

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 33, No. 6

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911

June 2008

## ¿FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE?

To repeat yet again: although whites commit more street drug offenses, African Americans are arrested and imprisoned on street drug charges at much higher rates. In the 34 states Human Rights Watch recently reported on, an African American man is 11.8 times more likely than a white man to be sent to prison on drug charges. An African American woman is 4.8 times more likely than a white woman.

In 16 states, African Americans are sent to prison for street drug offenses at rates between 10 and 42 times greater than the rate for whites. The 10 states with the greatest such disparities in prison admissions for drug offense convictions are: Wisconsin, Illinois, New Jersey, Maryland, West Virginia, Colorado, New York, Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Michigan.

In 43 of the country's largest

cities also recently reported on by The Sentencing Project, since 1980, the rate of street drug arrests in U.S. cities for African Americans increased by 225%, compared to increasing by 70% for whites. In 11 cities, arrests of African Americans rose at 3 times the rate for whites, 225% compared to 70%. In 11 cities, arrests of African Americans rose by more than 500% from 1980 to 2003.

From 1980 to 2003, there were 6 cities where the arrest rates on street drug charges increased by more than 500%. They are: Tucson (887%), Buffalo (809%), Kansas City (736%), Toledo (701%), Newark (663%), and Sacramento (597%).

Extreme variations in street drug arrests exist within states also. In Texas, for example, there was an 81% rise in street drug arrests in Fort Worth

(continued on next page)

## **FAIRNESS AND JUSTICE?, cont.**

between 1980 and 2003. In near-by Dallas, there was a decline of 42%. In Arizona, there was an increase in street drug arrests in Tucson of 887%. That is 17 times the 52% increase that took place in Phoenix.

Overall, African-American street drug arrest rates increased at 3.4 times the rate of whites, despite similar rates of street drug use. For example, from 1980 through 2006, African Americans were four times as likely as whites to receive jail time for possession of marijuana. Hispanics were three times as likely. In 2002, about 2.4% of all marijuana users were arrested for marijuana possession. The arrest rate for African Americans was 94% higher. According to the latest available FBI data, four in 10 of all street drug arrests were for marijuana possession.

All of this means that African American men are nearly 12 times as likely to be imprisoned for street drug convictions as white men. This is despite the fact that two-thirds of those arrested for street drug violations in 2006 were white and 33% were African American even though African Americans make up just 12.8% of the population. In 2003, the most recent year for which federal data is available, African Americans made up 53.5% of all those who entered prison for a drug conviction.

Thus it follows that, not only are one in every 99.1 U.S. adults (of which there are about 230 million total), but also one in 15 of African American adults of which one in nine are African American men between the ages of

20 and 34. As of 2006, one in 36 Hispanic adults is incarcerated.

In 2005, it cost a average of \$23,876 to imprison someone. This varies from \$45,000 a year in Rhode Island to \$13,00 in Louisiana.

Overall from 1980 to 2003, the number of those imprisoned for street drug offenses in the U.S. has increased by 1100% (not a typo). In numbers, this is an increase from 41,100 human beings in 1980 to 493,800 in 2003. Since 1980 there have been more than 31 million arrests for street drug offenses.

From the Sentencing Project report: "The impact of drug abuse has been particularly devastating in many African American communities...the indirect toll of the 'war on drugs' is vast in urban communities of color...[It] includes the financial cost and the hundreds of thousands of lives lost to incarceration, the additional lives lost to violence, and the irreparable damage done to African American families." Even more chilling is their statement that: "The extreme variation in city-level drug arrests suggests that policy and practice decisions, and not overall rates of drug use, are responsible for much of this disparity."

### **RESOURCES**

#### **Human Rights Watch**

350 Fifth Avenue, 34th Floor  
New York NY 10118  
212-290-4700, hrw@hrw.org

#### **The Sentencing Project**

514 Tenth Street NW, Suite 1000  
Washington DC 20004  
202-628-087, sentencingproject.org

# **Pena de muerte aplicada a 1.100 condenados desde que se restablecio en 1976**

La pena de muerte, criticada por organismos de defensa de los derechos humanos nacionales e internacionales, ha cobrado a la vida en EE. UU. de 1.100 convictos desde que fue restablecida en 1976.

