, such as carbon pricing, gender equality, racial justice, or even excessive corporate power, it sticks its neck out, adding fuel to a cause and challenging its customers to rally behind it.

The brand becomes far more participatory, making room for its customers to take on a heroic role by fighting for a more altruistic, tolerant, selfless world.

The pro-social brand doesn't say: “Look what we've done. Now buy our stuff.” Instead it says: “We're willing to take a stand. Stand with us.”

I've written a few times in the Guardian this year about how brands like Always, Airbnb and Fat Tire are building participatory tribes around key pro-social values. I also called for brands to take bold, political stands on climate change. Not long afterward, major corporations – including Coke and Pepsi – joined forces on Col-

(Continued on page 40)

What's The News!

(Continued from page 39)

lectively.org to call for political action on the issue.

Do brands have a place in politics?

That said, there are a couple of obvious pitfalls to the pro-social trend. For one, some think the last thing the US needs is more corporations meddling in the political process. And for that matter, it's worth asking if consumers really need big brands telling them what to think on key social issues.

I think there's an important distinction to be made here. Pro-social branding is not about meddling in electoral politics; rather, it's about taking an accurate read of the pulse of today's culture. For decades, society has been trending toward wider empathy, diversity and citizen engagement. Pro-social branding helps to amplify that movement.

This connection between beliefs and consumption isn't new: since the mid-20th century, brands have served as tools for people to express their identities and values. True pro-social brands will stay away from the ballot boxes themselves while encouraging citizens to raise their voices.

Avoiding hypocrisy

A second often-voiced concern is that, by making customers the heroes of brands' stories, companies will be able to absolve themselves of cleaning up their own acts. Should we encourage corporations to offload responsibility on citizens?

I don't believe that is much of a danger here. If pro-social brands take bold stands on an issue — as Ben and Jerry's did on campaign finance, for instance — they take a huge risk if they then brazenly violate that stand in their own actions. For example, if Facebook were to speak out in favor of same sex marriage or Always were to take a stand against discrimination toward girls, they would then be obligated to follow up on their statements in their own activities to avoid hypocrisy. If they then practiced discriminatory behavior behind the scenes, they would set themselves up for major embarrassment.

In effect, taking a controversial pro-social stand becomes a public commitment to better behavior. Thus, a pro-social brand is a sustainable brand — just a more involved and committed one.

How big will this trend go? I predict that the most sensationally viral and impactful marketing campaigns of 2015 will be bold, political and highly in tune with the twitter verse. And I expect their message will extend beyond: "We're sustainable. Buy from us."

By: *Jonah Sachs - CEO of branding agency Free Range Studios, and author of Winning the Story Wars: Why Those Who Tell (and Live) the Best Stories Will Rule the Future.*



Black Woman Researching Racial Bias In Criminal Justice Wins Prestigious 'Genius Grant'

Sep 17, 2014, By NewsOne

CHICAGO (AP) — A professor whose research is helping a California police department improve its strained relationship with the black community and a lawyer who advocates for victims of domestic abuse are among the 21 winners of this year's MacArthur Foundation "genius grants."

The Chicago-based John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation announced on Wednesday the 2014 recipients, who will each receive \$625,000 to spend any way they like.

The professor and lawyer, part of an eclectic group that also includes scientists, mathematicians, historians, a cartoonist and a composer, are among several recipients whose work involves topics that have dominated the news in the past year.

"I think getting this (grant) speaks to people's sense that this is the kind of work that needs to be done," said recipient Jennifer Eberhardt, a Stanford University social psychologist who has researched racial stereotypes and crime. Shrouded in secrecy, the selection process involves nominations from anonymous groups and recommendations from the foundation's board of directors. Recipients have no idea they've won until they get a call from the foundation, and even then recipients have been known to wonder initially if someone is trying to trick them.

John Henneberger, a housing advocate in Texas, said he was so stunned when he got his call

that he had to sit down.

"I got really quiet and they (people he was with) were asking me, 'Did somebody die?'" he said.

Eberhardt's work prompted the Oakland, California, police department to ask for her help studying racial biases among its officers and how those biases play out on the street — topics that have been debated nationally in the wake of the police shooting of Michael Brown, an unarmed black 18-year-old in Missouri. Eberhardt, who is also studying the use of body cameras by police — another topic of particular interest since Brown's shooting — said, "I hope this will show the work matters, holds value and promotes social change."

The justice system is also at the heart of Sarah Deer's work as a legal scholar and advocate for Native American women living on reservations, who suffer higher-than-average rates of domestic abuse and sexual violence.

Deer, a Native American who teaches law in Minnesota, met with women who simply stopped reporting such attacks because their tribal governments had been stripped of the authority to investigate and because federal authorities were often unwilling to do so, she said. The foundation pointed to her instrumental role in reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act by Congress in 2013 that restored some of those abilities to tribes. "For the first time since 1978 ... tribes (can) prosecute non-Indians who have committed acts of sexual assault and domestic violence on reservations," she said.

(Continued on page 41)

What's The News!

(Continued from page 40)

Like Deer, fellow recipient Jonathan Rapping has worked to improve the lives of others.

A former public defender, Rapping founded Gideon's Promise after seeing a legal system that he said valued speed over quality representation of the indigent. The organization trains, mentors and assists public defenders to help them withstand the intense pressure that can come with massive caseloads.

Today, the program that began in 2007 for 16 attorneys in two offices in Georgia and Louisiana has more than 300 participants in 15 states.

The foundation recognized Khaled Mattawa, an associate professor at the University of Michigan, for his poetry and translations of Arab contemporary poets.

Mattawa, who said he started translating the poetry as way to teach himself to write poetry, said the work can connect people from different cultures. "The poets are bearing witness not only to the humanity of their own people but of a shared humanity," he said.

The awards, given annually since 1981, are doled out over a five-year period. This year's class brings the number of recipients to more than 900.

Most winners are not widely known outside their fields, but the list has over the years included writer Susan Sontag and filmmaker John Sayles.

December 4, 2014

(The Sentencing Project)

ON ERIC GARNER'S DEATH AND THE NEED TO RE-ENVISION PO- LICING

Eric Garner's tragic death at the hands of a New York City police officer and a grand jury's decision to not indict have heightened concerns about police practices and accountability. Coming in the wake of a police officer's fatal shooting of Michael Brown in Ferguson, Missouri and subsequent non-indictment, Americans are outraged and demanding change. "Black lives matter" has become the



rallying cry of activists and is being echoed by political leaders including New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio. De Blasio has noted:

"It's a phrase that should never have to be said, it should be self-evident, but our history requires us to say that black lives matter."

