IMPRISONED AGING

A grotesque reality of modern U.S. life: the exponential rise in the number of imprisoned elders. The Federal Sentencing Guidelines of over 20 years ago, along with their copycat state versions resulted, in longer sentences and a greater proportion of defendants being sent to prison.

As we know, this resulted in the rapid expansion of both the imprisoned population and the percentage of long-term incarcerated. In turn, this meant the end of many more positive prison programs and the growth of warehousing of those imprisoned. Yet the older prisoners created by these changes are a "lower-risk, higher cost" population.

In the federal system, 43.7% of the imprisoned population was 41 or older by 2007. It is the fastest growing age segment of prisoners in many states. In the last 20 years, the population of older prisoners has grown by 750%. Prisoners over 50 are expected to reach 33% of the federal prison population by 2010.

In California, the population of prisons over 55 doubled from 1997 to 2006. In Louisiana State Penitentiary in Angola, 85 to 90% of those imprisoned will never leave.

An important factor in assessing the current reality of the situation is to note that studies have shown the the average prisoner is seven years older physiologically than they are chronologically.

Prison medical costs have risen dramatically. Older and geriatric prisoners are the largest and fastest growing segment of special needs prisoners. The cost of an older prisoner is two to three times that of a younger prisoner--on average roughly

(continued on next page)
$70,000 per year. In 1996, California prisoners over 55 cost more than double those younger and their numbers have doubled since 1997. In 2007, there were almost 20,000 California prisons over 55, 717 of them over 70.

Additional differences between older and younger prisoners include difficulties in mobility and interaction, which can lead to their being targets for theft, extortion and assault. Many older prisoners also suffer from serious mental illnesses. Establishment of geriatric units with different staffing patterns, rather than the current common "mainstreaming" housing model, would lower costs and could improve care for older prisoners.

Many of those now imprisoned will still be there a decade from now; but their costs and needs will be significantly different.

In addition, age at release is one of the most accurate predictors of recidivism. The rate for adult makes tends to fall dramatically around age 30. In the federal system the recidivism rate of those above 40 is at least one-third of the rate for prisoners under 40.

In Illinois, older prisoners were over twice as likely to succeed on parole than younger prisoners. In New York, the overall recidivism rate is 48%. For those between 50 and 65, it is 22.1%.

The threat to society is not within the prisons but in the policies & practices used in them.

Resource
Project for Older Prisoners
George Washington Univ Law School
2000 H St, Washington DC 20052
202-994-7063

Menos fondos para carceles

El procurador de justicia de Colorado, criticó el viernes, 8 de mayo, la decisión del gobierno de eliminar el programa que reembolsa a los estados los gastos por el encarcelamiento de criminales indocumentados.

El Programa de Ayuda a Estados por Criminales Extranjeros (SCAP, por su siglas en inglés) era “una de las maneras más importantes en las que el gobierno federal ayudaba a los estados a hacer cumplir las leyes federales de inmigración encarcelando a inmigrantes ilegales,” dijo el procurador.

SCAP es uno de los programas incluidos en los 17,000 millones de dólares que el presidente Barack Obama propuso eliminar del presupuesto federal para el año fiscal 2010.

El funcionario estima que en Colorado viven entre 200,000 y 250,000 indocumentados (del 20 al 25 por ciento del total de hispanos en el estado), la gran mayoría mexicanos. De ellos, el procurador cree que 10 por ciento tiene problemas con la ley.

El procurador dijo que es precisamente “la falta de efectividad del gobierno federal en el cumplimiento de las leyes migratorias lo que causa que los estados tengan estos enormes gastos.”

En el año fiscal 2006-2007, de acuerdo con la oficina de presupuestos de Colorado, este estado gastó casi 45 millones de dólares en reclusos indocumentados alojados en las cárcel locales. Colorado solamente recibió un reembolso de 9 por ciento del gasto total.
The Other Death Penalty Project Launches a Nationwide Campaign to Abolish Life Without Parole Sentences

On May 20, 2009, the first of more than 900 Prisoner Organizing Kits went out in the mail to prisons all over the United States, sent by The Other Death Penalty Project, a Lancaster CA based group comprised solely of prisoners serving life without the possibility of parole (LWOP), the other death penalty.

