

# Turning Point: The Newsletter of



Citizens United for  
Rehabilitation of Errants

Missouri CURE ♦ P.O. Box 116  
Ballwin MO 63022-0116

Phone 877-525-CURE (2873)  
Email: missouricure@hotmail.com  
Web: www.missouricure.org

From the Chair:

by Hedy Harden

## CURE Meets in Kansas City MO

**O**n Saturday, December 7, eleven of us gathered at the offices of radio station KKFI for a meeting

January 8. Rep. Rory Ellinger, who filed House Bills 752 and 753 for the 2013 session to reform the 85% law, will be

of Missouri CURE.

Community radio KKFI 90.1 hosts the Jaws of Justice program on Monday mornings at 9 AM.

Missouri CURE Vice-Chair Keith Brown-El, a volunteer programmer at the station,

will chair future meetings in KCMO.

Our secretary, Yolanda Gunn, was there to record the historic event. We discussed having monthly meetings, and a follow-up meeting was scheduled for January 4.

### Legislation

We discussed the need for legislation to address the unreasonable mandatory minimum sentences that so many of our loved ones are serving. CURE opposes all mandatory minimums. We will be building for a joint Lobby Day, partnering with the Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW) Criminal Justice Task Force, the KC Criminal Justice Task Force, and Mothers of Incarcerated Sons & Daughters (MISD).

The 2014 legislative session starts on



L-R standing: Dolores Owen, Curtis Johnson, Yolanda Gunn, Sharon Snyder, Kathy Franklin, Bonnie Roby, Clara Fuller, Keith Brown-El. Seated: Hedy Harden, Mark Childers. Not pictured: Jeff Humfeld.

filing the same legislation for 2014, although under different bill numbers. We are now in the process of trying to find co-sponsors for these bills, which must be done prior to the bills being introduced. Having co-sponsors will increase the chances of success, especially with Republican support, since both the House and Senate are 2/3 Republican. Readers on the outside should contact their own State Representatives and urge them to co-sponsor. Call or email MO CURE for more information.

**P**risoners should urge their loved ones to get involved in this struggle. We also support bills to give prisoners serving Life Without Parole

See *KC Meeting*—page 2

## Winter 2013-2014

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Note Our New  
Address Above!



*Do not go where the path  
may lead; go instead where  
there is no path and leave a  
trail.*

Ralph Waldo Emerson

## Missouri CURE

### Executive Board:

Chair: Hedy Harden  
 Vice-Chair: Keith Brown-El  
 Secretary: Yolanda Gunn

### Advisory Board:

Ruby Atkins	Michelle Dodson
Kevin Hammerschmidt	Damon Johnson
Allen X McCarter	Dolores Owen
Patricia Prewitt	Roosevelt Price Jr.
Jon Marc Taylor	

### Special Liaisons:

- Curtis Johnson, Kansas City Criminal Justice Task Force
- Mary Hutchison, MO Association for Social Welfare Criminal Justice Task Force
- Bev Livingston, Mothers of Incarcerated Sons & Daughters

## Meet our Newest Advisory Board Member:

**W**hile being physically locked up for over 21 years, I've noticed an overwhelming amount of injustice behind these fences perpetrated by both offenders and correctional officers.

Encountering obstacles, I soon saw a need for change within myself and others, so I began involving myself with programs and organizations such as Missouri CURE. I believe that in order to begin to make a difference, we first have to be willing to step outside of ourselves and put someone else's cause, someone else's struggle, before our own.

I'm a lifetime member of Missouri CURE. Once released from prison, I plan to be very involved with CURE on the outside, supporting its efforts to make a difference and bring about reform and change.

**Damon Johnson, SECC**



## KC Meeting—from page 1

sentences a chance at parole. The Kansas City Criminal Justice Task Force will get this legislation introduced as they did in the last session. CURE also supports anti-death penalty bills. Hedy is on the board of Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (MADP), and we will be following these bills as well.

