

Turning Point: The Newsletter of



Published in August 2016

Citizens United for
Rehabilitation of Errants

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From the Chairs

by Keith & Hedy

Prisoners' Lives Matter!

It's time once again for *Missouri CURE* to call on concerned citizens and prisoner rights advocates across the state and in fact the whole country. We are calling on them to assemble and participate in this year's 13th Annual State-wide Conference which is about to be held at the *South East Community Center* in Kansas City MO on September 24. The Theme for this year's conference will be "Prisoners Lives' matter—What Part of Modern Day Slavery Don't You Understand?"

This past year has been a momentous one. Police killings around the country have taken center stage. Mass incarceration has become a household word. Even many people who thought they'd never again see times like these are starting to feel the grip of criminal justice corruption and the hands of government oppression rapidly tightening around their necks. Indeed, there seems to be an ever increasing concern by almost everyone about the current state of lawlessness in law enforcement and the epidemic of mass incarceration. This concern is held by just about everyone with eyes to see and ears to hear, except for bootlicking blacks and the most diehard, racist fanatics. Yes, even in this day and time there are still plenty of those out here as well. These are people who are adamant that no matter how far astray the government goes, they are still willing to give it their full confidence and support. In fact, the further the government goes astray, the more they seem to love it and the harder they are willing to fight to preserve the way things are.

Planning and organizing for this conference has been and continues to be far a more monumental task than it has been in the past. This year we are expecting an audience of about 250 people, and this is just the number where we've had to stop recruiting because

we are running short on money. The outcome of the tremendous amount of work we have put in on this remains to be seen, but anytime someone can attract an audience this large (for a cause like this), it will certainly say a lot about something.

If everything happens the way we have planned, I am sure that *Missouri CURE* and organizations like it will be labeled by some as agitators and instigators. **But we are not the ones who created this nightmare which has people so concerned and upset—Big Brother did and it continues with no signs of ever letting up.**

All we at Missouri CURE are trying to do is find a sensible solution to these problems before they turn tragically otherwise. Enter Missouri State Representative Brandon Ellington; *New Abolitionist Radio* personality Max Parthas from South Carolina; and his wife, renowned poet Tribal Raine. Enter also our Noble and Distinguished Chairwoman Hedy Harden—and yours truly, your humble servant,

Keith Brown El

Brother Max Parthas will be our keynote speaker. His show is part of the Black Talk Radio network.

Max and Tribal Raine will drive to Kansas City for the conference. Tribal Raine will perform some of her poetry. Bev Livingston, Director of Mothers of Incarcerated Sons & Daughters (MISD), will be our MC.

The program will begin with a troupe of dancers from Dee Barker's group. Our co-sponsor, State Rep. Brandon Ellington, Chair of the Democratic Black Caucus, will address the conference. Keith and I will speak as well. Kay Perry, Chair of Michigan CURE, will offer greetings from International CURE as well as Michigan CURE.

See Conference—page 9



Summer 2016

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It appears we may have worked a little too hard in recruiting people to attend our conference. Everyone is welcome, but we may not have enough money to provide food for more than 200 people. Other expenses are mounting as well.

Please consider a donation to help us make this exceptional conference a complete success and continue to carry on the work of Missouri CURE.

Missouri CURE

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- Bev Livingston, MISD KCMO
- Angelika Mueller-Rowry, Gateway Greens

CURE is NOT a service organization. We are an all-volunteer non-profit criminal justice advocacy organization. CURE has NO legal services—please do NOT send legal papers. We advocate for criminal justice reform, but we cannot take on individual cases.

Mission Statement

CURE believes that prisons should be only for those who MUST be incarcerated and that prisons should only exist for the purposes of education and rehabilitation. CURE is a membership organization. We work hard to provide our members with the information and tools necessary to help them understand the criminal justice system and to advocate for positive change.

Transportation to Prisons from St. Louis



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Introducing the MacArthur Justice Center at St. Louis by: Alona Sistrunk, Civil Rights Litigation Specialist

For most of us, nothing resonates more than the earth-shattering scream of a mother who lost her daughter at the hands of those sworn to serve and protect, the cries of a son who has to bury his father too soon, or the deafening silence that lingers after a child's laughter is cut short.

Two years after the killing of Michael Brown, one year after the death of Sandra Bland, and less than a month after what would have been Tamir Rice's 14th birthday, we were yet again unified under the sound of unforgettable cries for Philando Castile, Alton Sterling and so many others.

For the past 30 years, the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center (RSMJC) has fought to amplify the voices of those who too frequently are ignored in our criminal justice system. RSMJC has won key victories on behalf of victims of police misconduct, individuals who have been wrongfully convicted, and for thousands injured by oppres-

sive and dangerous prison conditions. With offices in Illinois, Mississippi, Louisiana and, as of July of this year, Missouri, RSMJC remains committed and ready to boldly call for justice on behalf of those who go unheard.



After the Department of Justice released its scathing reports following investigations into the St. Louis County Family Court system as well as the Ferguson Police Department, it's clear there is much work to be done in the Gateway City. We are especially concerned about racial bias in policing, juvenile justice, prison and jail reform, right to counsel, court reform, sentencing practices, and the death penalty.

Though RSMJC is new to the state, its team of dedicated activists and attorneys are not. Building on her work as the founder and director of the Juvenile Law and Justice Clinic and a tenured profes-

sor at Washington University School of Law, Mae Quinn joined the office as its new director.