Black and white Americans experience different police practices. They encounter police at different rates and for different reasons, and they are treated differently during those encounters. Racially biased use of discretion – either intentional or unintentional – is one cause of the disproportionate police contact that is not explained by differences in crime rates. Another cause is policies, such as "stop and frisk" and "broken windows policing," that place people of color under greater scrutiny with the rationale of circumventing serious crimes. Officer Darren Wilson stopped Brown for jaywalking. Officer Daniel Pantaleo and his colleagues approached Garner for selling untaxed cigarettes.

There is limited evidence to support the efficacy of targeting such petty crimes, while there is great cause for concern about the impact. Excessive police encounters erode trust and cooperation with the police, contribute to the overrepresentation of people of color in prisons and jails, and lead to the disproportionate rate of fatal police encounters among unarmed African American men. We must work to correct all of these problems. Recommended reading: "Broken Windows Policing Doesn't Work," on Slate.

(Continued from page 35)

Jesus, Jahlil Thomas, Robert Jones or Erin Forbes. Not even in the vicious beating of Thomas Jones last summer, which was captured on live television, were any cops convicted.

In the case of Donta Dawson, Abraham has openly sought to thwart attempts by higher courts to bring charges against former Philadelphia Police Officer Christopher DiPasquale for the murder of this African American youth.

Abraham's office has also been tainted by the 39th Police District scandal. Hundreds of convictions were overturned and dozens of people released from prison after police frame-ups and faked evidence introduced by police and prosecutors against the African American community were exposed.

Abraham is running for re-election. An African American candidate, Alex Talmadge Jr., is challenging Abraham in the primary election May 15, targeting her racist record. Talmadge has also called for a moratorium on the death penalty and seems to be gaining support in the oppressed communities, prompting Abraham to run ads promoting herself as a "friend of the Black community."

Abraham's campaign organizers publicly accused Talmadge of "playing the race card." Recently they've launched a campaign to vilify Abu-Jamal and MOVE supporters by accusing them of using anti-Semitic slurs against Abraham. The press has chosen to focus on this unproven allegation rather than cover the growing support for Abu-Jamal and the Free Mumia/ Justice for MOVE encampment.

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say what? . . . speak up! / writings of multiplicity

Say What? . . .Speak Up? Can I Talk?

By: Eric X. Rambert
July 2014

Say what, speak up, writings of multiplicity is a dynamic platform and I want to take this opportunity to give props where props are due to Brothers Saleem, Lee, and Butler for such a platform with those who helped mobilize and bring it into fruition. Props!!!

Young Bro. Bradshaw and Brotha Bostic's stories were heart felt because I can relate with them in several ways. Bradshaw's experience as a juvenile being 17 years old with no knowledge of the White man's heaven and the Black man's hell (the law), having been forced to plead guilty to a crime I did not do under the guise of 40-80 years verses 10-25 years, then thrown away like an overstuffed bag of trash. Bostic - I too was a co-defendant to an adult in the crimes we were accused of; he got no time, I got 10-25 years, it should be duly noted!

Under the statues that I was tried under - I was a 17 year old career criminal to which the current Chief Justice of Pennsylvania's Supreme Court was the former Philadelphia District Attorney Ron D. Castille who instituted Philadelphia's Career Criminal Program which was an incentive for recidivism or let's call it what it is - to fill prisons, and to rise in the chain of command to be Justice Chief!

In January 1983 Castille's revised career criminal selection consisted of those convicted three times for certain classes of homicide, rape, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, burglary and aggravated assault; or twice convicted of robbery. Note, I'm 17 years old just six months after the revision of the Career Criminal Program arrested June 2, 1983 and certified as an adult, selected, placed in and forced into an unintelligent plea by Jules Epstein the big professor who filed a motion to removed me from this program that he knew by "White Law" I did not belong in because I had no prior criminal convictions even though Jules Epstein says I had two prior convictions. He also said I had two adjudications for robbery - *All Wrong!* As a juvenile I was arrested only four times, one resulted in adjudication for robbery, not two adjudications, and placed in St. Gabriel Hall. The professor, who put the rope around the ignorant Black boy's neck and walked to the tree so that Justice Chief Castille and his cronies could hang me, says he did nothing wrong. Well if he believes that I was convicted twice and had two adjudications for robbery, which are both lies, his filing the motion to remove me from the Career Criminal Program either was complicit or as a public pretender was ineffective in failing to investigate. He would have known that I had no prior convictions and only one adjudication for robbery, not two like he says his records and I still haven't been given a copy of reflects. The plea was not only unintelligent, it was illegal because I couldn't plead where a judge or (tribunal) lacks subject matter jurisdiction to try me as a Career

Criminal. The lack of subject matter jurisdiction cannot be waived nor conferred, it can be presented anytime; and, the "White man's" law says must be void! So even though the professor abandoned his challenge and later in 2005 is telling me the appellate courts has rejected any challenge to the Career Criminal Program uniformly; I guess so with the Justice Chief Castille functioning in the capacity of overseer of his "put'em away" project.

However the cases that he set fire to as a smoke screen does not fit (if it doesn't fit you must acquit - so says Johnny Cochran). Since July 29, 2010 I have had a PCRA laid to rest without a decision rendered to this July 23, 2014 date and counting. And it's obvious to me that Justice Chief Castille is keeping that rope around my neck obstructing justice, committing a hate crime, a human rights violation not in accord with or to international laws against hate crimes and acts of terrorism in the form of racism, institutionalized/ systematic racism, racial conspiracy, racist tactics of cruel and unusual punishments, psychologically, emotionally and physically behind the façade of crime and slavery! When Professor Epstein, Justice Chief Castille, his cronies and Judge James D. McCrudden got finish lynching me without murdering me they sent met to the slave plantation, Camp Hill to the Master Hillbilly who wound up beating and torturing me so bad that when I came into consciousness I was at Plantation Huntingdon on the concrete floor of a shower stall, naked, freezing and starving. It was the men inside that notorious death hole that fought for my well-being or I may have died at the tender age of 18. It was at that plantation that I first met Mumia Abu Jamal and other men. Unlike Bro. Nate Butler's experience those men had hands on mentality; they taught and trained the young brothers to become men!