**T**wo CURE members planned to attend the meeting December 18 of the MASW Criminal Justice Task Force in Jefferson City, where Ellis McSwain, head of the parole board, is the keynote speaker.

We support the JCCC NAACP's Actual Innocence Committee. We talked about the many cases of wrongful convictions and incarceration and some of the problems involved.

We discussed how to get families to influence legislation and showing clout with legislators by getting prisoners' loved ones registered to vote and then voting legislators out of office who do not support prison reform.

We talked about the possibility of getting rid of the parole board as some other states have done. Most parole board members have law enforcement backgrounds. Some have actually put people in prison and then are charged with deciding whether to let them out.

We talked about the corruption within the system and DOC policies that are not conducive to rehabilitation.

December 10 is the anniversary of the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights, established in 1949, which the United States still has not fully implemented, even while U.S. officials condemn other countries' human rights records.

We decided to have monthly meetings in Kansas City, with Keith chairing. We need people to join legislative, public relations, and fund-raising committees.

The next KC CURE meeting will be at 1 pm January 4, 2014 at the same location. All are welcome to attend—bring a friend! ♦

### Quote from U.S. Attorney General Eric Holder:

Mandatory minimum sentences "breed disrespect for the system. When applied indiscriminately, they do not serve public safety. They have a disabling effect on communities. And they are ultimately counterproductive."

### To Our Readers:

*We routinely receive numerous letters from prisoners requesting help with individual issues. Many are serious and troubling. We know there is a great need, but we simply cannot take on individual issues.*

*Since Keith came on board as Vice-Chair, he has been inundated with requests for help. Some of you know him from when he was incarcerated. Others know of him and feel he can help, since he has been where you are and knows what you are up against. But imagine your request to him multiplied by 75 to 100 or more. We would like to help, but it is humanly impossible. Moreover, CURE's policy nationwide is that we do not take on individual cases. Please keep this in mind. Wishing you a peaceful and hopeful New Year!*

*Hedy*

# Justice Gone Wrong

by Keith Brown El

**D**uring the last few years we have seen too many people who were wrongfully incarcerated for crimes they did not commit. There is reason to believe that the total number of those serving time unjustly is far greater than most people suspect. Even a modest estimate of those in Missouri would be in the hundreds. This is mostly due to:

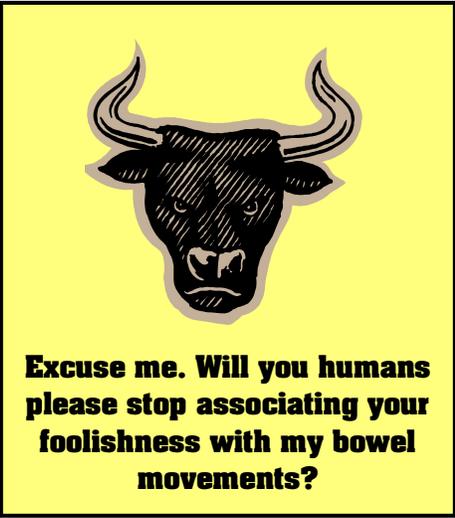
- ◆ Overzealous prosecutors and self-righteous judges trying to boost their careers by showing the public they can be tough on crime.
- ◆ Prosecutor misconduct—withholding evidence and misuse of statements by informants.
- ◆ Witness misidentification (unintentional and otherwise) and manipulated photo line-ups.
- ◆ Illegal confessions extracted by force, intimidation or deception.
- ◆ Alleged co-defendants turning state’s evidence to obtain plea bargains and save their own necks.
- ◆ Attorneys who take people’s hard-earned money and then refuse or fail to properly defend their clients.
- ◆ Overworked public defenders unable to provide quality representation.
- ◆ People too poor to afford adequate representation.
- ◆ Prisoners being procedurally barred from filing review forms when there is a claim of innocence.
- ◆ Missouri Governors in a State with one of the worst records in the United States when it comes to using their power to grant clemency, even in cases where wrongful convictions are obvious.