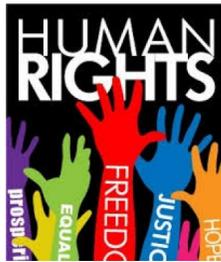
"Unfortunately, despite all that St. Louis has to offer, we are in great need of legal revolution reflecting 21st century views and values," Quinn said. "Countless outdated court, prosecution, and police practices have been allowed to flourish here. The system has perpetuated a pipeline to detention centers, jails, and prisons that benefits some while relegating others to second-class status and citizenship. This is no longer acceptable – and I am hopeful the new MacArthur Justice Center at St. Louis will contribute to turning the tide."

To learn more about the MacArthur Justice Center at St. Louis and how you can request help, visit our website, www.STL.MacArthurJusticeCenter.org. In addition, our address is 3115 South Grand Boulevard, Suite 300, St. Louis, Missouri, 63118. ❖

Legal & Resource Forum at Vandalia

On July 16 Angelika and Hedy joined a panel at WERDCC to discuss issues the women are dealing with. An extensive list of questions were submitted in advance by Annette Burnia, NAACP Legal Redress Chair.

Keith was also invited but unable to attend due to a previous commitment and sent



his greetings and regrets. Other panelists included an attorney and intern from the ACLU.

Topics of concern centered on serious issues such as child custody, legislation, institutional oversight, prisoners' rights, prison conditions, healthcare and taxes. ❖

August 10 NAACP Banquet at Licking

Keith and Hedy attended the Founding Fathers banquet hosted by NAACP Prison Branch 44AC at SCCC. This year's theme was "Go back to School, not to Prison."

Other guests included Dr. Sheryl Harris, the extraordinary and innovative principal of Walbridge Elementary School in North St. Louis; Dr. Saint Rice, Professor, Assis-



tant Dean, and Program Director of Criminal Justice at Lindenwood University; and Rev. Elston McCowan of the NAACP. 1st VP William Weaver presided in the absence of NAACP President Joseph Williams, who was unavoidably detained. We enjoyed the chance to converse with prisoner members, our gracious hosts. ❖

Animal Farm

August 4: Angie and Hedy enjoyed a performance of Animal Farm at WERDCC sponsored by Prison Performing Arts. The women did a marvelous job depicting the animals' revolt against their master in George Orwell's book, which is soon to be made into a motion picture.



PPA obtained special permission from Orwell's estate in England to become the only company producing the play before it becomes a movie. The play was both funny and thought-provoking. DOC Director George Lombardi was among the audience. ❖

Prisoners' Rights Matter!

Mumia's Fourth of July

Following are excerpts from an interview of Mumia Abu-Jamal by Chris Hedges

“Mass incarceration is a reality endured by millions of people in prison and in the systems of repression that exist outside of prison. What does freedom mean to poor people who cannot walk freely down a street? What does freedom mean when they cannot find work? What does freedom mean when there is no justice in the courts? What does freedom mean when black people cannot attend a Bible study in a church without the fear of being murdered? Where is this American freedom they keep telling us about? I don't see it.

Black folks are more in danger, and being killed in even greater numbers, than during the reign of terror that was lynching and Jim Crow.”

Abu-Jamal, who is fighting off hepatitis C that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the privatized prison medical service refuse to treat, scoffed when I asked him about the differences between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump.

“Donald Trump is the real face of the ugly American empire,” he said. “Yes, he ain't pretty. He ain't black. He ain't a woman. He has a fake tan and orange hair. His rhetoric is cruder. But his ideas are the same. The two major political parties are the abject servants of Wall Street and American empire. They each support militarism, at home and abroad. They each support the indiscriminant murder of civilians from drones. They each support the worldwide archipelago of secret prisons. They each support mass incarceration of poor people, the suspension of habeas corpus and torture. It is only their talk that is different. What is the difference between being beaten up by a black cop or a white cop? The only solution is to rise up to stop the cops from beatin' our asses and shootin' us in the streets, our homes and our cars. I can assure you voting for Hillary Clinton won't make a damn bit of difference. The Ku Klux Klan, after all, once served as the unofficial armed wing of the Democratic Party. You can't invest hope in an organization with a history like that.

“The black political elites, including Barack Obama, are powerless,” he went on. “They are emblems. They are not the voice of black America. They mouth the same words the white corporate masters mouth. They do not make white America uncomfortable. They do not name unpleasant truths. They never lifted their voices to denounce Bill Clinton's decision to massively expand our system of mass incarceration. And they do not lift their voices now. They go right along with the repression. And they are well paid for it.”



Abu-Jamal, a journalist and author of books such as “Live From Death Row” and a former member of the Black Panther Party, is serving a life sentence in the killing of a Philadelphia

police officer. Despite flagrant irregularities in his trial and evidence tampering, he was sentenced to death in 1982. His sentence was later commuted to life without parole. He spent 30 years on death row.

“Black people will probably vote for Clinton,” he said with resignation, “but this symbolizes the emptiness of hope. They fear Trump. They should look closely at the pictures from Trump's third wedding. Hillary Clinton is in the front pew of the church. Hillary, Bill, Trump and Melania are shown embracing at Trump's estate afterwards during the reception. These people are part of the same elite circle. They represent the same financial interests. They work for the same empire. They have grown rich from the system. The words they shout back and forth during political campaigns are meaningless. Trump or Clinton will deliver the same political result. They will serve, like Obama, corporate and military power. And if they were not willing to serve these centers of power they would not be allowed to run. Their job is to manufacture hope during election cam-

paigns that ultimately end in betrayal. This is why they spend billions on elections. They need to feed the illusion that our voices matter, that we are participants in their closed systems of power.