The slave masters placed me inside the Phase II Death Row cell and tortured me for nine days, because there had been no death warrants signed they used the cell as a torture chamber, no mattress, nothing but steel and concrete, and a window outside that they would open up in shifts, they would feed you but put foreign objects in your food - their favorite was their chewing tobacco. This was after they ran in the cell beat me and dragged me to another cell. I'm shipped to Plantation Pittsburgh, known as "The Wall" a notorious murder and mayhem spot, at the age of 19 where I was convicted of assault, riot, and criminal conspiracy for the disturbance/fire the slave masters plotted and put into motion. They knew what they had put into play, they expected mass murders and there were mass assaults. The Fire Marshall said that the fire in the tunnel was arson, no prisoners could access the area, staff had to sign them out from control to get keys. There were those who took the fifth not wanting to talk to the state troopers about the fire they'd set. I was assaulted by both guards and state troopers. I was beat unconscious, suffered broken ribs, they threw me in a cell that had been set on fire in the hole and was flooded with fire water, burned mattress and trash. All the window were knocked out, it was zero below snow and ice and it

(Continued on page 43)

say what ? . . . speak up! / writings of multiplicity

(Continued from page 42)

was four days later when they entered the cell in full riot gear, smacked me in the head with a black jack, grabbed me by the mouth - to muffle any sound, threatened to murder me if I said a word, cuffed me in the nude and was escorting/kidnapping me outside the RHU's exercise yard door. I began kicking and yelling, it was then that anyone knew I was even inside the hole and possibly saved by life! They took me outside, threw me down the concrete stairs in the snow and ice and jumped on me, they beat me asking me who was with me and threatened to murder me if they find out I had something to do with beating their . . . C.O. Chizsky stomped me right in my private and I was out. If it hadn't been for our White Sister Souljah Theresa Saluri from the Pittsburgh Chapter of the Prison Society, big Johnny Mack's finance (White brother), her calling down to our Queen Pioneer the late Louise Williams and she and Brother Cliff Hudson coming in from Philadelphia under that chapter of the Prison Society and forcing them to treat me after seeing me in that condition, I may have lost a few things.

All of this is backed by the 13th Amendment to the Willie Lynch modern day "Making of a Slave"; 31 years I have fought against the machine. October 29, 2009 I was secretly kidnapped from Plantation Dallas to Plantation Coal Township right before the Dallas 6, as a matter of fact there's a report out that when they kidnapped me they came for Bro. Souljah Andre Jacobs and said he's moving into Rambert's cell, a security cell they made up as a torture chamber. I have many complaints on the webpage: <http://peopleagainstoprisonabuse.com/STATES/pennsylvania/rambert.html>. In 2012 and 2013 I testified for Bro. True Life Carrington Keys in his civil complaint. I was in solidarity with them brothers . . . Say What? Speak Up? Can I talk? You heard me!!!

Eric X. Rambert (Eman)
#AM-9223
SCI-Coal Township
1 Kelley Road
Coal Township, PA 17866

WASTED TIME

THE TIME THAT I'VE WASTED IS MY BIGGEST REGRET. SPENT IN THESE PLACES I WILL NEVER FORGET, JUST SITTING AND THINKING ABOUT THE THINGS I'VE DONE, THE CRYING THE LAUGHING, THE HURT AND THE FUN. NOW IT'S JUST ME AND MY HARD DRIVEN GUILT, BEHIND A WALL OF EMPTINESS THAT I ALLOWED TO BE BUILT.

I'M TRAPPED IN MY BODY JUST WANTING TO RUN BACK TO MY YOUTH WITH IT'S LAUGHTER AND REAL BIG FUN. BUT THE CHASE IS OVER AND THERE'S NO PLACE TO HIDE, EVERYTHING IS GONE INCLUDING MY PRIDE. WITH REALITY SUDDENLY RIGHT IN MY FACE I'M SCARED, ALONE AND STUCK IN THIS HELL HOLE OF A PLACE. NOW MEMORIES OF THE PAST FLASH THROUGH MY HEAD. AND THE PAIN IS OBVIOUS BY THE TEARS THAT I, SHED. I,

ASK MYSELF WHY AND WHERE I WENT WRONG. I, GUESS I, WAS WEAK WHEN I, SHOULD HAVE BEEN VERY, VERY, STRONG. . . .

I'D PRETEND TO BE RUGGED SO FAST AND SO COOL WHEN ACTUALLY I, WAS LOST LIKE A BLINDED OLD FOOL. I'M GETTING TOO OLD FOR THIS REAL WEARISOME GAME OF ACTING REAL HARD WITH NO SENSE OF SHAME. IT'S TIME THAT I CHANGE AND GET ON WITH MY LIFE. FULFILLING MY DREAMS, FOR A BIGGER FAMILY AND A GOOD LOVING WIFE ON MY TEAM. WHAT MY FUTURE WILL HOLD I, REALLY DON'T KNOW BUT THE YEARS THAT I'VE WASTED ARE STARTING TO SHOW. I, JUST LIVE FOR THE DAY WHEN I'LL GET A NEW START AND THE DREAMS I, STILL HOLD DEEP IN MY HEART. I, HOPE I CAN MAKE IT. I AT LEAST HAVE TO TRY BECAUSE I'M HEADING TOWARD DEATH AND I, DON'T WANT TO REALLY DIE. (NOBODY REALLY DOES IN THIS BIG OLD WORLD.)

BY: ANTHONY L. BUTLER (14 YEARS IN THE HOLE)

Malicious Retaliation Acts Against Political Prisoners

Greetings to you. I Muwsa Green #HV-5362 a prisoner at SCI-Fayette Correctional Facility pleads for an end to Pennsylvania legislature and prison guard malicious retaliatory acts. I am going to draw a parallel between the two systems. The state and federal regulations must give political prisoner rights under the US Constitution; they cannot take away any rights guaranteed by the Constitution. The first amendment right to petition the government for redress of grievances justified court intervention in correspondence to and from no judicial public official and agencies. The cherished American freedom of speech and press were involved in regulations concerning access to news media. These rights also were involved in attempts by prison officials to exclude newspapers, magazines, and books from an institution.

In the Philadelphia Daily News 2014 the state legislature maliciously retaliated against Abu-Jamal to deter him from expressing himself about his innocence. Also Abu-Jamal gave the students powerful words of rebuilding civil society where so our children can have peace, justice, freedom, equality. The state legislature always advertises to the public that their goals are to rehabilitate but their actions are hypocrisies. It seems to me they are trying to place a burden on the political prisoner (prisoner of politics) so we prisoners can't seek help from no outside advocate.

(Continued on page 44)

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(Continued from page 43)

At SCI-Fayette I've witnessed political prisoners (prisoners of politics) repeatedly, malicious, retaliated against to deter them from exercising their First Amendment Right to petition the government agencies for a redress of grievances. According to law the Department of Corrections (DOC) is a government agency within the state, therefore prisoners shall not be punish for using the "grievance system".

Make no mistake about it, this is a contest between harassment and dysfunctional, between tyrant and hate, between a state that specializes in slave master and slave therapy in order to force their will on political prisoners. To change their behavior, political mind, attitude, it is necessary to weaken, undermine or remove communication with the outside world, most of these family communication systems are the face-to-face confirmation of present behavior and the old attitudes which are provided by those with whom (we have) close emotional ties.