La primera ejecución judicial de la que se tiene noticia en EE. UU. fue la del capitán George Kendall, ajusticiado por los británicos en 1608 acusado de espionaje.

En 1968 se produjo una moratoria de diez años para su aplicación y en 1972 el Tribunal Supremo de los EE.UU. decidió por cinco votos contra cuatro, que la forma arbitraria en que se aplicaba constituía una violación de la Constitución.

Sin embargo, en 1976 el mismo tribunal restableció la pena capital al dictaminar por siete votos contra dos su constitucionalidad en caso de homicidio. Desde ese año y hasta mayo de 2008 han sido ejecutados 1.100 presos.

La ejecución más reciente es la William Earl Lynd, ejecutado en Georgia el 6 de mayo del 2008.

Fue la primera ejecución desde que en septiembre del 2007 el Supremo accedió considerar los casos de dos condenados en el estado de Kentucky que alegaron que el método de castigo, la inyección letal, era cruel e inhumano y, por lo tanto, anticonstitucional.

La pena de muerte está en vigor en 36 de los 50 estados de la Unión. No se aplica en Alaska, Dakota del Norte, Hawai, Iowa, Maine, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Nueva Jersey, Nueva York, Rhode Island, Virginia Occidental,

Vermont, Wisconsin y el Distrito de Columbia.

El método más habitual para llevar a cabo las ejecuciones es la inyección letal, aplicada en 35 estados de los 50 estados. Nebraska aún mantiene la electrocución como método de castigo.

Tras una moratoria que duraba desde 1963, el Gobierno Federal se sumó en junio de 2001 a los países en la aplicación de la pena capital, con las ejecuciones del "terrorista" Timothy McVeigh y del narco-traficante Raúl Garza.

## **EXECUTIONS RESUME**

On April 16, 2008, the U.S. Supreme Court decided that lethal injection as practiced in Kentucky is not "cruel and unusual punishment" under the U.S. Constitution. The case is *Baze v. Rees*, no. 07-5439. Yet when the second place horse in the Kentucky Derby this year broke both front ankles and was euthanized, Supreme Court Justice Stevens remarked to a large group of lawyers that the horse probably died more humanely than do death row prisoners in Kentucky.

Just weeks later, a federal judge in Delaware stayed executions there so she could consider the constitutionality of Delaware's lethal injection procedures.

By May 23, 2008, there had been two executions, one each in Georgia and in Mississippi. Another May execution is scheduled in Virginia. Seven executions are scheduled for June and another six for July. Half of those to be executed are in Texas

# Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

VOICES  
FROM  
INSIDE  
since 1976

## FACTS

Crescent City CA

March 2, 2008

The new initiative that FACTS is proposing is not in the best interest of California 3-strikers. Section 6(F) of the new initiative gives all the power in re-sentencing of qualified individuals to the judge and district attorney. The district attorney needs only to prove by a "preponderance of evidence" that a person poses a risk to public safety. Tell your families not to support this initiative unless FACTS amends it to exclude this power of the district attorney. We non-violent, non-serious 3rd strikers should be given the same benefits as the initiative affords others regarding non-violent/non-serious felonies

CPR DISCLAIMER: None of us are lawyers.

6/08

## NON-COMPLIANT

Jarratt VA

March 16, 2008

Virginia's 4th Circuit Court of Appeals has dismissed *McRae v. Johnson*, No. 06-7548, grooming policy lawsuit, so the small handful of non-compliant inmates, is still forced to continue their 9 year solitary confinement. We plan to file in the Supreme Court. To assist, contact: Elton L. Williams, aka Fiyahbinghi Nkrumah, 260920, GRCC, 901 Corrections Way, Jarratt VA 23870. (No mail directly from inmates.)

CPR DISCLAIMER: None of us are lawyers.

## LETTER WRITING

Lovelock NV

April 2008

We are trying to arrange a prisoners' letter writing campaign to powers-that-be: politicians, bureaucrats, NGOs. Via outside Internet connections, letter will be scanned and sent as PDF file attachments. Our first letter will be about the Pell Grant renewal. Contact: John Quintero, 93782, LCC, 1200 Prison Rd, Lovelock NV 89419.

