

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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Update from Californians United for a Responsible Budget (CURB)

The push for new prisons: The last week of August California Governor Jerry Brown announced his intention to raid budget reserves meant to restore antipoverty programs in education and social services for more prison expansion. This is his response to the recent strongly worded U.S. Supreme Court order demanding the the California prison population be reduced. Brown wants to spend \$315 million immediately, and billions over the next five years building and leasing prison and jail space up and down the state, and across the country. His plan has already passed the California Assembly Budget Committee unanimously. This is despite the fact that repeated polls have shown that Californians support spending on education over prisons.

The fight against prison expansion today is the first step in preventing solitary confinement, torture, and other human rights abuses in California prisons tomorrow.

The push for force feeding: The third week of August a federal judge signed an order allowing California prisoner hunger strikers to be force fed. This disregards international human rights principles. In response, more than 120 health care professional have signed an open letter in support of the Five Demands of the California prisoner hunger strikers. It states in part:

"As health care providers, we are issuing this statement to register our concern with reports that the hunger strikers are being denied appropriate medical care."

All health care workers must uphold their codes of medical ethics and provide the highest quality of medical care to all prisoners.

Health care is a human right!

CURB Offices:

1322 Webster St #210, Oakland CA 94612
Chuco's Justice Center, 1137 E Redondo Blvd, Los Angeles CA 90302

www.prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com

Inequality is Killing Us

The United States now ranks 27th in life expectancy among the 34 richest nations--despite spending much more on health care than any other country. In the United States, 1% of the people hold 35% of the wealth. The top 10% receive 45% of the income, leaving the remaining 90% to divide the other 55%. Thirty years ago, CEO's in the United States were paid 42 times as much as the average U.S. worker. Today they earn 354 times as much.

People in the U.S. now live shorter lives than women and men in most of the rest of the rich countries in the world. And the gap is growing. A recent study published by the American Medical Association states that the U.S. ranked just 20th in life expectancy among the world's rich nations in 1990. So we've gone down seven places in the last 23 years. People in the U.S. are losing ground globally by every health measure.

The U.S. ranked as one of the world's healthiest nations in the 1950s, a time when U.S. people smoked heavily, ate a diet that would horrify a 21st-century nutritionist, and hardly ever exercised. Poverty, then as now, can't explain why fully insured middle-income people today have significantly worse health outcomes than middle-income people in other rich countries.

The study quoted above believes that it is the "social determinants of health, those social and economic realities that define our daily lives" which matter the most. The most influential one of all is the level of a society's economic inequality. Over 170 studies worldwide have so far linked income inequality to health outcomes. The more inequality, the more stress on a daily level and the more unhealthy most everyone is. Chronic stress wears down our immune systems.

A substantial proportion of our adult health gets programmed in the early years of a child's life. The nations with the highest ranking for child well-being are those with the most equal income distribution. Japan, much more equal, is now first in life expectancy.

De vuelta al bracero

La muerte de la Izquierda chicana

Antes de 1986, se podía escuchar claramente una voz de Izquierda sobre la reforma migratoria. Sus prioridades eran que no hubiera programas de "trabajadores invitados" ("guest workers"), que no hubiera sanciones de los empleadores, que hubiera políticas más humanas de aplicación de la ley en las fronteras, y que hubiera un camino claro hacia la ciudadanía sin multas ni cuotas. En general, perdimos y la única victoria real fue que desaparecieron las propuestas para un programa de trabajadores invitados.

A decir verdad, la reforma migratoria nunca ha sido una prioridad principal para los progresistas estadounidenses y, como consecuencia, no se desarrolló ninguna visión clara de la reforma migratoria fuera de la comunidad mexicano-americana.

--por Rodolfo Acuña, emérito, de la California State Univ. en Northridge

SOLICITING HOLIDAY CARD DESIGN

Imprisoned Readers: please send us a black and white drawing for this year's holiday/New Year's card & calendar. All designs must be respectful of our diversity: We cannot use any with racist, sexist, or religious symbolism. The deadline is November 15. Submission of a drawing will serve as your permission to use it, credited with your name and state. Prize: Our only copy of Black's Law Dictionary.

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. There are resource lists which, unfortunately, use the wrong address.

Remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS. It is very important not to mark any envelopes "Legal Mail."

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

We depend on our readers' donations! Thank you! ¡Mil gracias!

The American Prison Writing Archive

The APWA is an in-progress, internet-based, digital archive of nonfiction essays that will offer the public firsthand testimony to the living and working conditions experienced by prisoners, prison employees, and prison volunteers. All topics are of interest, including descriptions of sources of stress, ways of coping, health care, causes of violence and ways to reduce it, material conditions, education, employment conditions and the challenges these conditions present, the environment for volunteers, the aging prison population, visions of a better way to operate, reflections on the work of dealing with time inside, the challenges of physical and psychological survival public perception and popular depictions of prisoners and prison workers, the politics and economics of mass incarceration. All the work in the APWA will be accessible to anyone, anywhere in the world with access to the Internet. Contributors can write under pseudonyms or anonymously. The APWA reserves the right to edit or reject work that advocates violence, names names in ongoing legal cases, or libels named individuals. Address: APWA, 198 College Hill Road, Clinton NY 13323.

Contents Claimed to be a Problem

"On the list of periodicals rejected [by the Connecticut Department of Corrections] this month was the August 2013 issue of GQ magazine and the July 22 edition of The New Yorker because their 'contents pose a threat to the safety or security of staff, other inmates, or the public, facility order or discipline or rehabilitation.' Numerous issues of the Coalition for Prisoners' Rights newsletter are also on the prohibited list.

The American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut says: 'Prisoners have a right to these materials unless there's penological harm...When they err on the side of complete censorship, they violate prisoners' rights.' The American Library Association's Office for Intellectual Freedom says: 'Unless there is a compelling threat to public safety or the security of the prison, prisoners should have access to a range of reading material...."You would hope that prisons would help inmates prepare for reentering society. What's the best way to do that? Through reading and education. We find it problematic when the goal of maintaining order in the prisons denies prisoners access to material that will entertain them and educate them.'"