If you are a victim of one of the above, you are probably thinking that your individual case is unique and that all you need is the proper outside support to make the state acknowledge its injustice and then it will gladly correct the error. At the risk of making me the bearer of bad news and the messenger who is likely to be shot for delivering this message, I am compelled to inform that you are wrong!

Many state officials with the power to overturn and correct wrongful convictions are well aware that there are far too many people in situations just like

yours—and they simply don’t care! They have no interest in trying to clean up the huge mess they have created or in subjecting the state to having to pay out \$50 for every day for every person who has been wrongfully confined.

It costs big bucks just to prosecute someone accused of committing a crime. This does not include what it will cost to keep them locked up for years. There is no way officials are going to acknowledge that they have wasted that much money every year sending innocent people to jail.



For years they have been able to justify this attitude with arguments like: “Everybody in prison claims to be innocent,” or “All of them have committed crimes and are trying to get out of it because they just don’t want to do their time.” Or they wink and gently elbow someone in the side and say “Oh! We’ve got another innocent person in prison.”

I have found this to be nothing but a bunch of fecal matter being spewed by their hypocrisy. Yet this kind of crap is much too disgraceful to be attributed to anything except a bull (who, unfortunately, happens to be too dumb to even care).

Still, if bulls could talk, they would probably say that they don’t even want the waste that they discharge from their rear ends to be associated with the filth and corruption of some of these appointed and elected state officials!

The bottom line is that you may be innocent of crime(s), but your keepers (with few exceptions) don’t care! And by keepers, I mean anybody who gets paid for locking people up and for keeping them there. This includes, but is not limited to, police officers, judges, prosecutors, lawyers, prison staff, parole officers, and those who make the laws.



**F**or these reasons, I hope to launch a new website in early 2014 to be known as *justicegonewrong.com*. This will be an independent project (**not sponsored by Missouri CURE, which does not get involved in individual cases**). The purpose of this platform is to call the public’s attention to these injustices and the fact that nothing is being done by the courts, the governor or other politicians in this state to try to correct these errors and injustices.

Some Missouri prisoners already have their own personal websites for this purpose. Such information will be welcomed on this one as well. Having all this information about Missouri cases in one location will not only be convenient, but will underscore how urgent is the need for action.

However, anyone interested in having their name, picture and information about their case posted on this website **must have some kind of verifiable evidence** of their actual innocence in order to eliminate bogus claims. Contact the NAACP Actual Innocence Committee at P.O. Box 105301, Jefferson City MO 65101, to request a questionnaire. **Do NOT send legal materials with your request. If you do, they will NOT be returned.**

The completed questionnaire will help decide if your claim can be investigated by the NAACP Innocence Committee. If they determine that a case meets the legal standard of actual innocence, they will draft a summary of the facts, establishing that there is reasonable likelihood that the person is actually innocent.

*See Justice Gone Wrong—page 9*

## No Taxation without Representation!

by Hedy Harden

**D**ecember 16 marked the anniversary of the Boston Tea Party, when patriots threw boatloads of tea overboard into the Boston Harbor to protest exorbitant taxation by England.

The British king ruled the colonies from across the ocean and held a monopoly on tea. Colonists had no say in their own government. The 1773 Boston Tea Party was the triggering event leading to the American Revolution.

“No taxation without representation” became the catchphrase of the War of Independence, which resulted in establishment of the United States of America.

Now, 239 years later, Missouri is poised to begin collecting sales tax from prisoners. The Missouri Department of Corrections runs a monopoly on items purchased in prison. Prisoners cannot vote and have no say in their own lives.

As a not-for-profit organization, the DOC pays no sales tax on its purchases and should be prohibited from charging sales tax on the resale of these items to prisoners. Yet the notices from Central Office were posted nearly a month ago. Effective on



February 1, 2014, Missouri plans to exact a further tribute from its most oppressed citizens, the modern-day slaves of the State.

Jeffrey Mittman, Director of the ACLU of Missouri, said he was interested, and I sent him a copy of the DOC notice. After speaking with Pauline Sullivan in the National CURE office, I called Alex Friedmann, Managing Editor of Prison Legal News.

