

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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June 2013

TRUTH IN NUMBERS UGLY

Out of every 1,000 people in this country, on average one in 31 is held by the police, court or penal system--in prison, on probation or on parole. As of March 2009, the states with the highest numbers so controlled, for every 1,000 in the population as a whole were: Georgia - with 77 out of every 1,000, Idaho - with 56 out of every 1,000, and the District of Columbia - with 48 out of every 1,000. The state of Texas, was fourth, with 45 out of every 1,000 in the population as a whole.

California came in with 28 per 1,000. New Mexico was also just below average, with 29 per 1,000. The three states with the lowest rates were: West Virginia, with 15 per 1,000; Maine, with 12 per 1,000; and New Hampshire, with 11 per 1,000.

The U.S. incarceration rate was relatively stable throughout most of the twentieth century, at around 100 per 100,000 people. It was in the 1980s that the period of mass incarceration began. The number of those imprisoned has increased by more than 400% to about two million. Only in 2009 did the numbers of those locked up stabilize and they showed a small decline for the first time since the 1970s.

Formerly incarcerated people, more than seven million, face labor market discrimination, loss of voting rights, difficulty securing housing, and problems reconnecting with their families. The current rate of incarceration--prison and jail--now averages 743 per 100,000. This is the highest rate in the world. The two countries closest to us in 2011 were Rwanda, at 595 per 100,000 and Russia, at 568 per 100,000. Much of Europe and Canada have incarceration rates below 150 per 100,000.

Within the U.S. rates of imprisonment also vary tremendously. In 1980, the percentage of the adult population was below .5% in all states; by 2010, it ranged from less than .25% to over 1%.

In addition, the likelihood of arrest

has also risen in the U.S. over time. For those under 23, it averaged less than one in four in the 1960s; in the 2000s, it is one in three.

The major factor in skewing incarceration rates by states is ethnicity. Overall, in 2010, most states incarcerated at least 2% of African Americans. Predominantly "white" states such as Iowa, Wisconsin, and Vermont each lock up more than 4% of African American adults. This is politely called "differences in the responses of the criminal justice system, especially in situations where its workers have great discretion...police officers are more likely to stop and to arrest African Americans for 'low-level drug crimes.'"

There are some states in which as many as 10% of adult African Americans have been imprisoned. Clearly there is a breathtaking concentration of punishment by ethnicity in this country of African American and Latino/Hispano, concentrated in low-income, urban areas. Also, control by imprisonment varies not just by neighborhood, but also by city block. By 2010, more than 4% of adult African Americans were on probation/parole for felony convictions in at least 16 states, such as California, Iowa, Oregon and Wisconsin.

Sociologists have estimated that these days, for young African American men without high school diplomas, the lifetime likelihood of going to prison is roughly 60%. This is about five times higher than for "whites." Of young African American males without high school diplomas, one-third were incarcerated in 2000, compared to about 6% of "whites" and Latino/Hispanos. This is systematic imprisonment of whole groups of the U.S. population.

The functioning of the police, court and penal system as described above has led to the invention of a new word to describe its effects: *criminogenic*--contributing more to a lack of community safety and opportunity than to community safety and well-being.

BREAKING NEWS? IT'S BREAKING US!

Here's a hot new employment career path: *luxury consultant*. Christie's International Real Estate's affiliate in Santa Fe NM (New Mexico--the next to poorest state in the country) has one. Which fits right in with average CEO pay that is now 354 times the average worker's--up from only 42 times in 1982.

And goes along with another "hot corporate trend"--that of for-profit prison corporations operating as "real estate investment trusts." This make people living in for-profit prisons "renters." (In New Mexico, there are three prisons owned by GEO and one by CCA.) This classification, actually created in 1960, will cost the government millions of dollars in taxes --savings (read: new income), in turn, to the companies involved.

To receive the Newsletter each month, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address) --up to 12 at one time.

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests, in order to receive the yearly holiday card/new calendar.

Also, please note that the *only* address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. We have discovered that there have been resource lists which, unfortunately, give out an incorrect address.

Remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS for any envelopes marked "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our monthly Newsletter project available on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org/coalition.html> -- This is a GREAT site!!

We continue to appreciate and to depend on readers' donations! Thank you! *****

RESOURCE BOOKLET NOW AVAILABLE

Inalienable Rights--applying international human rights standards to the U.S. criminal justice system.

A 41 page booklet published by the American Friends Service Committee, Criminal Justice Program--Prison Watch Project, 89 Market St, Newark NJ 07102.

Topics covered include: international conventions, treaties, declarations, and where to find them, and U.S. positions taken on them. Chapters on reparations, execution, prison conditions, torture and isolation, racism, rape, and treatment of children in prisons.

Dieron vuelta la condena al genocida Ríos Montt

Los cinco magistrados de la Corte de Constitucionalidad (CC) de Guatemala concluyeron, en una decision dividida, que durante las audiencias no se siguió el debido proceso, por lo que decidieron anular lo actuado desde el 19 de abril en adelante.

La CC canceló la condena a 80 años de cárcel que un tribunal habia impuesto once días atrás al ex dictador guatemalteco Efraín Ríos Montt por genocidio y delitos de lesa humanidad. Tras cumplir anteayer el último día de análisis de las acciones legales interpuestas por la defensa, los cinco magistrados de la CC concluyeron, en una decisión dividida, que durante las audiencias no se siguió el debido proceso, por lo que decidieron anular lo actuado desde el 19 de abril.

Montt fue hallado culpable de genocidio el viernes 10 de mayo pasado por el asesinato, durante su mandato de facto entre 1982 y 1983, de 1771 indigenas de la etnia maya ixil en el departamento Quiché, en el norte del país, en 15 matanzas documentadas. La condena llega a 80 años de prisión: 50 por el genocidio contra indigenas ixtiles y 30 por crímenes contra la humanidad.

***** HOW TO GET A TX-CURE FREE FAN

You must prove that you have had \$5 or less in your trust fund for at least 6 months. The document that proves this is a *Trust Fund Inquiry* (TFI).

Step One: Write a letter to:

Mr. Eric Johnson, TDCJ-CID Trust Fund, Box 60, Huntsville TX 77342.

Say: Dear Mr. Eric Johnson, I want a TX-CURE Free Fan. Please send me my TFI. Thank you.

Sign: with your name, number and unit.

Step Two: Wait (patiently).

Step Three: You will get your TFI from Eric Johnson. When you do, mail it to: TX-CURE Fan Project, PO Box 38381, Dallas TX 75238. Send only the TFI. It is not necessary to enclose a letter.

Step Four: You may request a fan between January 1 and July 31. No later. Never expect to get more than one fan, even if yours gets broken, stolen, or confiscated. Protect your property papers. Report a malfunctioning NEW fan to Unit Property.

From: Dallas CURE, 214-348-0293