However the last thing the system wants is prisoners who are conscious and can challenge authority, corruption, brutality, injustice on the merits of fairness, justice, empathy, and equality.

The DOC prevents all communication with other prisoners inside the Special Management Unit (SMU) by isolating them. Prisoners are even denied to enter the law library with other prisoners to assist one another on their criminal litigation. DOC is trying to make political prisoners, (prisoners of politics) anti-social so they can prove to civil society that prisoners are uncivilized animals. Keep in mind if we prisoners standup against the assumption of deception that is used to manipulate society's perception of reality, we prisoners are considered "disruptive" or a "behavior problem".

The SMU is not a "program" because there is no daily counseling section or group activity for OPhases 4 prisoners, and the SMU is mix with the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU) prisoners. The SMUs are designed to warehouse and neutralize United States prisoners and there is no separation between RHU and SMU.

Transform Retaliation Tactic

According to Prison Legal News 2014, James Kilgore wrote an article in part and said: prisons and jails have become the new asylums and jailers are waking up to the fact that mental health facilities also represent a new cash cow.

At SCI-Fayette's SMU, I witnessed correctional officials manipulating the system they're supposed to uphold. A political prisoner by the name of Corliuectho McMillian #AY-6916 exposed SCI-Fayette's brutality inside a 1983 civil action. The officers retaliated when giving him a disability code in accordance to the DC 13.8.1 Mental Health Policy and sent him to SCI psychiatric ward. McMillian filed a civil action November 2014 against SCI-Fayette's SMU officers for persuading an inmate to assault him with body fluid. I overheard the psychiatrist at McMillian's cell door say that he was delusional. The Unit Manager and Warden agreed with the psychiatrist because they were involved in McMillian civil action. None of the correctional officials involved wanted to look at the mountain of evidence to show that McMillian was right.

The DOC is going to be taking the psychiatric route more often to silence the opposition to their own insanity and to deter any advocate who is willing to assist prisoners.

We political prisoners are motivated by the words of David Icke's book 'Human Race', we must demand our right to freedom of expression, yes, but we must also demand with equal vigor the same rights for those we disagree with. If one person does not have the freedom to voice their views than no one has. The rest don't have freedom of speech, only the "right" to say things acceptable to the state and public opinion. Where is the freedom in that?

We prisoners must not be denied the right to expression or be punish for exercising that right which is available to prisoners under the 9th and 10th Amendment of the US Constitution.

Muwsa Green #HV-5362
SCI-Fayette

The time will come when silence is betrayal. That time has arrived . . . (Dr. King)

"To whom it may concern"

Re: The cries of the poor can not be ignored . . .

The time has arrived for me where I must respond to a travesty or betray my conscience by remaining silent! As a re-

(Continued on page 45)

THE MOVEMENT

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say what ? . . . speak up! / writings of multiplicity

(Continued from page 44)

formed inmate, I am very circumspect of my mien. The word circumspect means “mindful”, and the word mien is a person’s bearings, appearance, and manner.

I am careful of what I say and doing my new redemption as evolution deems! But, my bearings were really tested the other day when I saw an elderly inmate literally crying because he was in excruciating pain because he couldn’t get his medication! As the tears flowed down his face, I experienced the distaste of neglect and mistreatment. “This senior citizen named Mr. Charlie Palmer, has cancer!”

My bearings are aloof and shaky to witness a so called compassionate nation preach altruism and philanthropy, but yet practice apathy and misanthrope?

The state’s mien regarding sick, elderly inmates is truly barbaric ... My emotions have been sullied to the extent that I may need some medicine to stop from shaking and crying! To see this senior citizen in so much pain is unbelievable and paradoxical to humanity! Mr. Palmer told me that they told him that they could not find his medication, It makes me wonder if perhaps they want him to pass away? His cancer medication may cost the state too much money. Maybe it would be cheaper to bury him? Mr. Palmer does not have a life sentence, but yet the state will not pardon him to live his remaining time on the street.

As I assimilate this sad agonizing reality in America’s prisons, I’m reminded of an old maxim: “In spite of everything, humanity is still admirable . . .”

As my eyes and soul weep, I vocally and openly disagree!

Sincerely,

A disheartened inmate

Avon Holland #HN-7410
SCI-Greene State Prison

Protect Freedom of Speech & Keep Mumia on the Air

Overturn Senate Bill 508: defend the First Amendment rights of prisoners, journalists & all of us.

This campaign will launch the Prison Radio Defense Fund to defeat PA Senate Bill 508 – signed by Governor Tom Corbett – which prohibits prisoners and those formerly incarcerated from speaking publicly. The law targets journalists, non-profits and individuals who aid prisoners in communicating to the outside world.

Your Donation Will:

- Make the legal battle to overturn SB508 possible.
- Fund Prison Radio’s work recording and broadcasting Mumia Abu-Jamal’s and other prisoners’ commentaries throughout the U.S. and internationally.
- Protect the First Amendment right to free speech.
- Be matched dollar-for-dollar. The Redwood Justice Fund has pledged to match your contribution up to \$45,000 until the end of the year!

What We Need

We need to raise \$45,000 to keep disseminating voices of dissent on the airwaves and to wage a legal battle. The Prison Radio Defense Fund will file a lawsuit immediately along with the Abolitionist Law Center and the Amistad Law Project to block the unconstitutional law SB508. But we need your help to win.

We Believe in Giving Voice to the Voiceless

This legislation was written in response to Mumia Abu-Jamal’s Commencement Address to Goddard College graduates in October. This so-called “Revictimization Relief Act” gives the PA Attorney General or District Attorney the power to file an injunction on behalf of a victim against prisoners and those who assist prisoners. SB508 violates prisoners’ First Amendment rights and has received public criticism from the American Civil Liberties Union and the Center for Constitutional Rights.

While this law only affects Pennsylvania, politicians hope that other states will copy them. We can’t let that happen! Prison Radio has been recording Mumia Abu-Jamal and other prisoners for over 20 years and we plan to continue doing so in spite of the threats we’ve received. Since this law was signed, we have been recording and broadcasting Mumia more than ever before. We must abolish this law so that prisoners’ voices are not silenced, and we need your support!

Noelle Hanrahan, Prison Radio



To give by check:
PO Box 411074
SF, CA, 94141

Stock or legacy gifts:
Noelle Hanrahan
(415) 706 - 5222

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NO NEW PRISONS! DECARCERATION! REINVEST IN OUR COMMUNITIES!