If it's a statute, he said, it's a done deal. Regular citizens in Washington DC are taxed without representation, since they are not part of one of the 50 states. At least one other state, Michigan, collects sales tax from prisoners. If, on the other hand, this

development is administrative, Alex said, then opposition can be mounted.

I spoke to my State Rep., Rory Ellinger, who is having his legislative assistant check to see if some type of amendment slipped through the legislature. No discussion was held on this issue, he recalled.

A statement we received from DOC Central Office states: “During a recent review of the sales tax laws, it was determined that the sale of commodities by offender canteens is subject to state and local tax. Therefore, the Department will begin collecting the sales tax on February 1, 2014.”

I wonder how long that's been the law and how much back tax the State owes itself because it was not collected in the past. It's interesting that this “discovery” occurred while Gov. Nixon was holding a special session of the legislature to obtain approval of billions of dollars in tax breaks for Boeing Corporation. In the shortest time legally possible, the legislature provided Nixon with all the money he wanted to compete with other states for the Boeing business.

Sure, if Missouri wins the competition, it will bring more jobs to the state. But it's ironic, though certainly not novel, that the state found a way to take more money from the poorest and most vulnerable population in Missouri to give to one of the richest corporations in the country.

**W**hen it comes to prisoners, it is take, take, take! With the majority of prisoners trying to survive on a “state tip” of either \$7.50 or \$8.50 per MONTH, how much more can be taken from them? For years now, the state has been steadily reducing the prisoner food allotment. The few pitiful “extras” that supplement holiday menus, themselves derived from prisoner canteen profits, have steadily decreased to almost nothing. Canteen funds are to be used for prisoners' benefit, yet the DOC has found numerous ways to circumvent this, using the funds to buy vehicles for staff, big screen color TV's for officers, and on and on, ad nauseum.

Meanwhile, necessary supplies such as toiletries and supplemental food and medical items must be purchased from the canteen at inflated and steadily rising prices. Since the state tip hasn't been increased for decades, it is the families and loved ones of prisoners who will ultimately pay the price for this added expense.

Except, of course, for those prisoners without outside support. Since they too, have to survive somehow, they must find a hustle.

Far from providing opportunities for rehabilitation, the DOC is instead encouraging the same type of behavior that put offenders behind bars in the first place.

At the very least, prisoners being charged sales tax should be allowed to vote. ♦

### Bears Repeating:

#### The Gospel According to Modern U.S. Society

“I was hungry and you eliminated the food stamp program. I was thirsty and you weakened the regulations protecting clean water. I was a stranger and you denied my children education and treated me like a criminal. I was naked and you told me to get a job. I was sick and you turned me away from the hospital. I was in prison and you told me I could never earn parole.”

from *Separate Prisons*, October 1996

**A Culture of Corruption:**  
Missouri public officials received more than \$750,000 worth of lobbyist gifts during the 2013 legislative session.

—from *Missourinet and the St. Louis Post-Dispatch*.

# In the Spirit of Madiba

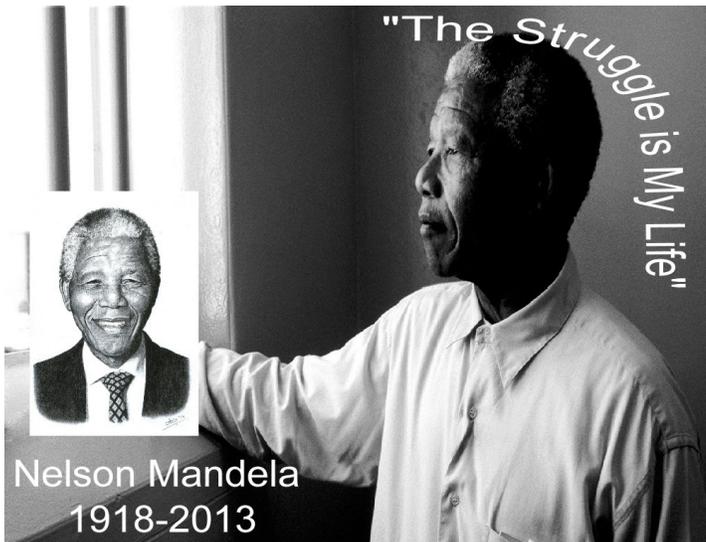
by Hedy Harden

**I**t's that time again. Another year has come and gone. For many of you, it's been another year of existing in prison, hoping for a miracle or an out date, or just marking the days, weeks, months and years until freedom.