“The liberals and the Democrats are in many ways more dangerous than the right wing,” he said. “Repression and neoliberalism are more effectively instituted by Democrats such as Bill and Hillary Clinton or Barack Obama. They sound reasonable. But because what they do is hidden it is more insidious and often more deadly.”

“The system is broken,” Abu-Jamal said. “It has to be torn up, root and branch. And this has to be done from the bottom up. If we keep electing and re-electing these puppets we will keep getting played. We have to form political parties that reflect our political ideas. We have to stop surrendering to false parties and politicians that do not represent us.”

He said he places his hopes in groups such as Black Lives Matter that have taken to the streets. He said that if he could he would be in the streets of Philadelphia, where he was raised, during the Democratic convention.

“This is our hour of protest,” he said.

“We live in one of the most un-free systems on earth,” said the black revolutionary and author Mumia Abu-Jamal.

“We have to physically resist. We will reclaim our power when we say no, when we refuse to cooperate. We need to make the streets our commons.”

In prison, “Services that were once the responsibility of the state have been outsourced to corporations, as in the rest of society,” said Abu-Jamal, who works as a trash collector.

“When [prisoners] fill out a sick call slip, a request for medical attention, we have to also sign a cash slip,” he said. “The medical visit costs five or 10 dollars. This may not sound like a lot. But a prison job only pays \$30 a month. Prices are constantly going up. Wages in prisons have remained the same since the 1980s. Most prisoners can only go to buy items from the commissary after begging their mothers, grandmothers or girlfriends for money.

“In February, Global Tel Link began selling electronic tablets in the prison for \$150,” he said. “They charge 25 cents for an email and \$1.80 to download a song. And you have to pay them in advance.

Mumia—see page 8

From Scourge to Crisis

by James Keown

It is nearly impossible to watch, read or listen to the news these days without encountering a story on the Opioid Crisis. Television stations flash fancy graphics, while newspapers run special investigative reports. Normally these stories feature heartfelt testimonials mixed with tearful proclamations by lawmakers insisting that we must do more to save our communities by helping those afflicted by this crisis.

I don't want to sound like a cynic... okay, maybe I do. But where was all of this coverage and those teary press conferences 10 or 20 years ago when I covered America's drug epidemic as a young reporter? Back then we were encouraged to focus on the scourge of drug users and dealers. We reported on the litany of crimes they committed and how they were ruining our parks and schools. In those days, politicians were fiery and hosted press conferences marked by lots of fist pounding. Those of us in the press regularly used words like "crack dens" and "junkies" in our reporting. In re-

sponse, America declared war on drugs, drug sellers, and most of all drug users.

Today politicians say that their position has evolved on the subject. It seems what has really evolved are the type of people dying from drug use. During the late 20th century, overdoses appeared concentrated in America's poorest communities, especially those dominated by minority populations. Today, a middle-class white kid in the suburbs is just as likely, if not more likely, to die from an opioid overdose as a poor black kid in the city. So now it is a crisis.

Few in the mainstream media are willing to acknowledge the hypocrisy in their reporting. They act like this crisis simply popped up overnight while no one was looking. Where are the reporters asking why this issue wasn't im-

portant when the bodies were found along Euclid in St. Louis or Troost in Kansas City? Instead, news crews rush to rehab center ribbon cuttings in places like St. Ann and Lee's Summit. Nor are those of us in the advocacy community immune from fault. Many who have

fought for more than 30 years to see the nation create a more sensible approach to drug policy have steered clear of pointing out the uncomfortable truth of the Opioid Crisis. Scores of those dedicated activists fear that such publicity could cause the country's new-found progressive momentum to lose steam.

It is important, however, to remember that we arrived at this crisis in no small part because of our nation's desperate desire to see a scourge rather than a public

health and socioeconomic problem. I spend most of my time working on issues involving lifers and long-termers—those typically called "violent offenders". Many in America still see these women and men as a scourge on our society. My work, our work, is to continue to put a relatable face on people that the criminal justice system seeks to permanently remove from the free world. I believe that the more those on the outside get to know the real people behind the wall, the harder it will be to hide behind hateful stereotypes. Yesterday's scourge can become today's crisis and ultimately lead to tomorrow's solution.

James Keown is a former talk show host, reporter and radio executive. He worked at KMBZ and KCMO in Kansas City; KJMO and KLIK in Jefferson City; as well as ESPN Radio in Chicago. He is now serving LWOP in Massachusetts. ❖



What are Opioids?

Opioids are pain relievers, whether illegal drugs such as heroin or prescribed narcotics. Fentanyl, originally prescribed for the excruciating pain of end-stage cancer patients, has been synthesized for sale on the street and has caused numerous deaths from overdose.

CNN reported that a medical examination concluded that singer Prince died of an accidental overdose of fentanyl, ending weeks of speculation on how the singer died. Experts say fentanyl can be 100 times more potent than morphine

and 50 times stronger than heroin. "Just micrograms can make a difference between life and death. It's that serious," said DEA Special Agent John Martin, based in San Francisco. An amount the size of a few grains of sand of fentanyl can kill you. "All you have to do is touch it. It can be absorbed through the skin and the eyes."

People in the United States, only 5% of the world's population, consume 80% of the world's pain relievers. Why are people in the "land of the free" in so much pain?

Angie would like to remind prisoners to submit contributions for our Prisoner Narratives and Life Stories. Your life matters!