The Other Death Penalty Project aims to end LWOP, which currently affects more than 33,000 prisoners in this country. It also plans to challenge those in the anti-death penalty movement who advocate for LWOP as an alternative to the more obvious, traditional forms of execution. Fundamentally, The Other Death Penalty Project believes that all prisoners should have, at least, the possibility of parole.

LWOP is a cruel and unusual punishment. NM governor Bill Richardson, in a statement concerning his changing New Mexico’s form of execution from immediate and shocking to slow and hidden, described LWOP as "worse than death." The whole truth about this nation’s prison policies is that we have not 3,300 prisoners on death row, but north of 36,000. The United States, with 5% of the world’s population, has virtually all of the world’s LWOP prisoners. There are 12 prisoners in the rest of the world serving LWOP for convictions for crimes committed when juveniles; there are more than 2,000 in the U.S.

Sadly, the death penalty abolition movement, with few exceptions, has bought into the lie that a death by incarceration is a humane alternative to a death by lethal injection. Clearly, these groups have never taken the time to speak to prisoners serving LWOP.

The Other Death Penalty Project will mobilize the nation’s LWOP prisoners to tell their stories, to peacefully lobby the free world to re-think sentencing policies driven by fear. It is time to include the plight of the 90% of those sentenced to death who don’t elicit candlelit vigils or impassioned speeches by actors outside the prison gates; the 90% who don’t attract crusading attorneys or get automatic appeals before the highest courts.

Contact at: PO Box 1486, Lancaster CA 93584; www.theotherdeathpenalty.org

"Despite what everyone envisions as the Coalition, this is our humble home: Hopeland."
I. Lawton OK  
March 26, 2009


II. Norfolk MA  
April 10, 2009

I am trying to compile a master list of all products Keefe Canteen Corp. sells in other states. Please send a copy of yours to me: Danny Holland, c/o Norfolk Lifers Group, PO Box 43, Norfolk MA 02056. Our group is looking to correspond with others to share ideas and resources.

III. Tucson AZ  
April 20, 2009

Write your family and friends in the freeworld and to tell them about the boycott there of all Keefe products....

IV. Gardner MA  
May 3, 2009

In MA, canteen used to be owned by the inmates here in MA prisons. MDOC forced us to give up that business to none other than Keefe Co. Since then, prices have risen each year in May, yet our pay as prisoners who work has never been raised....Nothing will get accomplished alone, everyone must act.

V. Jarrett VA  
March 31, 2009

The VA-DOC/Keefe Commissary has decided to up the price on tobacco (shredded, roll your own) from $5.96 to $25.96. All other Keefe tobacco products are also jacked up several dollars on each item.

TOBACCO - II.
Avenel NJ  
April 2, 2009

Have other prisons seen a 300% increase in tobacco in their commissaries? A 6.5 bag of tobacco went from $6 to over $23. We need to resist. John Dorner, 851167C, PO Box 190, Avenel NJ 07001.

RECIPES
San Quentin CA  
March 5, 2009

A partner and I are compiling all the prisoner recipes we can for a book. Readers: send us all the recipes you currently have. We can acknowledge the name, prison and sentence of any we use. We cannot receive any mail from other prisoners. Contact: Spencer R. Basure, P-10000, San Quentin State Prison - Death Row, San Quentin CA 94964.

RESTITUTION
Avenal CA  
March 11, 2009

I’ve filed motions in the CA Superior Court that have deleted, reduced and granted exceptions to restitution on a total of 6 cases. Have a family member contact: Paul Piper Sr, K-84717, PO Box 9, Avenal CA 93204. Eds’ Disclaimer: None of us are lawyers.

Correct Address for the TPLU: Dwight Rawlinson, TPLU, 22121 S 4th, Waco TX 7706
Mailing list additions WILL NOT be made until regular publication is resumed. We will continue to make address changes. Our goal is to answer requests for referrals and other correspondence within six weeks.

The Coalition makes information available on resources and services for prisoners. We strongly urge readers to 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.