## WHO NEXT?

Butner NC

April 2008

Several inmates who have finished their time are now being held under the Adam Walsh Act. Some inmates completed a program in good faith and found that their info was used against them. If you have an Adam Walsh story, write: David Luce, 24896-001, FCI One NC Compound, PO Box 1000, Butner NC 27509. (No mail directly from inmates, but will welcome all who can write.)

Mailing list additions and address changes should go into effect within two months from their postmarked date. Our goal is to answer requests for referrals and other correspondence within six weeks. Letters intended for publication must say "Do Print." If requesting response, state if you can receive mail directly from those imprisoned. 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.

## **PHOTOCOPIES**

Gatesville TX

April 7, 2008

Are you being allowed to pay for photocopies of your motions and briefs for the required 11 copies of your PDR etc. out of your Inmate Prison Account? If you are interested in a class action lawsuit to be allowed to use Trust Fund monies to pay for a copier service or the law library providing us with copies, please write: themodelprisoner@voiceforinmates.com, or 611 Kings Rd, Shelby NC 28150.

## **CAMPAIGN SUCCESS**

Florence AZ

April 8, 2008

The National Legal Professional Associates (NLPA) and my defense team are now awaiting the final evidence for my petition regarding my Juvenile Life Without the Possibility of Parole (JLWOP) sentence. It is a CT scan showing brain damage and the underdevelopment of my prefrontal dorsal cortex. This is scientific proof that juveniles are less culpable and must not be sentenced to No Hope Whatsoever. If you want the road map on funding an appeal that took me 20 years to discover, serious individuals write by third party to me: Kevin Woodrow Blackerby, 82707, PO Box 4000, SMU I, Florence AZ 85232 or, at 27051 Joan St, Taylor MI 48180. Bless everyone who has supported me in this cause.

## **REQUIRED DEDUCTION**

Steilacoom WA

April 18, 2008

Regarding the 10% required deduction on all wages and deposits in Washington State Prisons: All inmates who have a projected release date (ERD) which is past their expected life expectancy, can file form DOC 06-070 (Rev. 12/14/07) Mandatory Savings Account Exemption to have them stop the deduction and place any funds currently in the account back into their regular account. This will benefit many elderly, lifer, and long-term prisoners. With all good wishes.  
CPR DISCLAIMER: None of us are lawyers.

\*\*\*\*\*

Thank you to all those who sent in their subscription renewal requests, and often donations, by May 1. Please bear with us as we work on completing the updated mailing list. If you ask for it, we will be happy to send you a June issue if you have not received one as expected.





## **SPREAD THE WORD**

Warren ME

April 24, 2008

I am trying to start up a pen pal system. All are welcome: male, female, gay, Lesbian, bi-sexual, transsexual, hermaphrodites. Be sure to include if you can have inmate contact from institution to institution. Spread the word to more people; the more people, the more pen pals. No money involved. Be sure to put down your information in your letter. Send to: Daniel LeDuc, 7193, M S P, 807 Cushing Road, Warren ME 04864. No mail from other prisoners, but your friends and family can write.

## **POETRY I.**

Boscobel WI

April 20, 2008

I am compiling an anthology of inmate poetry. If you would like to make a contribution, you can send your poems directly to: Johnny Lacy Jr, 71373, PO Box 9900, Boscobel WI 5385. Your name will be included as the author as0. printed by your permission. Your permission is granted by your sending me the poems.

## **POETRY II.**

Pueblo CO

April 22, 2008

I would like to try to publish a book of inmates' poetry. Please send me your original art or poetry. Please try to make sure I can write back. All inmates will get credit for their work. In order to use your poetry or art, you will need to sign a release form. Write: Jonathan W. Woodstock, 116191, PO Box 3, Pueblo CO 81003.

## **INMATES OVER, GUARDS UNDER**

Lovelady TX

April 24, 2008

The TDCJ prison system is almost 4,000 inmates over capacity and approximately 4,000 guards understaffed. The prison administrators are now bribing people to come to work for the system by paying \$1,500 signing bonuses. File a Step 1 alleging that the system is severely overcrowded and understaffed and that these two problems are causing a breakdown in security, classification, access to food services, recreation, law library and endangering inmates, the staff and possibly the public. Then file a Step 2....

