

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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REDUCING HARM IN PRISON

Harm reduction is a set of ideas and strategies that work to improve the lives of individuals, families, and communities. The harm reduction philosophy acknowledges that everybody engages in behaviors (like eating too much junk food, driving without a seatbelt, drinking too much alcohol, or shooting dope with a dirty needle) that may cause harm, and that any behavior change that lessens the harm to ourselves and others, even if the changes are small, can be of great benefit. The main focus of harm reduction is to reduce the negative consequences of drug use without the judgment of whether a behavior is "good" or "bad," but whether or not it is harmful to a person's well being. Harm reduction practices exist on a continuum from using drugs in a safer manner, to abstinence, and everything in between. But harm reduction doesn't just apply to drug use. For example, if someone who never wears a seatbelt decides to

wear one just two days a week, they've reduced harm in their life. Or someone who drinks six beers a day, cuts it down to three, they too have created personal harm reduction. Harm reduction means that a person makes decisions for themselves about what behavior changes to make in order to live a healthier life.

The philosophy of harm reduction could play an important role in the lives of incarcerated people. Our judicial system should not concentrate on punishing people for adapting to oppressive conditions in ways that are harmful to them and their communities. Harm reduction could benefit prisoners through enhanced educational opportunities, more nutritional meals, better prison health care, programs designed to decrease violence inside prison, and access to clean needles and bleach for injection drug users and folks who get tattooed. A glaring example of

(continued on next page)

REDUCING HARM IN PRISON, cont.

Mexico who stated that forty prisoners in a regional detention center shared one needle to get their fix!!! The idea that people in prison don't do drugs, don't get tattooed, and don't have sex, is dangerous and it negatively impacts prisoner health and safety.

In some European countries, prisoners have access to clean needles and studies have shown that their access to a needle exchange has led to a decrease in HIV and Hepatitis C, and a decrease in the number of needle sticks experienced by guards. Studies also found that drug use among prisoners did not increase, needles were not used as weapons, needle sharing decreased, and there was a decrease in the number of suicides and overdoses. This year, some Australian prisons will begin having condom vending machines for prisoners to use. This is a historic step towards reducing the potential harm to prisoners by reducing the number of sexually transmitted infections like HIV, Hepatitis B, gonorrhea, herpes, and syphilis.

The prison system in the United States should recognize that harm reduction is a human rights issue that is important to broader community public health. Harm reduction programs must be considered as a critical part of prison health.

RESOURCES

Harm Reduction Coalition: 22 W. 27th Street, 5th Floor, New York NY 10001
International Harm Reduction Asso.: PO Box 818, N. Melbourne, Victoria 3051 Australia (Postage: .80 cents, 1st oz)

Canadian Harm Reduction Network: 666 Spadina Ave, Suite 1904, Toronto ON M5S 2H8 (Postage: .60 cents, 1st oz)

Acuerdan tratar mejor a deportados

El secretario de gobernación de México, Santiago Creel, firmó un memorando con Tom Ridge, secretario del departamento de seguridad interna estadounidense, para asegurar un trato seguro y digno para los mexicanos que son deportados de EE.UU.

El acuerdo, firmado durante una visita de Ridge a México, promete respetar los derechos humanos de los inmigrantes detenidos en el momento de cruzar la frontera y dar consideración especial a las mujeres, los niños separados de sus padres y la unificación familiar.

El acuerdo no menciona a los inmigrantes indocumentados ya dentro de EE.UU., porque según Ridge éstos se beneficiarán del plan migratorio del presidente Bush. Ambos países se prometieron cooperación en asuntos de seguridad y comercio en la frontera.

Más heterosexuales adquieren el VIH

Treinta y cinco por ciento de las infecciones nuevas del VIH en EE.UU. se adquieren por contacto heterosexual dice un reporte del Centro de Control y Prevención de Enfermedades (CDC). De estos nuevos casos, 84 por ciento representaron a personas afroamericanas e hispanas y la mayoría eran mujeres.

