

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 29, No. 3 PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911 March 2004

International Women's Day - March 8

Invisible Health Crisis

Imprisoned women are at the center of an epidemic of preventable illness, unnecessary suffering and premature death. Recent trends reflect a disturbing and dramatic increase nationwide in the number of women incarcerated. In 2002, almost 98,500 women were incarcerated in prisons alone, making up over 6.5% of the total prison population in the United States. This reflects a 592% increase among women prisoners between 1977 and 2001. Nearly 2/3 of all women in jails and prisons are women of color. They are 43% African American and 12% Latina. An African American woman is more than 7 times as likely as a white woman to spend time behind bars.

While imprisoned, health problems often get worse for women, and prison medical services are inadequate and even harmful. Men usually have better access to specialized medical procedures such

as heart surgery, which is generally unavailable to women.

As with other institutions in the U.S., the current prison system was created by men, and male-centered health care is the norm in prisons. The complexities of women's health are misunderstood by providers working in prisons.

Women's health issues tend to be more complicated than men's; women have a higher incidence of tuberculosis, hepatitis B & C, HIV, high blood pressure, and asthma. Of women incarcerated in the District of Columbia, 41% are HIV positive, of those in New York state, 18%. Women prisoners in California have an 40 to 60% chance of being infected with the Hep C virus. Women also have higher rates of reproductive health problems due to untreated sexually transmitted infections, and mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression.

(continued on next page)

INVISIBLE HEALTH CRISIS, cont.

Even food in women's prisons is worse than in men's. Several men's prisons have salad bars, no women's prison does. California spends half as much money on women prisoners' food as on men's - \$1.25 a day vs. \$2.45. California has also ended women's prisoners access to special medical diets.

A woman prisoner in "The Fire Inside" says, "The medical attention is atrociously inept. No one responds well when their medical needs are not being met."

Regular screening for breast and cervical cancer are not part of the routine annual care received by women who are incarcerated. Prisons have yet to make these routine services available to women, although their availability would prevent unnecessary illness, emotional trauma, and even death.

Pregnancy services are also sorely lacking in prisons nationwide. Six percent of women who enter jail and five percent entering prisons are pregnant at the time of entry. But less than five percent of women receive pre-natal care in jails and prisons, which includes vitamin supplements, regular screenings, and a healthy diet.

One in five of the 2.1 million people in jail and prison are mentally ill; figures are higher for women. Mental health services, like medical care, are inadequate, and many women do not trust prison therapists because of confidentiality breaches and a general lack of compassion.

In addition to medical and psychological neglect in prisons and jails in the United States, women are mistreated by others who work for the male-dominated prison industry. Women's issues are not

only dismissed and misunderstood by medical providers, but also by guards and caseworkers. Women are physically and emotionally isolated from their families and children and their communities.

A woman prisoner in Chowchilla recently wrote in a letter about the attitudes of the people who work for the prison industrial complex: "They don't seem to take these living conditions seriously. They feel like you're not Human, because you're in jail. They deny you of all your human rights!"

In response to inadequate care, women are organizing to create better conditions in prisons. AIDS is the leading cause of death within U.S. prisons, and women in New York prisons have twice the rates of HIV infection than men entering prisons. The AIDS Counseling & Education Project (ACE) at Bedford Hills Correctional Facility in New York is one of the most successful projects started by prisoners. It was founded by women prisoners to educate and counsel other prisoners and to help care for women with AIDS.

Many women create informal support groups with other prisoners, increasingly important as programming cuts continue and increase. Women in prison have proven repeatedly that they must and can support each other.

"Un ejército de voces, manos y pies/ un río de caras morenas, miradas que no piden perdón." L.Rios

RESOURCES

CA Coalition for Women Prisoners,
1540 Market St., Ste. 490, San
Francisco, CA 94102. Newsletter:
"The Fire Inside"

Incarcerated Womyn's Health Project,
PO Box 544, Austin TX 78610.

Justice Now, 1322 Webster St, Suite
210, Oakland CA 94612.

Women on the Row

There were 47 women on death row in the U.S. as of December 31, 2003. These women range in age from 24 to 73. Twenty-six (55%) are white, 15 (32%) are African American, 5 (14%) are Latinas, and one (2%) is Native American.

Ten percent of the people arrested for murder are women, but women receive fewer than 2% of the death sentences handed out. A bit more than half the women sentenced to death were convicted of killing their husbands or their children. According to the *Daily Targum* of Rutgers University, one-third of the women on death row are Lesbians.

Many women on death row were sexually abused before they were convicted and sentenced. Relatively few states have a death row specifically for women, so many are simply held in isolation, their lives controlled entirely by guards, usually male guards.

One hundred forty-five women have been sentenced to death since 1973. CA and NC account for 16 each. FL and TX each 15 hold, and OH, 10. The other states with women sentenced to death since 1973 are AL, IL, MS, OK, GA, PA, MO, IN, KY, MD, NJ, AZ, AR, ID, LA, NV, TN, SC and VA.

Ten women have been executed since 1976. Nine were white, one was African American. Two were killed in TX, 2 in FL, and one each in Arkansas, AL and NC. OK, however, executed 3 women in 2001.