RALLY FOR MEANINGFUL COMMUTATION

On August 28th, people concerned about the fate of individuals sentenced to Life Without Parole gathered at the Capitol in Harrisburg and held a Rally to Restore Meaningful Commutation. The event was largely organized by *Let's Get Free: the Women and Trans Prisoner Defense Committee*, and supported by *Decarcerate PA*, *New Voices Pittsburgh: Women of Color for Reproductive Justice*, *Human Rights Coalition*, and *Fight for Lifers West*, among other organizations.

Currently, Pennsylvania has the second highest number of people serving LWOP sentences of any state in the country, and is one of only six states that denies parole to lifers.

The date for the rally was chosen because it was the day that the Board of Pardons was holding its Merit Review hearing at which it would be determined if lifer Avis Lee would get a public hearing on her petition for commutation. Avis has spent the last 31 years of her life in prison for being a lookout in a robbery that went wrong and ended a man's life. Avis has never denied

her role in the events, and has attempted to seek help for the victim, but under the felony murder rule she is condemned to die in prison.

A number of people participating in the rally showed up early to sit in on the hearing and show solidarity with Avis and others seeking commutation. In an act of callous injustice, Avis and others were denied their chance at a public hearing by the Board of Pardons.

"Avis Lee has been incarcerated for 34 years. Avis transcribes braille, donates her time to charity, lives on the Honor Block. Imagine what she could do if she were home," said Suzanne South of *Let's Get Free: The Women and Trans Prisoner Defense Committee*.

Angered and saddened by the Board of Pardons' decision, many people spoke passionately at the rally against life without parole sentencing and the broken commutations process.

Tyrone Wertz who served 36 years on a

felony murder sentence before his own sentence was commuted in 2010 said, "There are thousands of men and women languishing in Pennsylvania prisons who deserve the opportunity to be with their families, to be on the street, to raise their children and to be role models... life in Pennsylvania is a death sentence"

Decarcerate PA's Sarah Morris underlined how life without parole and the commutations process is robbing our communities of leaders: "For the last eight years, I've been lucky enough to have mentors on the inside who happen to all be serving life sentences. They spend all of their time thinking and strategizing about creating a better world and they have been condemned by the state of Pennsylvania to die in prison. Some of the most brilliant minds I know are sentenced to death by incarceration and I believe all of our communities would be stronger if we gave them a chance to come home and to join us in the struggle on the outside."

After the rally, people broke up into teams

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MOBILIZING AGAINST ANTI-PRISONER LEGISLATION

In the summer issue of our newsletter, we let you know about a package of anti-prisoner bills that had recently passed through the House Judiciary committee. The worst of these bills (HB2386) was introduced by Montgomery County Representative Todd Stephens and proposed taking 25 percent of a prisoner's wages and 75 percent of all deposits into personal accounts to be deducted for any fees, costs, and restitution that person owes. Additional legislation proposed increased costs on people found guilty or placed in diversionary programs to raise money for the crime victims fund (HB2134, introduced by Rep. Masser); diverting people's tax refunds to pay court debts (HB2382, introduced by Rep. Kula); garnishing wages to pay court debts (HB2383, introduced by Rep. Toepel); making it easier for counties to collect court debts using collections agencies (HB2384, introduced by Rep. Costa); and diverting bail money to pay any owed costs and fines (HB2385, introduced by Rep. Delozier).

voted for them.

On October 3rd, Representative Mike Vereb introduced another bad bill, HB2533. Called the "Revictimization Relief Act," the bill allows victims, District Attorneys, and the Attorney General to sue people who have been convicted of "personal injury" crimes for speaking out publicly if it causes the victim of the crime "mental anguish." The bill was written in response to political prisoner Mumia Abu-Jamal's

across the nation for a national call-in day against SB508. Hundreds of people made calls, but unfortunately the legislature was set on attacking free speech, and the bill passed unanimously in the House and 37-11 in the Senate. The Abolitionist Law Center, the Amistad Law Project, and the MacArthur Justice Center, representing Mumia Abu-Jamal and Prison Radio, have already filed a lawsuit to challenge this bill in federal court. If this bill has dissuaded you from speaking out publicly and you

want to help with the lawsuit, please write to Amistad Law Project at P.O. Box 9148, Philadelphia, PA 19139.

At the close of the legislative session, only SB508 had passed through the General Assembly, and the Stephens bill (HB2386) had been stalled indefinitely. Delozier, Costa, Toepel, and Masser's bills did pass the House but did not advance through the Senate Judiciary committee. Several of the legislators we met with voted against the Masser and Delozier bills,



The Decarcerate PA bad bill eradication squad

Upon learning of this legislation, Decarcerate PA mobilized people to call and write their legislators and ask them to vote against these bad bills. On September 16th, a group of us traveled to Harrisburg to meet with legislators and tell them to vote no on all six bills. We met with about 30 legislators or their staff, outlined why we thought these bills were bad for prisoners, their families, and the state as a whole, and gave them a packet of additional information. Some legislators made commitments to vote against the bills, including some members of the House Judiciary Committee who had previously

pre-recorded commencement speech at Goddard College, and is a clear attempt to silence Mumia and other prisoners and formerly incarcerated people. We believe that this legislation is not actually designed to help victims, but is a cynical move by legislators to stop people in prison from speaking out against an unjust system. The bill is also a clear violation of the First Amendment. Unfortunately, the PA General Assembly didn't think so, and they fast-tracked the bill for approval by amending a different bill (SB508) to include the same language.

We mobilized quickly, calling on our allies

and Representative Dean even spoke out against the Masser bill on the House floor. Kula's bill never made it to the House floor.

The fact that only one of these seven bills became a law during this session is a small victory for Decarcerate PA and for prisoners and their loved ones across the state. We will continue to fight against these bills and all legislation that threatens to hurt people caught up in the legal system and their loved ones. Find out how you can get involved in the Action Steps section of this newsletter.

COMMUTATION *CONTINUED*

and spent the rest of the day in meetings with legislators to press for reform to the commutation system and an end to life without parole sentencing. Others spoke with reporters, and the rally received excellent coverage on ABC 27's Evening News, as well as written coverage by the Harrisburg Patriot News and several inter-

net blogs.

Bret Grote of the Abolitionist Law Center made the point that such harsh sentences do nothing to actually solve the problem of violence in our communities, remarking that: "LWOP is a pillar of race and class based mass incarceration. It does not

serve the value of deterring crime. There is no compelling evidence whatsoever that increasing excessive sentences decreases crime. There's plenty of evidence however that life without parole sentences and mass incarceration permanently exclude people from participation in political, economic and social life in the country."