5ta. Conferencia Nacional de Reducción de Daño

Trabajando Bajo el Fuego: Usuarios de Drogas Salud y Justicia 2004 patrocinado por La Harm Reduction Coalition (HRC)

THE COST OF THE DEATH PENALTY

People seldom talk about how expensive financially, as well as in terms of human decency, the death penalty is. Yet study after study show that efforts to impose a death sentence cost the states substantial amounts of money that could better be spent on other things. The only debate is how much money the states could save by eliminating the death penalty.

The latest state to prove this truism is Kansas. In a study released in December 2003, Kansas found that the cost of prosecuting a case increased by 70% when the prosecutor chose to pursue the death penalty. In round numbers, the median cost of a death penalty case from prosecution through execution was \$1.26 million, whereas the cost of a comparable murder case through the end of incarceration was \$740,000. That's an additional \$520,000 per case that could better be spent providing food, shelter and other services to those who need them, or a total of \$3.6 million since 1994. Actually, the amount is much greater, because the study did not include the cost of cases in which the prosecution unsuccessfully sought the death penalty.

Other states have come up with different estimates. North Carolina found that pursuing the death penalty costs an extra \$2.16 million more per execution than if the prosecution had not tried to get a death sentence. On a national basis, this would be over \$1 billion spent on trying to kill people since 1976. Florida has conducted state-sponsored murders of 44 people since 1976, at an approximate cost of \$24 million each. A study done in 2000

found that Florida could save \$51 million each year by eliminating the death penalty. California spends \$90 million dollars annually pursuing the death penalty. New York, which reinstated its death penalty in 1995, has spent in addition \$160 million in pursuit of the death penalty, or approximately \$23 million for each person sentenced to death.

Many states are having budget problems. One of the best ways we can think of for them to save money is to eliminate the death penalty, including Life Without the Possibility of Parole - NOW.

SOME POSITIVE DEATH PENALTY UPDATES

On February 18, 2004, former NC Death Row prisoner Alan Gell was acquitted of all charges related to a 1995 murder. He is the 113th death row prisoner to have been exonerated

On February 24, the US Supreme Court overturned the death sentence of Texas Death Row prisoner Delma Banks, Jr. The Amnesty International director said: "The examples of prosecutorial misconduct in this case are appalling; they are not anomalous. The Banks case is further evidence that the death penalty system is too flawed to fix."

THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY & LAST CALL FOR SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

We need you Subscription Renewal information by May 1, 2004, to keep you on the Coalition Newsletter mailing list. If you have not renewed, send us your: Last name, First name, Middle initial; if imprisoned, your prison ID number; and address with city, state and zip. PLEASE write clearly.

Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter



VOICES
FROM
INSIDE

since 1976

THANK YOU

Chowchilla CA

January 26, 2004

Thank you to all the brothers and sisters behind the walls who sent help out to the problems we had in Chowchilla. The problem has been resolved; they aren't allowed to do pat searches any longer.

ALL INTERESTED CONTACT

Shirley MA

February 4, 2004

I am conducting a prison reform study and looking for volunteers to fill out a short, confidential questionnaire. Contact: Timothy J. Muise, 466927, SBCC, PO Box 8000, Shirley MA 01464.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS

Lancaster CA

February 23, 2004

A.L. Henderson, formerly of Represa, has been transferred: Arthur Lee Henderson Sr., D-25201, CSP-LAC C5-104, 44750 60th St W, Lancaster CA 93536. Some must apply for approval for me to respond. Re US policies' and their impact on Muslims.

LOOKING FOR ARTISTS AND POETS

Westville IN

February 24, 2004

I will be released in December and returning to San Antonio TX. I am looking for any art and poetry that you would like to publish in a book to reflect life behind bars. A title for the book is also needed. I cannot receive mail directly from other inmates. Send to: Christopher Walker, 110827, MCC, PO Box 557, Westville IN 46391.