POLYNESIAN STUDIES
Chowchilla CA March 17, 2009
Here in CA’s Valley State Prison for Women we started a Polynesian Studies group which has expanded to the whole of the Pacific Islands, including so far: Hawaii, Samoa, Tonga, Guam, the Philippines. Does anyone know of any resources that would help us, like books, movies, sponsorship for special events? Contact: Carlene Balbuena, X33749, C4-07-1u, VSPW, PO Box 92, Chowchilla CA 93610.

CEREMONIAL ITEMS
Kenedy TX March 19, 2009
I am a Native American Indian on the Connally Unit asking for any and all information on other Units’ here in TX. What they can have and not have as far as Ceremonial Items? Respond to: Henry O. Parks, c/o Mrs. Cox, 118 Ken Blaschke Dr, Smithfield TX 98057.

DRUG SCANS
Santa Rosa NM March 22, 2009
NM prisons continue to use ion drug scans although the Bureau of Prisons has discontinued their use as of April 10, 2008. These machines have also been recalled by the manufacturer. See Dehmer v. Gonzales, US DC (CD IUI), #1:07-CV01218 (2008 WL 4414377). Also www.november.org and www.prisontalk.com Eds’ Disclaimer: None of us are lawyers.

TELEPHONE CONTRACT
Coldwater MI April 8, 2009
In July 2009 the current Michigan prison telephone contract expires. New contract negotiations will take place, which will no doubt result in raising the cost of prisoner telephone calls. MDOC prisoners need to start writing to the MDOC Bureau of Fiscal Management, PO Box 30003, Grandview Plaza Building, Lansing MI 48909. and to state representative Alma Smith, House Office Building, 124 N Capitol, Lansing MI 48933. Explain the importance of how your rehabilitation and family contact work hand in hand. That the low cost of telephone calls has permitted you to maintain strong family relationships. For sample letters or more information contact: F. Corky Proctor, 178602, Lakeland Correctional Facility, 141 First St., Coldwater MI 49036.
A DIFFICULT BUT NECESSARY C.P.R. CHANGE

We need to let our readers know of the biggest, and hardest, change that the Coalition for Prisoners’ Rights has ever undergone. With this issue, we are suspending publication of our free, monthly, national eight page newsletter, begun in the fall of 1976. We do this with a great deal of regret, but acknowledgement of its necessity. Over the last 11 years, we have accumulated debt close to the size of our annual budget: $25,000. We need to begin to pay it off and not continue to owe more money.

We regret this necessity enormously. We believe in doing what we say we will do and therefore we take great care with what we say we will do. We will continue to send resources and information on request. We will include a one page, updated monthly, abbreviated C.P.R. Newsletter with each such response. And, above all, we will do our best to maintain the accuracy of our mailing list. PLEASE CONTINUE TO SEND US YOUR CHANGES OF ADDRESS. Regretfully we will be unable to add new names to our mailing list, but will keep all such requests on file for the future. You will hear from us as much as we can possibly manage.

Our chances of resuming publication of our full Newsletter will increase if our readers can financially support our debt reduction and fundraising efforts. Stamps, as well as financial contributions, continue to be most welcome.

We want to let you all know a little more about how the Coalition has been doing its work of publishing the Newsletter, responding to correspondence, answering additional requests, and education through a variety of public presentations.

We are an all volunteer group of approximately two dozen people at any one time. Some of us have been imprisoned, some are family members of those who are, all are deeply concerned about the sad state of human rights in our country. We pay no rent because we do our work around a large living room table. We have existed all this time (34+ years) by the thinnest of financial threads and a great deal of determination. We originally sent out Newsletters first class, less than 100 a month. Our May 2009 mailing was 9,142. From the over 500 letters a month we respond to (and will continue to answer), we believe we have a monthly readership of 50,000 or so. We have supported our work with individual donations (both in-kind and cash), contributions from faith communities, and a few grants from progressive foundations. As our work has grown, sources of money for the work have shrunk. This is a part of the changes in our country over the last 30 years in which, consistently, the poor have gotten poorer and the rich have gotten richer. The current world financial crisis has only made this situation worse.