Those looking for inspiration need look no further than commemorating the life of perhaps the world's most renowned prisoner, Nelson Mandela, who was known by many as Madiba, his clan name. After spending 27 years of incarceration in some of the world's most horrific prisons, this extraordinary man came out and became the first black president of his country.



His leadership of the African National Congress (ANC) brought democracy and free elections to South Africa, home of centuries of racist Apartheid. Under Apartheid, the white minority exercised control over the black majority.



**A** political prisoner, Mandela was arrested after the South African government declared the ANC illegal for fighting the system of white rule.

Along with the Organization for Black Struggle (OBS) in St. Louis, I was part of the anti-Apartheid movement in this country. In song, at rallies and demonstrations, wearing protest buttons and t-shirts, we lived the South African struggle.

Taught by Razia, a native of South Africa, the OBS Youth sang the South African National Anthem. The Infrared Rockers, St. Louis' premier Reggae band, wrote and performed songs like "Free Nelson Mandela." We fought for divestment and sanctions against the racist regime. We protested against U.S. entertainers such as Ray Charles who performed in racist South Africa. When he appeared at the Fox Theatre in St. Louis, we marched and chanted, "Stevie is blind, but he can see!"

We read his biography, Nelson Mandela: the Man and the Movement, and later his autobiography, Long Walk to Freedom.

When at last Madiba was released from prison early in 1990 at the age of 71, we celebrated joyously. On June 28 of that year the United Auto Workers brought Nelson and Winnie Mandela to Tiger Stadium in Detroit, and more than 50,000 people were there to welcome our hero. Our numbers included Rosa Parks, Stevie Wonder and other celebrities. Mandela talked about "Mo-to Town" and expressed his love for all of us. Thousands waved flags with South Africa on one side and Palestine on the other side, signifying a common struggle.

I was in Kansas City in December 2013 when the news broke that Madiba had died at age 95, and the world celebrated the life of this great man. While we miss him, his remarkable life will forever be an inspiration in our struggle for justice. ♦

**Why does America look and sound more like old South Africa now than South Africa does? Whites in South Africa had less trouble accepting Nelson Mandela as their President than many whites in America do in accepting Barak Obama.**



## MASW Criminal Justice Task Force

CURE members Mary Hutchison and Clara Fuller attended the December 18 meeting of the Task Force in Jefferson City. The CJTF goals for the coming year are as follows:

- ◆ Advocate for legislative and administrative changes that will reduce prison populations
- ◆ Meet with parole board chair, Ellis McSwain to discuss Parole Board decision making policies
- ◆ Work on drafting legislation that would change requirements/make-up of the parole board
- ◆ Testify and advocate for the criminal code revision bills
- ◆ Hold a Criminal Justice Advocacy day (Lobby Day) at the Capitol building
- ◆ Monitor and advocate for services and programs that prevent incarceration and recidivism
- ◆ Advocate, create a fact sheet, and testify in hearings against food stamp ban
- ◆ Meet with others in Missouri working on re-entry and encourage them to become part of the MASW task force



Some of the legislation that the MASW task force is working on includes opposing the food stamp ban, long-term sentencing, and sex offender registration (making it less than a lifetime requirement), and support for decriminalization of marijuana.

The next MASW Criminal Justice task force meeting is **February 12** at 10:30 a.m., and the advocacy day date (Lobby Day) is April 9th.