This was the highest number executed in one year since Virginia executed 6 enslaved African American women in 1863. But Massachusetts still holds the record: 14 women executed for witchcraft in 1692.

Inmigrantes: Hay nuevos datos

Nuevos datos del Consejo Nacional de Población en México indican que 75 por ciento de los mexicanos que emigraron a EE.UU. el año pasado entraron al país sin documentos legales.

Esto es un aumento grande comparado con el 48 por ciento de personas que entró a EE.UU. hace una década. Según el Consejo, nueve de cada 10 emigrantes alieron de México en busca de trabajo. Sus datos indican que unos 6,4 millones de mexicanos trábajan en EE.UU. y que estos representan 4,4 por ciento de la población laboral del país norteamericano.

Wal-Mart enfrenta nuevas demandas

Los inmigrantes indocumentados mexicanos detenidos en una redada de migración el pasado octubre en las tiendas Wal-Mart ampliaron su demanda de abusos laborales en contra de la compañía, acusándola de mantener bajo llave a los trabajadores de limpieza en el turno nocturno.

Algunos de los demandantes se quejaron de no poder salir de las tiendas para recibir atención medica al lastimarse en el trabajo porque las puertas estaban trancadas. Wal-Mart respondió a las acusaciones por medio de su abogado, David Murria, quien dijo que siempre había un supervisor presente con la llave, que encerraban a los empleados por su propia seguridad y la de la mercancía.

La semana pasada inmigrantes de Polonia, Eslovaquia y la República Checa, también detenidos en la redada, se unieron a la demanda de los inmigrantes mexicanos.

Coalition for Prisoners' Rights Newsletter



VOICES
FROM
INSIDE

since 1976

HONEST DEBATE

Aberdeen WA

December 23, 2003

...If we can not use the right names, how are we ever to have an honest debate?/ Now you may ask why should a prisoner care about whether or not weomen have the right to choice or not. I believe that all things are connected in some way; if I do not care about women's rights, why should they care about any prisoners' rights?/ We have to care about each other in all things.

MAXIMUM MANAGEMENT

Raiford FL

January 24, 2004

The rule we're being held under is Chapter 33-601.820. FL Administrative Code states this is a temporary status. No matter how long we go disciplinary-report free, we are denied Close Management 1 privileges. The relief sought is: the right to weekly recreation, adequate clothing, receive books, magazines and newspapers, radios, canteen/commissary, phone calls and visitation, procedural due process. We are pleading for support. Inmates of Maximum Management W-Wing, F.S.P., 7819 N.W. 228th Street, Raiford FL 32026-1160.

VICTORY

Gatesville TX

January 27, 20004

Robert Hart, a Texas prisoner, complained of prison conditions and official misconduct at the A.D. Hughes Unit in Gatesville TX. As a result, Hart was retaliated against when he was punished and received 30 days commissary and cell restrictions. After the Asst. Warden overturned the disciplinary case, Hart file suit pursuant to sec. 1983 for retaliation. And, after 2.5 years of litigating, the district court dismissed for failure to state a claim. However, upon appeal to the 5th circuit, the circuit court, per curiam, vacated and remanded for various reasons. This ruling was long overdue for Texas prisoners. See *Hart v. Hairston*, 343 F. 3d 762 (5th Cir. 2003)

DAZED AND CONFUSED

Waverly VA

January 28, 2004

In August, 2002, the governor of Virginia announced he would offset the \$48 million deficit of the VDOC by closing 3 state prisons. A new contract with Vermont was signed to warehouse 600 prisoners at \$12 million per year. In late December 2003, Vermont Human Resources told prisoners: "In early February you will be transported to Kentucky."

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.

NEWSLETTER

Ina IL

January 28, 2004

Illinois has an excellent newsletter. It's D.E.N.I.S., edited by Phyllis Coleman, 8740 S. Ashland, Chicago IL 60620.

SIGNATURES NEEDED

San Diego CA

January 31, 2004

Families to Amend California's Three Strikes (F.A.C.T.S.) and Citizen's Against Violent Crimes (C.A.V.C.) are currently gathering signatures to qualify an initiative onto the ballot in November 2004. To amend California's unjust three strikes law, we need to gather 600,000 signatures by April 1, 2004. If you are incarcerated in California, please encourage your family and friends to register to vote and to contact F.A.C.T.S. at (213) 746-4844 or C.A.V.C. at (714) 547-9847 to see how you can help and to sign onto the initiative.

THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

Lovelady TX

February 2, 2004

Complaints and resistance on the Eastham Unit include: Food portions halved, no bread, served cold; dishwashers broken, little heat, phone calls denied, chronic staff shortage, missed recreation periods, yard cages caked with bird excrement, written requests from prisoners not responded to, excessive disciplinary reports, sick call requests unanswered, mail not picked up or distributed on Saturdays, haircut implements not sanitized properly.

LITERATURE

Tennessee Colony TX

February 2, 2004

Richard Ayers v. Gary Johnson, et al., civil action #01:99-011-C, in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas - Abilene Division, challenges pretextual denials of literature to TDCJ-ID prisoners as "written solely...to cause prison disturbances such as strikes or riots," where "contains material of a racial nature" is in the remarks column. Seek joinder, of file amicus curiae briefs. Trial set for April 15, 2004, but expect reset.