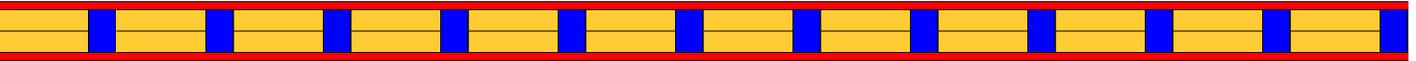
What's Your Story?

Mandela Prisoner Rights Day

The United Nations Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners are called the Mandela Rules. These were passed by all countries including the United States. The Nelson Mandela Rules call for July 18 – Mandela's birthday – to be known as Mandela Prisoner Rights Day, which will promote humane conditions of confinement and raise awareness of prisoners as a continuing part of society.

Mentally Ill Prisoners: Rule 109 of the Mandela Rules states the following: "Persons who are found to be not criminally responsible, or who are later diagnosed with severe mental disabilities and/or health conditions, for whom staying in prison would mean an exacerbation of their condition, shall not be detained in prisons, and arrangements shall be made to transfer them to mental health facilities as soon as possible."

International CURE holds consultative status with the United Nations. ❖



June

Summer 2016 Activities

- 4 MADP Annual Meeting/Event in Columbia MO
- 5 IWW meeting in KCMO
- 6 CURE Membership Committee meets STL
- 22 Keith travels to STL
- 24 STL CURE meeting University City Library
- 28 Keith returns to KCMO
- 29 KC CURE Meeting



CELEBRATE THE STRUGGLE!

July

- 10 IWW meeting in KCMO
- 11 KKFI Jaws of Justice Programmers Meeting (Keith)
- 16 WERDCC legal seminar (Angie & Hedy)
- 16 Gentlemen of the Round Table Meeting in KC (Keith)
- 17 IWW meeting in KCMO
- 20 Black Lives Matter & the Criminal Justice System meeting with Sen. Maria Chappelle-Nadal (Hedy)
- 21 Keith travels to STL
- 22 STL CURE meeting
- 26 Keith returns to KCMO
- 27 Troost Alliance meeting
- 30 Connections to Success Meeting KCMO (Keith)



August

- 4 PPA at Vandalia (Angie & Hedy)
- 9 Keith travels to STL
- 10 NAACP Banquet at Licking
- 12 STL CURE meeting at University City Library
- 15 Keith returns to KC
- 15 Membership Committee meets
- 19 Shirley Miner & Hedy interviewed on USA Ferguson Hot Talk Radio
- 20 Angie & Hedy meet
- 20 Gentlemen of the Round Table Meeting in KC (Keith)
- 21 Brandon's Musician Stop the Violence event (Keith)
- 22 KC CURE Meeting
- 25 Corey's Network (to stop the violence)
- 26-27 MADP Planning Retreat in Liberty MO
- 28 IWW Meeting KC
- 31 Summer issue of **Turning Point** goes to Printer

**ABOLISH
SLAVERY IN
AMERICA!**

September

- 24 Missouri CURE Conference in KCMO: Prisoners' Lives Matter!

Candidate for MO Governor Wants to End Mass Incarceration

Don Fitz is a professor at Washington University teaching Environmental Psychology. He is also head of the **Gateway Greens** and is running for Governor on the Green Party ticket. The Green Party supports ending mass incarceration as a first step in overcoming injustice in law enforcement. The Greens' Missouri platform for criminal justice reform includes the following:

The criminal justice system is not 'broken' but in fact serves the purpose it was designed for. Since the days of *slave patrols* and *chain gangs*, policing and prisons have been the principal means of social control. This needs to change. Ending conditions that create crime, or what is defined as such, is our overall goal as it is the only viable solution.

This will include de-criminalization of all illicit drugs, in order to discourage sale by eliminating the profit margin. Research indicates that most crimes against persons and property are closely correlated to poverty. Building strong communities is the best crime prevention.

A Green Governor will overhaul "Corrections" into a "Department of Rehabilitation." Its offices will be de-politicized through election of its public servants. Detention must be justified by a *legitimate* public safety concern and comply with the U.N. Protocol to the Convention Against Torture (OPCAT). A genuine "justice" system is *restorative* rather than *retributive*. Maximum sentence length, retro-actively enacted, shall be 15 years.

- Establish an independent community based Oversight Board with subpoena power in order to address/eliminate human rights violations. An independent Ombudsperson with sufficient resources who will review all prisoner complaints and intervene in cases of institutional abuse/neglect/medical malpractice, to increase accountability
- Exonerate all prisoners who have not received a fair, impartial trial and/or were coerced into plea bargains
- Close down all prisons where fair, racially un-biased, trauma-informed institutional and medical staffing cannot be guaranteed
- Release all non-violent drug offenders, provide access to programs of their

choice without charge, expunge drug offences from prisoner records

- Transform "correctional" drug and sex offender treatment into *culturally sensitive* rehabilitation programs, provided through community based agencies, with integrated focus on Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)



- Parole Board and institutional P.O.s shall mirror the ethnic composition of the prison population, have cultural competency and trauma awareness
- Prisoner health/mental health care shall be provided through qualified, culturally diverse and culturally competent community based professionals and free of charge. Enroll all prisoners in 'MoHealthNet'
- No solitary confinement to last longer than 4 hours. Abolish "Use of Force" and involuntarily medicating of prisoners
- End outsourcing of prison phone services, provide free calls to stay connected with their families
- Abolish the death penalty in Missouri
- Eliminate the Prison Litigation Reform Act

A Green Governor will support Re-entry and prevent Recidivism:

Regardless of the length of sentence, individuals shall be released if they become permanently physically incapacitated and are no longer a risk to the community. There shall be a presumption of parole at the earliest release date. Release decisions shall be based upon validated, dynamic risk assessments and performance (including therapy) while incarcerated. The nature of the offense of conviction and criminal history shall not be a factor other than the impact they may have on the outcome of a risk assessment. Lack of programming staff shall not be used as rationale to delay release.