ACTION STEPS



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HELP STOP LEGISLATION THAT HURTS PRISONERS AND FAMILY MEMBERS:

This summer, the House Judiciary Committee approved a package of anti-prisoner bills, which aimed to increase the ways that court costs, fines and restitution can be taken from people caught up in the legal system (for more information see page 2). Although these bills did not make it through the General Assembly this session, we are concerned that legislators may try to push them forward again next year. We are asking people to write to the Senate Judiciary Committee and ask them to vote down any of these bills that reach them. It would also be helpful if you could send us statements about how this bill would negatively impact you and/or your loved

ones so we can share this information as part of trying to stop these bills.

Senate Judiciary Majority Chair:
Senator Stewart Greenleaf
Senate Box 203012
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3012

Senate Judiciary Minority Chair:
Senator Daylin Leach
Senate Box 203017
Harrisburg, PA 17120-3017

TELL US WHY YOU THINK THAT LIFE WITHOUT PAROLE SENTENCING IN PENNSYLVANIA SHOULD END: Decarcerate PA is part of the newly formed *Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration (CADi)*, and we are

seeking statements from individuals on the inside which testify to their thoughts, feelings and experiences about why LWOP sentencing in this state should be abolished. We'd love to have your words and ideas included. Write to us at: Decarcerate PA, Attn: CADi, PO Box 40764 Philadelphia, PA 19107.

INVITE YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY: Decarcerate PA is an all-volunteer campaign and we are always looking for new people to get involved. If you have family or friends in the Philadelphia area, invite them to come to a meeting! Decarcerate PA has General Meetings at 6pm on the 4th Monday of every month at the Friends Center at 1501 Cherry Street in Philadelphia.

SCI COAL TOWNSHIP RETALIATES AGAINST PRISONERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN FOOD PROTESTS

In the last issue of our newsletter, we reported extensively on the efforts of prisoners at SCI Coal Township to achieve conditions that meet even the most basic civil and human rights standards. In June 2014, more than 1,300 prisoners at SCI Coal staged a historic week-long boycott of the dining hall in protest of cuts to their food portions. Following the protest, prisoners submitted a list of 22 demands to prison officials that would improve conditions at the prisons. The response to this outpouring of legitimate requests and grievances from prisoners has been repression and retaliation by the staff and administrators at SCI Coal, rather than a shift in its own harmful and negligent policies.

On September 2, 2014 SCI Coal Township's Administration took advantage of a state of emergency in the prison and placed 17 men in the Restrictive Housing Unit (RHU) on Administrative Custody Status following an isolated attack on a correctional officer. Among those 17 men were three individuals who the administration considered to be leaders or participants in the Dining Hall Boycott that the men of SCI Coal Township initiated from June 16

to June 23 in response to the cutbacks in food portions and other problems at SCI Coal Township (see last issue's feature article for more info.) All three of these men were accused of "unauthorized group activity" in relation to the boycott and were transferred out of SCI Coal Township to SCI Greene, SCI Fayette and SCI Smithfield within a week of being placed in the RHU. All have reported missing items from their personal property, including legal material and personal photographs. All of them were subsequently released to general population, although one man (who was transferred out of SCI Coal Township in July as part of an earlier wave of retaliatory administrative response) remains in the RHU at SCI Greene after being falsely validated as a gang member by SCI Coal Township and is facing possible placement in the Gang Unit.

The RHU placement and transfer of these three men in September is disturbing considering that all three had filed grievances with Central Office over the food cuts at SCI Coal Township and the disruption/censorship of prisoners' mail; the failure to respond to grievances; the repressive

atmosphere within the visiting room; the lack of medical care at SCI Coal Township; as well as a host of other problems within the prison. Since the beginning of the summer, SCI Coal Township has faced continuous critique of the current hostile environment at the institution, including a lawsuit filed against the Superintendent in May by the former Islamic Chaplain, accusing the Superintendent and two other high ranking officers of false imprisonment and kidnapping following an argument over a complaint he filed against the Deputy Superintendent.

Prisoners at SCI Coal Township report that the prison has been in a state of dysfunctional administration throughout the summer culminating in the assault on the officer on August 31. Rather than responding to the actual incident, the administration opted to go after prisoners who were transparently pursuing their objections to the conditions at SCI-Coal Township through the grievance system and in letters to prisoners' rights advocates on the outside. Instead of addressing the prison-

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I saw something interesting last night. It was after midnight, and I was outside shoveling snow. In prison, any job you can get that allows you to work outside of “normal” hours and “normal” circumstances, is always a good thing. So as a maintenance worker, I’m usually among those who get the first shot at jobs of that nature (think the “roof job” in the movie *Shawshank Redemption*).

I enjoy doing snow removal late at night. I find serenity, and some level of inner peace. I find an opportunity to do some deep thinking, without having to worry about the normal hysteria that takes place during the prison’s regular hours of operation. After midnight, I can relax, while still working hard.

It was quiet, and very cold. It didn’t matter much to me, as my mind soon began to focus on what my eye’s peripheral had just caught: something in the snow. It was alive and struggling to move. Too small to be a skunk; too large to be a mouse. I approached with curiosity, and immediately recognized its walk, a very distinct wobble. I’d seen it plenty of times before. It was a wounded pigeon. I couldn’t tell exactly what the nature of its injury was, but it was serious enough to keep it from flying away as I drew closer.

I felt terrible. It was freezing outside. I wanted to help, but the closer I got, the more panicked it became. As it scurried towards the middle of a large field – where I suppose it thought it would be safe – I couldn’t help but to think that me and this pigeon

may have more in common than that it would appear.

I looked around, nervously, making sure that I was out of the view of my supervisor – who wouldn’t like it too much if he caught me trying to help a bird when I was supposed to be

THE PIGEON AND ME

By Sergio Hyland

shoveling snow. I wanted to help it. I wanted to pick it up out of the snow and at least place it somewhere warmer. It may have still succumbed to the elements, but I’d feel better knowing that I’d tried. I just wanted to help; because I would want somebody to help me if ever I should find myself in such a precarious situation.

But I couldn’t help. Between the watchful eyes of my supervisor, and the hurried feet of the fowl, I was stuck. So I watched as it ran away from the only person out there who was willing to – or at least really trying – to help it.

More often than not, I feel just like that pigeon. I relate to it in so many ways. Far away from home, alone, in a dark and cold environment, where people don’t usually offer help without strings being attached, I can relate to its helplessness, and its sense of hopelessness. How would YOU feel if you had wings that were meant to fly, but couldn’t?

I don’t blame the bird for not trusting me. After all, I AM human. And humans can be wolves, or they can be foxes. See, the wolf sali-



RETALIATION

CONTINUED

ers’ concerns, SCI-Coal Township retaliated against the men by transferring them hundreds of miles away from their loved ones and by destroying some of their personal and legal property. What type of message, prisoners at SCI Coal are asking, does this send to prisoners who exercise their first amendment rights by filing grievances?