## Parole Board Chief Speaks at MASW Meeting

by Mary Hutchison & Clara Fuller

Ellis McSwain, Director of MO Board of Probation & Parole, spoke at the MASW CJTF meeting on December 18. About 25 people attended.

As would be expected he was very positive about Missouri's parole process. He mentioned that 2,000 more offenders had been released this year than last year and that 12,000 offenders had been released in 2012. Except for 2005, this was the most offenders released in a single year since 2000. However, he did not make a distinction between releases on parole and other type of releases, such as completing sentences.

Task force members asked why the board continues to use the seriousness of the crime as a common reason for denying parole. Attendees felt that he did not really answer our question.

McSwain said that Missouri uses an evidence-based Risk Factor Instrument to guide its decision to grant or not grant a release. Each parole hearing consists of a parole board

member, a parole board analyst, and a district administrator. If the crime is serious, then a report is provided by this group to the entire board for a



vote. Also, if there is disagreement between the board member and the analyst as to whether or not a person should be paroled, then that too goes to the full board. For any hearing in which the victim comes to testify, those also are decided by the entire board.

Although McSwain side-stepped many pointed questions posed by task force members, he stated that he and his staff are always willing to answer questions and attend any meetings. He is open to calls if someone has a

question about a particular hearing. His direct phone number is 573-526-6550, and his email address is [ellis.mcswain@doc.mo.gov](mailto:ellis.mcswain@doc.mo.gov). All parole hearings are recorded, so he can review the tape if needed. He said that they were working on providing the board members more training, and all but two board members (who are new) have gone to the national training program.

He acknowledged that what the offender had done could not be changed and that it is important to focus on what offenders are doing differently to change their behavior, such as programs they have completed.

*Per Mary:* The latter was not my experience when I recently went as my husband's delegate. They did ask about the programs he had completed, but did not give him time to tell them about more than one. They also focused a lot on past behavior, even arrests in which charges were dropped. So maybe I was a little biased, but I felt he painted a rosier picture than I experienced. ◆

## Member Writes of Death at SECC

The reason for this correspondence is to raise awareness of the death of a man here at SECC on October 25, 2013, a Friday night.

Andre Mosely was transferred from the institution infirmary to Housing Unit 1, to be placed in a padded cell. In that process he was handled roughly. It was common knowledge that Mr. Mosely was paralyzed from the waist down. The man tried to end his uncomfortable life here by taking out his dentures and attempting to cut his wrist.

Due to these actions he was placed in the Restraint Chair naked. There were straps around his shoulders and stomach area. He was handcuffed behind his back with shackles on his feet and an extra-huge helmet on his head. This individual had to suffer severely for 6½ hours in that Chair, with no food, no water, and hardly any air to breathe.

Mr. Mosely was considered a diabetic. With none of the above was he given the multiple shots to keep him from going into a diabetic coma. This incompetent nurse failed the man and job title, by not fully doing the assessments on him every time he was to be checked on.

After the 6½ gruesome hours of being confined in the Chair, Mr. Mosely

stated he couldn't breathe and was thirsty. Still he hadn't received any water or food, with a limited supply of air. In the process of being removed



from that new age torture chamber (the Chair), he was told that he'd better not move nor wipe his nose or he would be placed back in the chair for another 6 hours.

Mr. Mosely complied. Then, once the helmet was removed, blood started coming from his nose. After the officers exited the cell and secured the door, Mr. Mosely vomited some blood up. At that time this same nurse told them to call a Code 16, which means the offender is not responsive.

The officer with the nurse re-entered the cell, and Mr. Mosely was not responsive, nor was he breathing.

That's when a caring human of a guard jumped into action by performing CPR, while the incompetent nurse just stood there, waiting on another medical personnel to bring the medical bag with supplies. CPR and AED, the machine that shocks the body to get the heart to pump again, were conducted for 15 minutes while the ambulance was being summoned. However, the result was nothing. Mr. Mosely was considered D.O.A. when the EMS arrived.