Based upon validated risk assessment results, persons who have not completed programming through no fault of

their own shall be released to the community where they shall receive community treatment and monitoring to ensure their successful re-entry without charge. Everyone past his or her minimum release date shall have an opportunity for release annually. No one shall be denied release because of a pending appeal or for lack of a home placement. If the individual is not able to live with family members, adequate housing shall be provided outside of the prison system.

- No fee ("intervention fee") shall be charged by the state for probation or parole services. This is the responsibility of the state government.
- Licensing restrictions shall be imposed only if there is a strong correlation between the crime(s) committed and the activity being licensed.
- Anyone released from a prison shall have access to a re-entry program for assistance with housing, transportation, job searching, health care, and other needs.
- Incarceration shall not be extended through mechanisms such as civil commitment, lifetime parole, or home confinement. No individual shall be subject to residency restrictions.
- Community supervision, in the form of probation, parole, or registration shall be imposed only if a dynamic risk assessment indicates it is warranted.
- Persons shall be listed on police registries only if they screen high risk on a dynamic risk instrument. There shall be no public registry.
- Social security, veteran's benefits, pension payments, etc. shall be available to the person leaving the prison system.



You may have noticed that some of the above points are similar or identical to those in CURE's "Expectation for a Justice System." This is no accident. We were consulted for our ideas prior to the drafting of the Green platform for Missouri.

Space prohibits printing the entire summary, which includes overhauling policing and strengthening Missouri's Civil and Human Rights as well as an overhauling of the Court system. ♦

Angola 3's Alfred Woodfox Finally Free!

After nearly 44 years of torture in solitary confinement for a murder he didn't commit, Albert Woodfox, the last of the Angola 3, was released this year on February 19. This incredible survivor spent more time in solitary confinement than anyone in the history of the United States.

When a guard was killed in 1971, Woodfox and two other Black Panthers, Herman Wallace and Robert King, were targeted because they fought for better prison conditions. All three spent dec-



Albert Woodfox

ades in solitary, together more than 100 years. King (who was in another prison 150 miles away when the killing took place) was released in 2001. Wallace was released in 2013, just three days before his death from liver cancer. Woodfox's conviction was overturned numerous times during his captivity.

Joined by Robert King, Woodfox was interviewed upon his release by "Democracy Now!" on National Public Radio. ♦

Voting Rights for 70,000 in Louisiana Sought in Constitutional Challenge

The organization VOTE, along with 8 individuals, filed a class action voting rights challenge for 70,000 parolees and probationers in Louisiana, claiming they are illegally prohibited from voting. They charge that the Louisiana legislature wrongfully and unconstitutionally passed a law disallowing people convicted of felonies from voting if they are on probation or parole.

Louisiana's Constitution prohibits people who are "under an order of imprisonment" from voting. VOTE says that this was intended only to prohibit people actually in prison or escapees from voting. The suit further notes that the Louisiana state constitu-

tional convention voted down an attempt to restrict voting for people on probation. Filed in Baton Rouge, the suit names the State of Louisiana, the Governor and the Secretary of State as defendants.

VOTE began in 1987 as the Angola Special Civics Project, a group at the Louisiana Penitentiary run by prisoners who had become paralegals. VOTE was officially created in 2003 when it focused on voter registration for pre-trial detainees and people convicted of misdemeanors. VOTE has registered thousands of people to vote. It educates the public about the collateral consequences of convictions that inhibit successful reentry. Vote has partnered with Tulane Medical School to provide medical care for people

leaving prison and has partnered with other organizations to win several recent victories including Ban the Box and a new public housing policy.

Eight individuals who joined VOTE in filing the suit in Baton Rouge all work and pay taxes but are not allowed to register or vote. These include Checo Yancy, president of the Louisiana chapter of CURE. A member of the Kairos Angola Advisory Board, Checo served 20 years in Angola for a felony conviction. He has been out on parole for 12 years and will remain on parole until 2029. ♦



Here in Missouri, our Initiative Petition did not succeed, but more than 30,000 signatures were collected from throughout the state. We survive to fight another day for the rights of prisoners, parolees and probationers to vote like other citizens.

Mumia from p. 4

The state pays Wexford Health Services \$298 million a year to run the medical services. The more medical services are cut, the greater the profit. You go to medical and most of the time they tell you to go to the commissary to buy Tylenol or throat lozenges. If you fall in the yard and need a wheelchair they charge you \$25. If you can't sit up they charge you \$75 for a motorized cart. They will not treat my hepatitis C, saying it is



not advanced enough, but of course it is because the medicine is expensive. It costs between \$87,000 and \$95,000. A price like this exists solely to enrich pharmaceutical companies. I could get the same drug from India for a few thousand dollars. There is a guy in my block with stage four hepatitis C and cirrhosis.

They have denied him treatment because, they said, he will get out soon. There is always a reason not to treat us. Prisons have replaced state psychiatric hospitals. MHM Correctional Services is paid \$89 million a year to handle the

mentally ill. It does little more than medicate them. And remember most guards, especially with overtime, make more money, about \$100,000 a year, than a full professor at a university.