EXCHANGING IDEAS

Blythe CA

February 3, 2004

I would like to form a special group group for all bilingual, Spanish and English speaking persons coming together to create anetwork relating to culture, original poetry, legal issues, chess games at any level or simply support. Anybody is welcome to participate. Prisoners can't respond directly. David Niebla E., H35833, PO Box 2199, Blythe CA 92226.

RADIO SHOW

Love lady TX

February 3, 2004

Texas Inmate Families Association (TIFA)announced on the Ray Hill "Prisoners' Radio Show," Friday, January 23 that it was asking all inmates to, in turn, ask family members and friends to contact TIFA in order to find out how they can help support TIFA in its effort to seek legislation for getting good conduct credits and work time credits. Contact: TIFA, PO Box 181253, Austin TX 78718-1253, www.TIFA.org, (866) 291-6564. Every Texas inmate should join in this effort!

CORRESPONDING

Waupun WI

February 5, 2004

I am interested in corresponding with Muslims on religious issues and others. I can receive mail from prisons and will respond to all letters. Jason Ludke, #351644, Waupun Correctional Institution, PO Box 351, Waupun WI 53963.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWAL REMINDER & THANK YOU

Everyone MUST return their whole Subscription Renewal Form by May 1, 2004, to continue to receive their Coalition Newsletter. If you did not receive your February issue/the renewal form it contained, send us: your last name; first name & middle initial; and, if currently in prison, your prison ID number; address; city; state & zip. PLEASE write clearly.

THANK YOU RESIST!

The CPR is proud to have received funding for the 2nd year of a 3 year grant from RESIST for support to challenge human rights violations related to the US police, court and penal system. RESIST funds groups like the CPR to support people who take a stand about issues that matter in today's world. Contact: RESIST, 259 Elm Street, Suite 201, Somerville MA 02144, (617) 623-5110, www.resistinc.org



VOICES IN SOLIDARITY

THIS ISSUE IS DEDICATED TO THE HUNDREDS OF WOMEN OF CUIDAD JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA, MEXICO, WHO HAVE BEEN TORTURED & KILLED OVER THE PAST DECADE. NI UNA MAS!

CORRECTION

Re: NY S-1688 and A-3807 bills (see CPR Newsletter for January 2004). They leave out ALL inmates serving indeterminate sentences of life. So inmates serving such indeterminate sentences are not eligible for merit time ("good time").

ANOTHER 3 STRIKES

Jeff "Free" Luers is doing 22 years in Oregon for vandalizing 3 SUV's as a protest against their destructive impact on the environment. Videotapes, golf clubs and now cars--like oil, all held to be more important than human life by those in power in this country.

SCREAMS OR SHOUTS

Are you presently or were you ever imprisoned, on probation or parole having been wrongly convicted? Do you wish that someone having the ability to help could get the chance to hear your side of the events for which you were convicted? In internationally distributed magazine may be willing to print your version of the crime. Send for an application form at: *SCREAMS OR SHOUTS*, The International Voice of the Wrongly Convicted, 12 Hawthorne Avenue, Duhaney Park, Kingston 20, Jamaica, West Indies (80 cents postage for the 1st oz.)

TEXAS CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM COALITION

Supports civil rights and changes in public policy regarding the police, court and penal system which disproportionately affects minority and poor families. Distributes: *Stand Up!: What to do if you are a victim of police abuse in Texas* (with the ACLU of Texas Police Accountability Project, \$6 + \$.95 s & h), the manual *Racial Profiling in Texas: What You and Your Community Need to Know* (free) and the brochure *"Get Your Vote Back in Texas"* (by the ACLU). Order from: Texas Criminal Justice Reform Coalition, 1506 S 1st St, Austin TX 78704.

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

There is no end to the scandals heaped upon our president. Numerous books have included convincing documentation, replete with endless footnotes, regarding his follies. Hardly a good word is said about him and his motley crew; his one redeeming feature is rarely mentioned: that of family loyalty.

Take the prez's little brother Neil, famous for his involvement in the Silverado Savings and Loan debacle for which he got off scot free. He has a \$60,000 yearly contract as a contact person for New Bridges, a recently formed firm that helps companies seeking reconstruction business in Iraq (yes, there are other companies than Halliburton and its subsidiaries there).

Young Bush also serves as co-

chairman of Crest Investment Corporation for another \$60,000 a year. Crest is involved in Neil Bush's educational software company called Ignite!

Learning, a company vying for contracts for Iraqi education. This, however, is peanuts compared to Neil's \$400,000 consulting contract with Grace Semiconductor, a Chinese computer chip maker. That contract was generated while his big-brother-president negotiated with China on sensitive trade, arms and human rights issues.

But the big winner is Uncle Bucky, William H.T. Bush, brother of *former* president Bush, and a board member of Engineered Support Systems, a company that has received more than \$850 million in military contracts since 2001.

This all is our Crime of the Month.



03/04

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