

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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BLOCKING HORRIFIC CONDITIONS

"In 1996 [when Clinton was president], Congress passed a law that made it much harder for inmates to challenge abusive treatment. It has contributed to the bad conditions--including the desperate overcrowding--that prevail today. The law must be fixed.

In the name of clamping down on frivolous lawsuits, the Prison reform Litigation Act [PRLA] barred prisoners from suing prisons and jails unless they could show that they had suffered a physical injury. Prison officials have used this requirement to block lawsuits challenging all sorts of horrific conditions, including sexual abuse.

The law also requires inmates to present their claims to prison officials before filing a suit. The prisons set the rules for those grievance procedures...they have an incentive to make the rules as complicated as possible, so prisoners will not be able to sue. That has become the main purpose of many grievance systems.

SHORT

FEDERAL HATE CRIMES EXPANSION

In July the U.S. Senate, with the backing of president Obama, approved the most sweeping expansion of federal hate crimes law since 1968. It would extend federal protections to cover those found to have been physically attacked because of their gender, sexual orientation, gender identity or disability.

FEDERAL COURT ORDER NOT FOLLOWED

In mid-September, California prison officials released their plan to reduce the state's imprisoned population by more than 23,000 over the next two years. The plan was submitted to a special panel of federal judges which had ordered the state to reduce its prison population by 40,000 over the next two years. Under the court order, the population in California's 33 adult prisons is supposed to drop to 110,000.

In the last Congress, Rep. Robert Scott (D-VA), sponsored the Prison Abuse Remedies Act. It would have eliminated the physical injury requirement and made it harder for prison officials to get suits dismissed for failure to exhaust grievance procedures. It would have exempted juveniles, who are especially vulnerable to abuse, from the law's restrictions.

The bill's supporters need to try again this year. Conditions in the nation's overcrowded prisons are becoming increasingly dangerous... Prisoner lawsuits are a way of reining in the worst abuses, which contribute to prison riots and other violence.

The main reason to pass the new law, though, is human decency."

--Editorial, *New York Times*, Sep 24, 2009

Resources

Southern Center for Human Rights
83 Poplar St NW, Atlanta GA 30303

Equal Justice Initiative
122 Commerce Street, Montgomery AL 36104

TAKES

PLANS FOR REFORMS

In September, the director of the IDOC released his proposal for reforming the state's prison system, including a 10 point plan for the supermax prison in Tamms Il: Transfer Review Hearings; estimated length of stay info; complete health evaluations; increase of privileges, including phone use; GED testing; congregate religious services; fewer print materials restrictions, a Reassignment Unit; a public outreach strategy; re-examine transfer eligibility

ABUSE OF CHILDREN IN DETENTION

The Southern Poverty Law Center (SPCL, 400 Washington Ave, Montgomery AL 36104) filed a federal class action law suit, *D.W. et al. v. Harrison County MS*, in April to stop the "shockingly inhumane" treatment of the children held at the for-profit detention center there

MILES DE BRACEROS LLEGARON PARA SOSTENER LA ECONOMIA DE LOS EE.UU. DURANTE 22 ANOS

Durante el Programa Bracero unos 2.5 millones de hombres llegaron a 26 estados de EE.UU. entre 1942 y 1964. De cada cheque el gobierno estadounidense retiraría un 10% de su salario. El plan era que EE.UU. dedujera el dinero y luego enviarlo al gobierno Mexicano para que éste lo distribuyera a cada bracero. Pero hasta el momento hay miles de exbraceros que aún esperan su dinero.

El Presidente Vicente Fox comenzó a distribuir 38,000 pesos, unos \$3,500 durante su administración, pero el actual Presidente Felipe Calderón ha detenido ese proceso con nuevas leyes y más requisitos, dijo la Alianza de Exbraceros del Norte 1942-1964, basada en Los Angeles.

El gobierno actual designó 700 millones de pesos como "ayuda social" para unos 172,174 braceros o sus beneficiarios. Sin embargo, en junio el gobierno Mexicano anunció que solamente distribuiría 4,000 pesos por año basta completar los 38,000.

Además, algunos braceros han declarado que administradores del apoyo social--al entregarles los 4,000--los han hecho que firmen un documento donde consta que liberan al gobierno de pagarles la cantidad pendiente, si es que los fondos llegaran a agotarse. A los braceros que viven en EE.UU., ¿cuánto no les cuesta viajar a México por ese dinero? Ni para el boleto. En oposición a cómo se está manejando el asunto, organizaciones pro-braceros se postrarán frente a los Consulados Mexicanos el 29 de septiembre, Día Internaional del Exbracero, para protestar la administración de Calderón.

This 2 page version of the CPR monthly newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. Others who would like to receive it must send us a stamped, self-addressed envelope (up to 12 at one time) for every issue they would like to receive.

Many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making the newsletter available on line at:
<http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html>. Download and mail it!

Our debt is down to \$12,000, with several grant applications still to be heard from. We plan to send out our yearly holiday card/calendar to our updated, but not expanded, mailing list.

Keep your letters of support to Oprah (Harpo Productions, 1058 W Washington Blvd Chicago IL 60607), and to us, coming!

CRIME OF THE MONTH aka Crimetoppers

The federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) is preparing us for a terrible epidemic, Swine Flu (also known as H1N1). They say that this threatened epidemic will kill millions around the world.

But don't worry: they have a new vaccine against Swine Flu. The vaccine is available to everyone who's wealthy enough to buy it and willing to take it

This new vaccine is at present being tested on "volunteers," including children. But there is not enough time to start over. If the vaccine proves to be dangerous or ineffective it will simply be declared safe and effective, whatever the vaccine trials actually show.

In 1976 the CDC ran a similar fiasco. The vaccine trials supposedly showed the vaccine used then to be safe, yet thousands were paralyzed by the vaccine, and hundreds died. No Swine Flu epidemic occurred.

There is little evidence that the threatened epidemic will happen this year either. But if it did, this new untested vaccine is very unlikely to be of any benefit anyway.

Yet the CDC continues to terrorize people into getting this bogus new vaccine--terrorism is the systematic use of terror, especially as a method of coercion. So recent headlines include: "World Health Organization (WHO) Raises Global Threat Level as Reports of Swine Flu Increase," "5-year Old, Infant Die of Swine Flu."

Terrorism is this month's crime. The CDC is guilty of terrorizing people into getting an untested and therefore possibly dangerous vaccine.

VOICES FROM INSIDE

Lebanon OH June 8, 2009

I'm trying hard to get video games approved in Ohio prisons. I'm looking for fellow convicts who have the privilege of playing video games, what states or counties allow video games, what kinds of video games you're allowed. I need any and all information. Kevan Trewartha, 477701, LCCI, PO Box 56, Lebanon OH 45036.

Kincheloe MI July 6, 2009

We are asking ALL concerned who believe in and support second chance legislation for youth lifers to show their support by writing, e-mailing or otherwise contacting Michigan legislators. Urge them to act on and vote in favor of Senate Bills 173-176. Visit our website at: www.secondchanceforyouth.com for further info, or contact: Herbert Lee Allen-Bey, 188620, 42 W M-80, Kincheloe MI 49784.