"They are doing to us on the inside what they are doing to us on the outside," he said. "They are letting poor people die or killing them for profit. Things will get worse and worse until people can't take it anymore. These corporations won't stop. No one in the political class will make them stop. It is up to us." ♦

Justice Department orders Mississippi County to impose Prison Reforms

According to the New York Times, a landmark agreement was reached by the Justice Department on June 23 with a Mississippi County requiring the local government to provide an array of options to reduce mass incarceration. These include programs that offer alternatives to incarceration, re-entry services, and prohibition of certain jail sentences for failure to pay fines and fees. Hinds County is home to Jackson, the largest city and state capital of Mississippi. The Justice Department found last year that its jails violated prisoners' rights by keeping them past their release dates and failing to protect them from violence perpetrated by guards and other prisoners.

Vanita Gupta, Chief of the Justice Department's Civil Rights Division and principal deputy assistant attorney general, said the agreement included measures that were discussed by the Obama administration and by police and prison officials during the past three years. These measures seek to moderate the growth of the criminal justice system where 2.5 million U.S. citizens are in ptfprisons and jails as well as 4.7 million on probation and parole. They reflect a shift away from solitary confinement, reducing recidivism, and keeping juveniles and the mentally ill out of jail using

early intervention programs.

Gupta said that the types of problems uncovered by the Justice Department in Hinds County, like pervasive violence by guards and inmates and overreliance on solitary confinement, are similar to those in jails and prisons across the country.

"This is the first time we've been able to incorporate a spectrum of reform," said Gupta. "Every jail is going to have its own specific issues, but the creativity and innovation in this is something that could be promoted in other jurisdictions."

The Times reports that police chiefs, corrections officials, judges and prosecutors have joined the call for substantial reductions in prison and jail populations to match reductions in crime rates. The agreement also comes while Congress is debating a bill to overhaul the criminal justice system, one that would alter mandatory minimum sentencing laws that have played a significant role in increasing the

length of time served.

The Justice Department found last year that Hinds County officials had regularly violated the rights of inmates at the Hinds County Adult Detention Center and the Jackson City Detention Center. Its May 2015 report found that Hinds County routinely held inmates beyond their court-ordered release dates. For example, a 13-year-old had served 173 days without an indictment — including 70 days beyond his mandatory release date.

Three major riots at the county's jails led to the death of a prisoner. Investigators uncovered rampant and unnecessary guard violence, lack of basic equipment such as functioning radios, cases of the jail losing track of inmates, staff shortages, and inadequate safeguards and care for juvenile and mentally ill prisoners.

Hinds County officials have agreed to cooperate with the Justice Department, allowing the county to avoid the imposition of a court-ordered federal consent decree. The settlement agreement is subject to the approval of a federal court judge, who will appoint a monitor to ensure that the changes are carried out. ♦



Conference from p. 1

The conference will feature six workshops, three in the morning and three in the afternoon. Wrongful Convictions will be led by Yohanan EliYah and Shelby Day.

Angelika Mueller-Rowry and Renese Drake will facilitate a workshop on Prisoner Health. Re-entry will be led by Susan Long of Journey to New Life and Rickey Peters of Connections to Success.

Kay Perry will lead a workshop on Advocacy. Attorney Mae Quinn and Evelyn Crosby will lead a workshop on Juvenile Justice. Finally, Brian Colby will facilitate a workshop on Legislation.



Lunch will be provided free to those in attendance who have registered. Awards will be presented. Our Courageous Citizen Award will be presented to Audrey Chaney, mother of James Naugles, one of our Ten Most Wanted. The Rory Ellinger Award will go to Shaheer Akhtab, former Committeeman and social activist in Kansas City. Max Parthas and New Abolitionist Radio will receive the Jon Marc Taylor Award. Several certificate awards will be presented as well.

At our last KC conference in 2014, we paid tribute to our "Ten Most Wanted" prisoners who we felt needed to be released. Since then, Jeff Mizanskey's LWOP sentence for marijuana was commuted by Gov. Nixon, and Jeff was released on parole September 1, 2015. Jon Marc Taylor died of a heart attack December 27, 2015

following a major stroke. Another of the ten has a release date, and Reggie Clemmons, on death row, has a new trial scheduled for February 2017.

Jon Marc Taylor and Jeff Mizanskey will be replaced by Walter Hunter and Patty Prewitt. Walter is dying of liver cancer after years of being denied the effective treatment for his Hepatitis C. Patty has served 30 years in prison while maintaining her innocence in the murder of her husband. She acts as a mentor for younger women prisoners and is indefatigable in her efforts to remain positive and involved. Finally a brief business meeting will include election of officers.

We called on our Advisory Board members, most of whom are prisoners, to provide input on discussion. Their responses have helped to guide us in preparing the program. Joseph Williams and the SCCC NAACP sent a complete presentation. This year's conference promises to be the best one yet!

Hedy Harden

Justice is Not for Sale!

by Hedy Harden

Private prison stocks plunged on Wall Street after the Justice Department announced plans to phase out private prisons. Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the country's largest private prison company, fell 50%, while the second largest, GEO Corporation, fell 40% when the news broke. Spokesmen for these groups, however, said they were not worried since only about 20% of their holdings are in federal prisons. What's more, most federal private prisons hold immigrants and are unaffected by the decision, as they are under the auspices of Homeland Security.

However, a federal judge recently ruled that the government must make contracts with private prison companies available to the public. Detention Watch and the Center for Constitutional Rights (CCR) had sued the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) due to a severe lack of transparency in the agency's detention of immigrants, which is 62% privatized.