Family members and human rights advocates also took up this very same question as they rapidly organized against the RHU placement and transfers. Decarcerate PA, the Human Rights Coalition, the Abolitionist Law Center, and many other allied organizations flooded both SCI Coal and the DOC Central Office with calls demanding the release of these men from the hole and an explanation of the nature of the investigations being lodged against them. Hundreds of individuals spent hours on the phone lines each day attempting to determine the location and well-being of their loved ones and fellow human rights advocates. Numerous articles were written and widely distributed and an extensive social media campaign was engaged to try to secure their release.

Since the Inmate Dining Hall Boycott in June, five men in total have been transferred—two to SCI Fayette, one to SCI Smithfield, one to SCI Greene, and one to SCI Retreat. Despite the June boycott having been an act of multi racial solidarity, all of the prisoners transferred or placed in the RHU for participation in the boycott have been Afrikan Amerikan or Latino. SCI Coal Township’s retaliatory action towards these men and the Department of Corrections (DOC) Central Office’s failure to intervene to stop the transfers, demonstrates the need for an Independent Ombudsmen Office that would be empowered to independently investigate and take action against DOC personnel that retaliate and abuse prisoners for exercising their First Amendment rights to file grievances and lawsuits challenging unjust conditions and the violation of their rights.

vates at the very sight of the injured pigeon. And the fox? It smiles at the pigeon, dances with it; it may even pull the bird out of a jam. But at the end of the day, both the wolf and fox aim to make an easy meal out of the injured prey.

So no, I don’t blame that pigeon for running away from me – even though I was only trying to help. I run from help all the time. And for precisely the same reasons. Because when you’re down, and wounded, and alone, the world seems a lot colder, and a lot darker; you start to feel more helpless, more hopeless. Friend mimics foe.

It’s all in my head.

There must be SOMEBODY out there who I can trust.

But who?

Run, pigeon...

Run.

Sergio Hyland #FX1537
SCI Greene
175 Progress Drive
Waynesburg, PA 15370

Every issue of our newsletter we feature one of the many badass organizations that are part of our coalition. So far over 85 organizations have signed our platform from large NGOs to street level social justice warriors - check out who's with us at decarceratepa.info/platform !

ORGANIZATION HIGHLIGHT:

HUMAN RIGHTS COALITION

The Human Rights Coalition (HRC)

was founded in 2001 based on the radical notion that there was a vital segment of the population missing from the organizing work against prisons: the families and loved ones of the over two million prisoners in the United States. Incarcerated brothers took this idea and asked their family members and supporters to take the lead in building such an organization, and HRC was born.

Our ultimate goal is to abolish prisons. The prison system is based on a foundation of exploitation, punishment and corruption. Most of the people in prisons are poor, brown, urban, functionally illiterate, unemployed or underemployed before they were locked down, and are there for nonviolent crimes. The prison system reflects all the inequalities present in our society and it does not work.

We seek to empower prisoners' families to be leaders in prison organizing while at the same time seeking to reduce the shame of having a loved one who is in prison or formerly incarcerated. We want to make visible to the public the injustice and abuse that are common practice throughout our judicial and prison systems across the country, and eventually end those abuses.

We also work to encourage the rehabilitation of prisoners. HRC understands that prisoners are human beings with problems that need to be addressed. Many prisoners have led lives of drug abuse, child abuse, or neglect, in addition to the impacts of racism, sexism, classism, and homophobia. We should demand that the prison system focus on the rehabilitation of prisoners so that they can return to society as productive citizens with the skills needed to take care of their families.

HRC has hosted film showings, book readings, panel discussions, poetry slams, and concerts. We have answered hundreds of letters from folks locked down and have provided resources, referrals, and assistance wherever we could. We send out a quarterly newsletter filled with writings by prisoners and their family members and supporters on the outside. The newsletter, *The Movement*, is mailed to over 700 people inside and outside of prisons.

HRC Fed Up!, the Pittsburgh chapter of HRC, is starting a campaign, called "Fed Up With Phone Rates", to demand reductions to the phone rates in Pennsylvania's prisons. After years of delays and grassroots pressure, the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently capped the interstate rates that phone companies can charge prisoners and their loved ones. However, intrastate rates in Pennsylvania are not limited by this ruling and a portion of the fees generated by these calls goes directly

to the PA DOC. The goals of the phone campaign are to *end the kickbacks* to the DOC and to *prioritize the lowest rate possible* for consumers--prisoners and their family and friends.

There are many fronts to fight the prison system on, and many issues to address, but the voices of those most affected - prisoners' families, ex-prisoners and the prisoners themselves - have to be at the forefront of any movement to change and, sometime in the future, to abolish the prison system entirely, because we are the ones who know the intimate pain this system causes. There are HRC chapters in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, and Chester. You can find out more information at www.hrcoalition.org or can write to us at 4134 Lancaster Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19104.



Pics from HRC's Rally Against Solitary Confinement in September 2012

DEMANDING ANSWERS ON MASS INCARCERATION FROM PA'S NEXT GOVERNOR

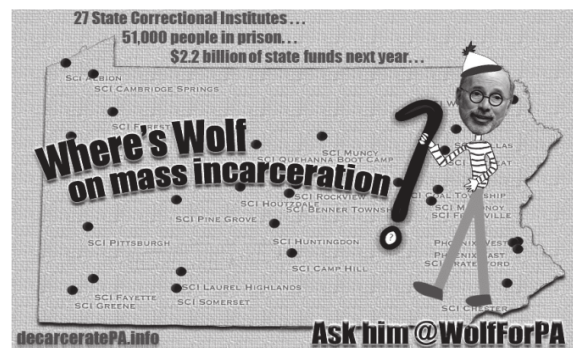
On November 4, people across the state went to the polls to elect Pennsylvania's next Governor. Incumbent Republican Governor Tom Corbett was defeated by Democratic candidate Tom Wolf. Corbett's defeat was a referendum on his failed policies. During his time as Governor, Corbett spent \$685 million to expand Pennsylvania's prison system and has failed to deliver meaningful sentencing reform. Corbett has cut massive amounts of funding from public education and public services. He has cut General Assistance, put forward an inadequate Medicaid proposal, and advanced failed policies that harm young people, workers, incarcerated people, and people living with HIV and AIDS.

So far, Wolf has had little to say regarding how he plans to address mass incarceration in Pennsylvania. There are currently over 51,000 people incarcerated in the state prison system, and communities across the state have been devastated by the broader impacts of mass incarceration. Wolf needs to tell the public what, if anything, he would do to stop prison expansion and bring people home.