SECOND-HAND SMOKE EXPOSURE

Yazoo City MS

February 25, 2004

For a lawsuit re injuries from second-hand smoke, if you know of any successful suit, either pursuant to the federal tort claims act or a Bivens-type complaint for violation of the 8th amendment prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment, or have successfully obtained a court order banning the sale of cigarettes/cigars at your facility, please send case/court information or copies of pertinent pleadings to: Reydel Santos, 58859-004, FCI Yazoo City, PO Box 165333, Miami FL 33116.



Mailing list additions and address changes should go into effect within two months from their postmarked date. We don't have the resources to acknowledge these requests by letter. Requests for referrals and other correspondence will be answered within four to six weeks. Letters intended for publication must say "Do Print." If requesting responses, state whether you can receive mail directly from those imprisoned. The Coalition makes information available on resources and services for prisoners. We strongly urge that readers keep copies of all papers, especially legal papers, sent to those offering assistance, and be careful about sending money. In most cases we do not have direct experience with the quality or reliability of the services provided by the groups mentioned. NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS.

VALUABLE AND NEEDED SERVICE

Springville AL

February 25, 2004

...No one in the history of Alabama has done more to help those in prison than Roberta Franklin. She is again hosting the FMI convention on April 15 and 16. Contact her at: 2243 Ajax St, Montgomery AL 36108.

LADDERS

Tennessee Colony TX

March 1, 2004

My 1983 suit is against the 13 original TDCJ-ID units for being infifferent to the need for ladders on bunk beds. If you wrote a step 2 grievance or had an injury recorded or previously filed suit/settled out of court or have knowledge of applicable case law, please send all specific information: Kevin Boettner, 906170, Coffield Unit, Rt 1, Box 150, Tennessee Colony TX 75884 or 3833 Ave Q, Santa Fe TX 77510.

LIGHTS

Rosharon TX

March 2, 2004

During the day, lights are always off. All night, the new warden has these extremely bright lights turned on until morning. My family, along with other families, has contacted the US Department of Justice about this problem. If we can produce enough inmate names on complaints, then the Justice Department will seriously consider an investigation.

MEDICAL CARE

Trenton NJ

March 3, 2004

Mark McLaughlin, et al. v. Devon Brown, et al., No. 03-3432 (GEB) is against the NJ DOC and CMS, for failure to provide proper medical care and is seeking class certification. Submit specific affidavits or declarations to: US Dist. Court, attn. Judge Garrett E. Brown, 402 East State St, Trenton NJ 08608.

BOOTS

Chipley FL

March 6, 2004

FL DOC recycles prison boots, gluing new soles on them. But the soles come unglued. This happened on one of my boots and I fell down stairs, breaking my ankle in 3 places. If interested in joining my suit, write: Peter M. Siegel, Esq., FL Justice Institute, 4868 SE Financial Ctr, 200 S Biscayne Blvd, Miami FL 33131, Mike Minton v. FDOC.



BUDGET CUTS

Frackville PA

March 7, 2004

The Governor has cut the budget on prison funding; all meal portions were reduced...The guards here claimed that there was no unity among inmates; we proved them wrong. The meals took a small turn for the better. The corruption continues. We pay to wear the blindfold. Ignoring the problems doesn't make them go away.

THE CORRECTION CONTINUES

Pine City NY

March 8, 2004

The only people who would not be favorably affected by NY bills S 1608 and A 3807 are those on death row and those serving life without the possibility of parole because they have no minimum term and are completely ineligible for release. The vast majority of us will benefit.

The proposed bills will affect all inmates serving indeterminate sentences, including lifers. In NY, lifers do not have a maximum term, so the law would only affect their minimum term.

COLLECTIVE OPINION

Frackville PA

March 11, 2004

Traditionally, no one group of people or individual may speak for all nations, tribes, clans, or prayer circles. The Native American circle at SCI-Mahanoy has a model native/natural/spiritual/cultural program.