CCA and GEO made \$361 million in profits last year, avoiding \$113 million in federal income taxes after converting themselves into special real estate trusts in 2012. Legislation introduced in Congress by U.S. Senator Ron Wyden (D-Oregon) would make it harder for private prison companies to take advantage of federal rules that provide massive tax breaks.

New American Slavery

Although it was technically abolished in 1865, an exception clause in the 13th amendment has allowed slavery in the U.S. to continue to the present day "as a punishment for crimes." There are more mostly people of color performing mandatory, virtually or totally unpaid, often hard labor in this country today than in 1830 during the height of slavery. With the largest incarcerated population in the world, the US has half a million more prisoners than China, which has five times our population.

Most of us, perhaps unknowingly, support slavery in this country by purchasing goods or services from one of the

many companies that use prison slave labor. These include McDonald's, ATT, Walmart, Bank of America, Chrysler, Costco, K-Mart, Microsoft, Starbucks, Verizon, Wendy's, Exxon Mobil, Johnson and Johnson, Pepsi, Shell and UPS, among many others.

In Texas, all prison work is mandatory and unpaid. Prisoners work in the Texas prison system's own Agribusiness Department. In a year's time they factory-



farm 10,000 beef cows, 20,000 pigs and 25,000 egg-laying hens. They produce 74 million pounds of feed for animals, 300,000 cases of canned vegetables, and lots

of cotton for clothing. Working at meat plants, Texas prisoners process 14 million pounds of beef and 10 million pounds of pork. Those working outside the perimeter fence are supervised by armed guards on horseback. In more than 12 other states, similar prison farms exist. Some of the prisoners work in logging, mining and quarrying. Agricultural goods produced by prisoners are used to feed prisoners and also sold for profit. Prisoners who refuse to work are placed in solitary confinement.

Even before the Justice Department's decision to phase out private prisons, some states have taken major steps. In Colorado, the Kit Carson Correctional Center, operated by CCA, is closing, the 4th private prison in Colorado since 2009 to shut its doors. Mississippi's notorious Walnut Grove Correctional Center, also privately operated, will also close, culminating years of work by the ACLU against unconstitutional conditions there.

Despite housing mostly lower level prisoners, prisons run by private companies are more violent than public prisons and have higher rates of recidivism.

Campaign kicks off to outlaw slavery in Colorado

In Colorado, both chambers of state government voted unanimously to put an amendment on the November ballot to abolish the exception clause in the state

constitution.

The Colorado Constitution reads, "There shall never be in this state either slavery or involuntary servitude, **except as a punishment for crime.**" If passed by voters, Amendment T would remove the words "except as a punishment for crime," which makes prisoners legal slaves of the state.

State Sen. Kent Lambert, a Republican from Colorado Springs, noted that if the clause was an oversight in the state constitution it needs to be corrected.

"We oppose slavery," he said, speaking at the foot of the Civil War soldier statue on the west side of the state Capitol. Lambert noted that the streets nearby are named Lincoln, Sherman and Grant for the Union's leaders.

Rep. Jovan Melton, a Denver Democrat, said the issue is personal, as he descends from slaves freed in North Carolina by the Emancipation Proclamation.

"In the 150 years since, the debate over slavery is over," he said. "We all know it's wrong in any and all forms, so why we still have an exemption in our state constitution doesn't make sense."

"It doesn't make any sense for the state of Colorado to say that slavery is OK in certain circumstances."

Alabama Freedom Bill

The Alabama Freedom Bill contains the following language: "Be it ENACTED that no citizen or laborer in the State of Alabama shall be required to work any job in this State without compensation of less than the prevailing minimum wage in Alabama, including those citizens incarcerated in the ADOC, and that no restrictions on forming a labor union shall apply to any person performing labor within or for the Alabama Department of Corrections."

"After over 400 years, it is time to remove any exception, practices, or provision of law that permits slavery or involuntary servitude from the 1901 Constitution of Alabama."

What Comes Next?

What does phasing out of private prisons by the feds mean in the fight to end mass incarceration?

For the past 15 years Max Parthas has studied and reported on the American

Conditions at Kansas City Re-entry Center (KCRC)

This place is labeled as a reentry center, but it is operated as a Super Max prison. We don't have access to many of the standard (or required) "amenities" that are available at other facilities (even level 5's), for example: No Law Library, very limited recreational/exercise times (and things to do/equipment), and normal visits with family and friends limited to only 2 hours (instead of the department-wide 4 hours). We are treated badly, talked to badly, and threatened with "the hole" (TASC) and some being taken to the hole over trivial or minor things. There is not a single staff member here who has read policy. What policy or rules they do know are regularly being interpreted and utilized in an arbitrary and capricious manner to the detri-



ment of the inmates. (March 2016)

The KCRC started out great. Staff were pleasant and cordial. When our loved ones (inmates) arrived, they were told that they would be treated like responsible adults, because the KCRC facility was getting them ready to return to society. There weren't any issues or problems at that time.

All of a sudden, things started to change. Now they're imposing curfews. Former staff and guards have been replaced. They have brought in guards from level 5 prisons who are rude and verbally abusive. The guards are yelling at the inmates, saying "Shut the F-up. Go to your room before I take you to the Hole." They're talking down to the inmates, talking real crazy to them. Some guards have said that they can "feel the tension in the air." Guards are creating a hostile environment. There was a stabbing on Wednesday, July 20th because of the curfew. An inmate came into

his room and turned the light on. Another inmate was trying to sleep and asked him to turn the light off, since he had to get up early for work. The first inmate could have done whatever he had to do in the dayroom if there were not an imposed curfew, and the others wouldn't have been disturbed. That's when one of the men got mad and stabbed the other with a pen or pencil. The attacked inmate had to be taken to the hospital.