We continue to believe that the U.S. prison system and its subsidiaries make our communities less, rather than more, safe. We will do all we can to continue to work to change this. Please join us!

In Solidarity, The Coalition for Prisoners’ Rights

PLEASE POST  *  PLEASE SHARE  *  PLEASE POST

JUNE 2009
CORRECTION:

The current correct address for VEGAN OUTREACH is: PO BOX 30865, Tucson AZ 85751.

COLORADO COMMISSION ON CRIMINAL & JUVENILE JUSTICE

It’s mission is to enhance public safety, to ensure justice, and to ensure protection of the rights of victims through the cost-effective use of public resources. The work of the commission will focus on evidence-based recidivism reduction initiatives and the cost-effective expenditure of limited criminal justice funds. It produces an annual report, with recommendations. The postal address, c/o the Department of Public Safety is: 700 Kipling St, #1000, Denver CO 80215, 303-239-4400.

VOICES.CON: Term-to-Life Prisoners Converse

An e-mail newsletter and web site advertising a wide range of services to prisoners. Address: 8490 Westcliff Dr #40, Las Vegas NV 89145

WHAT WE SHOULD DO

One ex-prisoner/volunteer thought on the tragedy that will affect all 9,142+ prisoners that the Coalition Newsletter helps: Use just one 44 cent stamp addressed to Oprah. (Oprah Winfrey, c/o Harpo Productions, Inc., 1058 W Washington Blvd, Chicago IL 60607; 312-633-1000).

Let her know what we all know is up in the prison systems of the U.S.A. More importantly, everyone that gets and shares and reads this issue--all of you, 9142+: get off your asses and as one, or close to it: Let Oprah know that human lives, yours, are just as important as any other topic on her shows. We need help to continue to bring a little hope in to our world. That hope is the Coalition Newsletter.

Without hope, life is meaningless. Let Oprah and anyone else who will listen know that--your hope, which at one time was my only hope. The Newsletter has been the ultimate result of the long, hard work of special people who have exhausted all but themselves to keep the Newsletter going. THEY NEED HELP! So! What’s it going to be? $50,000 is chump change to many people such as Oprah. If the Newsletter truly is hope, then fight for it! 44 cents!

The Coalition for Prisoners’ Rights Newsletter has been published since 1976 by the Prison Project of Santa Fe, PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE NOT NOW BEING ACCEPTED. PLEASE DO CONTINUE TO SEND US YOUR CHANGES OF ADDRESS. WE HOPE TO RESUME REGULAR PUBLICATION WHEN OUR DEBTS ARE PAID AND FINANCES ALLOW. We appreciate those who help us by sharing our materials and by sending stamps and other donations to us at: Prison Project of Santa Fe, PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. We continue to need and appreciate your support.
Crime of the Month

Sgt. Ryan Maseth was a 24 year old green beret in Iraq when he took a shower at his barracks in Baghdad. He was electrocuted. The Army is calling Sgt. Maseth's death a negligent homicide.

Maseth's barracks had been wired by KBR. KBR, a large military contractor which used to be a subsidiary of Halliburton, is a company that former vice president Dick Cheney used to lead. KBR has made billions in the Iraq war.

And KBR has a record in Iraq. Seventeen other soldiers have been electrocuted in buildings wired by KBR.

In 2004, the Army issued a bulletin stating that electrocution was "growing at an alarming rate." Just recently, KBR was awarded another $35 million contract to do electrical work in Iraq.

aka Crimetoppers

Said one Pentagon official "Many within the department of defense have lost or are losing all remaining confidence in KBR's ability to successfully and repeatedly perform the required electrical support services mission in Iraq."

And it turns out that the U.S. Army paid tens of millions of dollars in bonuses to KBR, its biggest contractor in Iraq, even after it concluded the firm's electrical work had put U.S. soldiers at risk.

Manslaughter by a continuous criminal conspiracy is the crime of this month. One suggested punishment, offered by a congressman is: "KBR is a sociopathic organization that turns lies into profit. It deserves a corporate death penalty."