To the family of Mr. Mosely, we convicts of the modern-day slave trade send our love and blessings your way. We are sorry for the loss of this brother, son, uncle, father, cousin and great man.

Thank you to the CURE for taking the time to listen to what needed to be said. DH

**"Courage is giving your all to the fight, even when you're scared shitless."**

**-Hedy Harden**

## Requests for Copies of DNA Motion

In our last edition of *Turning Point* Newsletter, Missouri CURE committed itself to providing copies of Robert Nelson's motion requesting DNA testing. We have received numerous requests and continue to receive more with each passing day.

If you have sent us a letter asking for a copy of this motion and you *have not* received a reply, we apologize for the delay but we ask you to **please be patient**. Missouri CURE is a grassroots organization with only a handful of active volunteers. With all the important issues we're confronted with, we are stretched



very thin.

We take all correspondence very seriously and attempt to deal with it accordingly. However, some letters we receive contain issues that are more serious than others and must be given priority.

The copy of the DNA motion we have is the same one that was actually filed by Mr. Nelson. We have modified and restructured it, omitting all personal information to make it suitable for mailing into the DOC. Otherwise prison officials may claim it is somebody else's personal property..

We are handling this and other

requests as quickly as possible and we hope to have this motion available and to be able to address your other concerns very soon.

Please be advised that all requests for copies of the DNA motion must be accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope.

When you receive the motion, it will have to be retyped double-spaced and have your own case information inserted.

You should also be aware that DNA testing can cost upwards of \$10,000.00.

**Keith Brown El**



# Upcoming CURE Events



**Meeting in Kansas City MO**  
 Saturday, January 4, 2014  
 1:00 PM  
 KKFI Radio Station  
 3901 Main St., 2nd floor  
 (enter from rear of building)

Show your Prisoner  
 Family power!

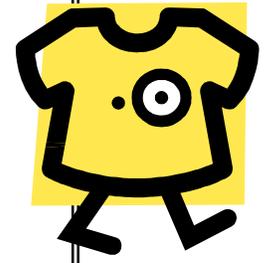


**Meeting in St. Louis**  
 Saturday, February 1, 2014  
 1:00 PM  
 University City Public Library  
 6701 Delmar (in the Loop)

Support sentencing  
 reform!



All out for Criminal Justice  
**Lobby Day!**  
 Wednesday, April 9, 2014  
*All day*  
 Missouri State Capitol  
 in Jefferson City  
 Details to follow—Mark your Calendar!



*Come one—Come All!*

**Justice Gone Wrong—from p. 3**

Once we are able to gather a sufficient number of these cases, we intend to confront Missouri lawmakers and demand that they pass legislation that would authorize special judges to hear these complaints and set free those who can substantiate their innocence.

We do understand that lawyers will of course eventually be needed somewhere in this process. But let's not get caught up on that. **We need to keep in mind that in many of these cases lawyers (paid and otherwise) played a very crucial role in many persons being wrongfully convicted in the first place.** So having an attorney is not always an automatic solution to these kinds of problems. Even if you end up with a really decent lawyer, s/he probably won't be able to do much good in a legal system that is corrupt from top to bottom. So the emphasis here is not on acquiring attorneys, but on trying to bring forth changes in existing practices and laws.

While such legislation is pending, we will keep an eye out for politicians who favor or oppose it. And we will endeavor to see that those who are in opposition will be looking for another job after the next election.

There are currently more than 100,000 people either incarcerated or out on probation and parole. With the help of family members, friends and other loved ones, this should be enough for all of us to pull together and send a serious message to these State governors and local politicians.

This is a cause that everybody can identify with. All prisoners and parolees, even those who do not have actual innocence claims, should encourage their family members to support this effort. **All those who care about justice must register to vote, and exercise this right at the polls! Your state representative and senator work for you. You pay**

**their salaries with your taxes.**

This will show politicians that incarcerated citizens and their supporters can affect the outcome of elections. We only have to do this one time, and it will be a long time before anyone else will want to oppose us again. After that they will realize what they really stand to lose. This will make them think twice about how Missouri prisoners and parolees are being treated (on all issues) and about passing laws that may affect them.