The requirements to come to the KCRC were that the inmate had to be 6 months to a year short of going home. Then it went up to 15 months, then to 18 months. Now it appears they might keep moving it up further.

KCRC is understaffed. They have 6 or 7 guards a day for 400 inmates. The atmosphere at KCRC is "the guards against the inmates." It is so dangerous with this attitude—us against them.

Guards are working double and triple shifts; they're sleeping on the job. DOC can't afford to fire them because they're already short staffed. The guards are tired, irritable, frustrated and bitter; it all comes out with the behaviors they are displaying towards the inmates.

See **KCRC**—page 12

Justice—Continued from page 10

justice system and its practice of legalized slavery and human trafficking made possible by the US constitution's 13th amendment in association with prison, jails, private industry, legislation and criminal justice. Max is considered one of the nation's foremost experts and has written extensively on the subject. *Turning Point* interviewed Max of New Abolition Radio in South Carolina:

"The decision by the DOJ to phase out private prisons is not the end of our fight against modern slavery and human trafficking, but it has caused a chain reaction and a ripple effect that could very well sound its death knells.

"Just as it did in 1862, public opinion has shifted against the practice of flesh peddling. Then as now the majority of the American public simply considered slavery as everyday normal life.

"To them, annually sending 13 million to jails, holding 2.4 million in prisons and monitoring 8 million probationers and parolees is as normal as summer heat. They have no idea that in states like NY a child is worth \$350,000 a year for

his/her incarceration. That in Vermont blacks, who only make up 1.2% of the population, are being arrested at (a rate of) 14 to 1. That in Milwaukee WI more than one out of two black men will spend time in prison before they are 30 years old.

"It is true that federal prisons are only a 5th of the total for-profit prison population, but in a short time this decision will continue to erode away at stockholders' confidence in this evil practice. The states will begin to follow the

fed's lead and eventually the multi-billion dollar operations held by private prisons worldwide will find rejection wherever they are based.

"Whether that be G4S in Africa, which is the entire continent's largest private employer, in Brazil where notoriously brutal prisons were just contracted out to private prisons, or Australia where the nation as a whole is contracted with such industries. Even in the UK and

France, where 70% of their prison population are Muslims and blacks.

"Our next steps should be two-fold. Push for the enactment of the **Justice is Not For Sale Act** of 2015, which bans private prisons from operating in the US and ends the quotas for mandatory

The Justice is Not For Sale Act, a bill banning all private prisons, was introduced into Congress on September 18th 2015 by Sen. Bernie Sanders (I-VT) and Reps. Raúl M. Grijalva (D-Ariz.), Keith Ellison (D-Minn.) and Bobby L. Rush (D-Ill.). Sen. Sanders and Rep. Grijalva are now calling on the Department of Homeland Security to follow the DOJ's lead and end its relationship with privately run, for-profit detention centers.

minimums for detention centers set by DHS in its immigration detention centers. Then move the conversation into a constitutional convention to remove the 13th amendment exception clause which would end any federal loopholes for slavery."

Max Parthas will be the keynote speaker at Missouri CURE's annual conference September 24 in KCMO. ♦

Missouri CURE
P.O. Box 28931
St. Louis MO 63132



Help Stop Mass Incarceration—and CURE the Madness!

Missouri CURE Annual Conference in Kansas City MO: Prisoners Lives Matter!
Saturday, September 24, 2016 10am–4pm

Southeast Community Center, 4201 East 63rd Street Trafficway (at Jackson) KCMO 64130

Admission is free, but registration is required. Call or text 816-377-2873 (CURE) and give names and phone numbers for all who plan to attend. You may also email hedyharden995@gmail.com for info.

Asante! We appreciate your support!

Many thanks to the following people who donated to Missouri CURE: Stephanie Charles, Ellis Chen, Julius Collins, Mark Engstrom, Linda Fisher, Curtis Johnson, Eric Jones, Kristy Martinez, Nathan Myers, Columbus Neal, Jonathan Pearson, Janet Porter, Patty Prewitt, Charles Raines, Kevin Sago, Brian Smith, Randy Smith, Gary Sonnenberg, Sammy Vincent, and Belvin Williams.

Special thanks to Carol Corey and Will Holcomb for their gift of \$250.00. We're grateful to Mae Quinn and the MacArthur Law Center for their generous donation of \$250.00. Special thanks to Clare Peterson of South Carolina for her invaluable assistance with our Prisoner Health Committee and the Missouri CURE website. As always, we are greatly indebted to Action Printing of Liberty MO for the printing of this newsletter.

KCRC from p. 11 DOC has transferred inmates from St. Louis and Springfield down here. St. Louis and Kansas City inmates are known to have not gotten along for many years. These inmates coming in are very disgruntled about being moved in the first place and being so far away from home. Some of them are going home soon. Some are 12/12, meaning they'll be completely finished with their time. With no parole left to do at all, they don't have anything to lose.

The guards did a mock fire drill at midnight—they had all the inmates outside with 6 or 7 guards, knowing that some of them have to get up early for work release. They're just exacerbating the whole situation. The inmates are already upset about the curfew. We're asking for someone to look into this matter ASAP, before it gets out of control. We're concerned about our loved ones' safety and the safety of the public at large (July 2016). ❖

Join Missouri CURE!

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