TREATMENT PROTOCOL

Limon CO

March 12, 2004

In March of 2003, the CDC inmates in US District Court of Colorado civil action no. 01-N-2513, *Akers v. Ortiz* (PAC), agreed to settle their deliberate indifference suit against CDC for failure to treat their Hepatitis C. Pursuant to terms of the settlement, a new treatment protocol was established. This protocol allows a great number of additional inmates to receive treatment. The settlement also allows for any inmate who has Hepatitis C to receive a copy of the treatment protocol at no cost and at minimal cost to those without the disease. However, CDC has not been providing the protocol as required, nor have they been treating inmates that qualify. If you have not gotten a copy of the protocol, or have qualified and are not receiving treatment, you may also move for enforcement of the judgment/settlement under Fed.R.Civ.P. 71.



VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

CORRECTIONS:

* Correct address: US Department of Justice, Civil Rights Division, Special Litigation Section, PO Box 66400, Washington DC 20530.

* Workers' World Party Newsletter deeply regrets that it is *unable* to afford free subscriptions and mailings to prisoners and hopes that they will be able to change this in the future.

BLACK SEEDS

"We Who Believe in Freedom..." Black Historical and Educational Calendar. In its 27th year of worldwide distribution. Single copies: \$7.50, postage & handling: \$3.00. Black Seeds, Inc. 1217 17th Street NE, Washington DC 20002.

PRISON SUPPORT GROUP

I am writing in regards to getting a prisoner family support group together through the mail. I know there are a lot of families with no one to talk to or no one to understand things. My husband is in Michigan City IN. I would also like to correspond with anyone who has been there. The more people we have such as families, the easier it is to find information out and to work together to get some of these rules changed within the prison. One cannot do this alone. Sandrah Lipps, Prison Support Group, N2919 US Hwy 151, Waupun WI 53963.

VETERANS OF THE VIETNAM WAR, INC.

Services offered, both to Incarcerated and Homeless Veterans: Shelter Placement, Food Banks, Military Records Retrieval, Filing of Disability Claims, Re-issue of Awards, Upgrade of Disabilities, Job Placement, Substance Abuse Counseling, Marriage Counseling. Contact: Robert E. Miller, National Executive Officer for Veterans in Conflict with the Law, 860 N Sloan Lane, Apt 201E, Las Vegas NV, (702) 302-2262, 1-800-VIETNAM, www.vvnw.org

SUPPORT NEEDED IN PROJECT FOR OUR TEENAGERS IN PRISON

God put it in my heart to start a program based Halfway House for our young people. This letter is written to find the needed support. Rev Juan Horton, PO Box 610787, Birmingham AL 35261.

The Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter is published monthly by the Prison Project of Santa Fe, Inc., PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM, 87504-1911. Subscription rates are: free to prisoners, their family members, and ex-prisoners who request it themselves; \$12/year for other individuals; \$25/year for government agencies and for-profit institutions. Please do not send names of other people; order only for yourself. We appreciate those who help us by sharing their newsletter and by sending stamps.

Crime of the Month

aka Crimetoppers

Surely his mother, Barbara Bush, told little George that we are often judged by the company we keep and may wonder to this day why he hangs out with the likes of D.Cheney and D. Rumsfeld.

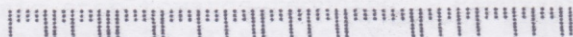
Cheney is being blamed, in part, for the president's drop in the polls due to his connection to Halliburton, the giant oil company he once headed and from which he still receives retirement income. That company is currently under investigation for breaking a federal law barring US companies from doing business with Iran, overcharging the defense department for gasoline and for providing meals to the military, charging \$28 a day per person.

Rummy, as he is affectionately known to some, seems to suffer from intermittent memory loss. He "doesn't

recall" a \$200 million contract between the US and the engineering firm ABB, on whose board he serves. The contract was to supply North Korea with two light-water nuclear reactors. Numerous ABB officials have said its board members had a written summary of that contract and one said Rumsfeld was asked to lobby for it before the 2000 election.

Nuclear energy experts say it is possible to extract weapons-grade material from light-water reactors. Three days after 9/11, groundbreaking ceremonies were held and shortly thereafter North Korea announced it has a secret uranium program, kicked out the inspectors and said it would start making plutonium.

Shouldn't we always mind our mothers? This is our crime of the month.

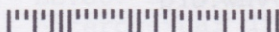


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