CPR DISCLAIMER: *None of us are lawyers.*

## **BOND PROBATION**

Amarillo TX

April 26, 2008

Any person from Tarrant County TX who was required to submit to a bond probation as part of their being released on bail/bond please have their family or friends contact me with the names and addresses so that I might begin a class action civil suit. Write: James Thomas Wright Jr, 1096313, Clements Unit, 9601 Spur 591, Amarillo TX 79107.

CPR DISCLAIMER: *None of us are lawyers.*



## VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

### RE FEDERAL PAROLE

FedCURE has drafted a new federal parole bill entitled: *The Criminal Justice Tax Relief Act of 2007* (CJTRA). Among its provisions are to: reinstate the old parole statutes and amend them, make all federal prisoners eligible for parole, increase good time allowances, have release dates set by the U.S. Parole Commission in accordance with applicable parole guidelines or the U.S. Sentencing Guidelines-- whichever is lowest, provide for term reductions of elderly prisoners, clarify parole procedures, provide postincarceration supervision, apply prospectively and retroactively, and extend the life of the U.S. Parole Commission for 20 years. Contact them: FedCURE, PO Box 15667, Plantation FL, [www.fedcure.org](http://www.fedcure.org)

### INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON PENAL ABOLITION (ICOPA XII)

"Creating a Scandal--Prison Abolition and the Policy Agenda" will be held at Kings College, London on July 23 - 25, 2008. These conferences have been held regularly since the 1980s, on different continents. Topics this year include: deaths in custody; prisoners' families and penal abolition; prison gangs, human rights and the need to abolish imprisonment; gender and victimization; abolishing prisons: a necessary path to respect fundamental rights and improve democracy. Contact at: [www.icopal2london.org.uk](http://www.icopal2london.org.uk)

### SUPPORT FUNDING FOR THE SECOND CHANCE ACT

was signed into law on April 9, 2008. It authorizes a number of critical services for those recently released from incarceration. BUT: No monies will be available for these urgently needed programs until Congress votes to allocate funding. Contact your members of Congress who must hear that you and your loved ones want them to vote to fund these programs at the highest possible levels. For more information contact: National HIRE Network, Legal Action Center, 225 Varick St, 4th Floor, New York NY 10014, 212-243-1313, [www.hirenetwork.org](http://www.hirenetwork.org) or [www.lac.org](http://www.lac.org)

### PRISON FIRINGS

As of mid-April, a total of 17 Maryland prison guards had been fired in an investigation into accusations of brutality against prisoners at both Roxbury near Hagerstown and North Branch near Cumberland.

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 and other donations to us at the address at the top of this box.

# Crime of the Month

aka Crimetoppers

As Israelis celebrate the 60th anniversary of their nation, Palestinians commemorate a less joyous historical event: al Nakba, Arabic for "catastrophe." When Israel was established, more than 500 Palestinian villages were systematically destroyed, their names removed from maps of the new state. Countless Palestinian homes were confiscated and given to Jewish immigrants from Europe. This ruthless program of ethnic cleansing, planned and implemented by the Zionist founders of Israel, has been thoroughly documented by Israeli historians using Israel's own archives. It is as much a fact of history as the Holocaust. Yet few of us even know that it occurred.

The moral outrage directed toward those who deny the Holocaust is well

deserved. Why is there not a similar outrage expressed over the routine denial of the tragedy which befell the Palestinian people in 1947? Not one Palestinian family has received compensation for the lands and homes which were taken from them. Indeed, since 1948, more and more land has been confiscated from the Palestinians who now live in tiny areas in the West Bank on what constitutes less than 17% of their original lands.

Those who would raise a toast to 60 years of European colonization of Palestine should take a moment to reflect on what this anniversary means to the Palestinian people. Our crime of the month is the "celebration" of the ethnic cleansing which accompanied the birth of the state of Israel.



6/08

Return  
Service  
Requested