Decarcerate PA has been working throughout the year to insure that mass incarceration is an issue that all candidates feel pressured to address. On October 1, both Corbett and Wolf were in Philadelphia for a live radio debate at the KYW Studios.

On the morning of the debate, Decarcerate PA joined with our allies from the Philadelphia Coalition Advocating for Public Schools, the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power (ACT UP), Fight for Philly, the Philly Student Union, and Philadelphians Organized to Witness, Empower, and Rebuild (POWER), for a rally and interfaith prayer vigil outside the KYW studios. We sent a clear message to the candidates and the news media that we want a governor who will invest in community needs, not prisons.

As Wolf prepares to take office, Decarcerate PA will continue to keep the pressure on him to take action against mass incarceration in Pennsylvania.



A DECARCERATE PA STATEWIDE GATHERING

This November, Decarcerate PA (DPA) brought together advocates and activists against mass incarceration from across Pennsylvania for a daylong Statewide Gathering. Over the past year, Decarcerate PA has begun working with activists in the Lehigh Valley and Reading. At the same time, we've been strengthening our relationships with activists and organizers in Pittsburgh and Harrisburg and elsewhere across the state.

We came together in Philadelphia to share our stories of why we are involved in this important work and to talk about the local campaigns going on in different parts of the state. DPA updated the gathering on our emerging campaign to end life without parole sentencing and our other recent efforts. Most importantly, we discussed how to mobilize and respond together as a statewide network against mass incarceration. While some of the forces that affect mass incarceration are primarily local ones (prosecutors, judges, and police), the policies that shape and impact those forces are largely enacted at the state level (mandatory sentencing, the crimes code, and the ballooning Department of Corrections budget). We hope that this event is only the first in a series of gatherings that seek to unite us as a cohesive, statewide force.

WHO WE ARE

This quarterly newsletter is intended to be a tool of communication and information between Decarcerate PA members on the outside and people inside of Pennsylvania prisons.

Decarcerate PA is a coalition of organizations and individuals seeking an end to mass incarceration and the harms it brings our many communities. Decarcerate PA seeks mechanisms to establish and maintain whole, healthy communities and believes that imprisonment exacerbates the problems we

face. We therefore demand an immediate and lasting moratorium on all new prisons: no new prisons, no new county or city jails, no prison expansions, no new beds in county jails, no immigrant detention facilities, no private prisons. We also demand changes in policing, sentencing and legislation to reduce the prison population. We believe that public money should instead be spent on quality public schools, jobs and job training, community-based reentry services, health care and food access, drug and alcohol treatment programs, stable housing, restorative forms of justice and non-punitive programs that address the root cause of violence in our communities. The task before us is as large as it is necessary. With your help, we can put an end to mass incarceration.

If you know others who would also like to receive this newsletter, please encourage them to write us at the address below.

This newsletter is also available online at <http://decarceratepa.info/newsletter>

DECARCERATE PA

Box 40764 Philadelphia, PA 19107
decarceratepa@gmail.com
decarceratepa.info (267) 217-3372

CELEBRATE HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2014

The United Nations' (UN) **Human Rights Day is annually observed December 10th** to mark the anniversary of the presentation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Human rights provide a foundation for building a just and peaceful world. Every human being on the planet has the right to dignity, respect, and freedom - whatever their race, colour, sex, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, wealth or other status.

On 10 December 1948, the General Assembly of the United Nations adopted and proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Declaration has been translated into over 300 languages and dialects - from Abkhaz to Zulu. It is the holder of the Guinness World Record for the document that has been most translated.

CELEBRATING YOUR EFFORTS TO BRING HUMAN RIGHTS HOME ON HUMAN RIGHTS DAY

December 10, 2014

Dear IAOHRA Members,

Happy Human Rights Day!

This anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights offers a welcome opportunity to celebrate the fundamental idea that all people are born equal in dignity and rights. It is also a time to take stock of how these rights are respected in our own backyard. Many IAOHRA members are honoring this day through local commemorations. Today, we want to take a moment to celebrate each of you as human rights heroes. President Obama underscored that income inequality is the defining challenge of our time. Your daily work is essential to addressing this challenge by combatting discrimination and fostering equality in your communities.

This August, 50 years after the March on Washington many of gathered at the annual IAOHRA conference to reflect on where we are now and where we are going. The conference focused on critical human rights issues, including housing, equitable development and employment. We also had the opportunity to explore concrete strategies to incorporate international human rights standards into local policy and hear examples from Eugene, Oregon and Salt Lake City, Utah, among others. At the conference we shared a joint IAOHRA and HRI report, recently submitted to the United Nations, which highlights promising human rights strategies from many of your agencies.

We are also excited to report that IAOHRA adopted five resolutions, all reaffirming the core values found in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, including ensuring equal voting rights for all, eliminating racial profiling, proactively addressing the root causes of discrimination and advancing racial justice.

Two resolutions explicitly connected your daily work to international human rights principles, and can serve as a guide for your actions in the upcoming year. As in recent years, the IAOHRA membership adopted a resolution to promote and encourage a broader understanding of international human rights. This resolution signaled a commitment to take at least one action to incorporate international human rights standards locally, in collaboration with other state and local government actors.

IAOHRA also adopted a resolution to promote the civil and human rights of homeless persons, including through homeless bills of rights. Through this resolution, IAOHRA recognized that efforts to criminalize homelessness, such as penalizing basic life-sustaining activities and disparate enforcement of laws against homeless people, violate our international human rights obligations. Further, the membership resolved to affirm the human rights of homeless individuals through homeless bills of rights, and to promote the human right to adequate housing, and other constructive solutions to homelessness.

Notably, both of these resolutions align with commitments of the U.S. Conference of Mayors (USCM), and offer opportunities to partner with mayors. In 2013, the USCM similarly adopted resolutions committing to promote international human rights and to enhance efforts to address homelessness, including through recommendations laid out in the 2012 report by the U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness and Department of Justice, Searching Out Solutions. HRI looks forward to continuing a strong partnership with IAOHRA and working with member agencies to advance international human rights principles in these and other ways. We have detailed a number of promising human rights strategies that agencies already using in several reports, available at law.columbia.edu/ipimages/Human_Rights_Institute/UPR%20Toolkit.pdf and web.law.columbia.edu/sites/default/files/microsites/human-rights-institute/files/StateandLocalReport.pdf. We are thrilled to work with you in your efforts to bring human rights home in your community. You can contact JoAnn Kamuf Ward at jward@law.columbia.edu with any questions.

Happy Human Rights Day.

JoAnn Kamuf Ward, Associate Director, Human Rights in the U.S. Project, Columbia Law School, Human Rights Institute
Jean M. Kelleher, President, International Association of Official Human Rights Agencies