The process which Missouri now has in place to exonerate innocent people isn't working and needs to be fixed. It has resulted in far too many people languishing unnecessarily and unjustly in prison for years, even decades. For those persons on death row, it can cost them their lives (if it hasn't already).

There is no reason that any government official should oppose a law requiring mandatory release of wrongfully convicted persons. **Innocent people are not criminals** and do not deserve to be treated as such simply because the system failed to properly do its job.

**Innocent people have an absolute right to be released from confinement, no matter how belated the discovery of the exonerating evidence.**

Procedural bars set by rules of the court have impeded the cause of justice. Gubernatorial discretion authorized by the state constitution to commute sentences has failed to right the wrongs committed in courts.

Robert Nelson and Ryan Ferguson are two of Missouri's most recent examples of wrongfully convicted persons who were successful in getting the "Show-Me State" to acknowledge it had made a serious blunder. However, these two men had luck that was roughly the equivalent of a major jackpot lottery winner.

Justicegonewrong.com, along with other groups and organizations working with it, believes that the solution to this problem is to bring

pressure on governors, judges and other politicians to take these kinds of cases more seriously.

It is unfortunate that Missouri CURE and other organizations like it have only a limited number of active volunteers. We lack the resources to try and fight these cases on an individual basis. Even giant corporations, if they had the will, would not have the kind of resources needed to carry this burden. Nor can we pick and choose which individual cases we are going to fight.

Missouri CURE is primarily an organization that gathers and distributes essential information. And the information we are giving our readers now is this:

We are living in the age of lunatic, pathetic politicians and other public officials who seek to build their careers and reputations on a Rush Limbaugh philosophy, i.e., mistrust, bigotry, hate and fear mongering, the rich against the poor, and a world where the powerful can silence and crush under their feet those who are without power.

At this very moment they are calculating just how much finance they are going to need to incarcerate children still in grade school. Even as this article is being written, tests are being conducted *on your children* to determine which ones are likely to end up in prison.

So the only way we can change some of the nightmares you are now living in prison as well as we are as out here in society is to start paying attention to who these people are. Then we need to organize and rally our family members and encourage them to vote these people out of office.

We have no choice in this matter. Our survival depends on it. ♦



**The JCCC NAACP Innocence Committee advises prisoners requesting questionnaires: Do NOT Send legal materials with your request. If you do, they will NOT be returned.**

**Ed: Call your local League of Women Voters or Board of Election Commissioners for the name of your State Representatives and how to contact them. Those with Internet access can go to the Missouri House of Representatives website for this information.**

### Asante!

**M**any thanks to the following people who made donations: Fari Abdullah, Elaine Auch, Henry Berger, Keith Brown El, Earl Coen, Jim Frisella, Tammy Gillespie, Fred Givens-Bey, Gordon Haas, Geraldine Hartwigsen, Larry Holland, Curtis Johnson, Mr./Mrs. Gary Lyerla, Judith Moore, Larry Phillips, Margaret Phillips, Marjorie Place, Rich Placke, Ireda Roeder, Rob Schaeffer, Daniel Slate, Brian Smith, Milt & Carole Stohs, and Dorothy Yeager. Your kindness is greatly appreciated. A special shout out to the JCCC NAACP for their generous gift of \$200.00. Asante sana!

*No one is free when others are oppressed.*

#### Task Force Meeting:

The Kansas City Criminal Justice Task Force will hold its regular monthly meeting at 6:30 PM on Monday, January 6, at 4947 Northeast Chouteau Drive, KCMO 64117.

### Join Missouri CURE!

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name/ID# \_\_\_\_\_

Facility \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_

State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Please check the annual membership type:

- Prisoner \$2.00 \*
- Individual \$10.00
- Lifetime \$100.00
- Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Make checks payable to Missouri CURE.

\* Stamps from prisoners are welcome if permitted by your institution.

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

**Missouri CURE**  
**P.O. Box 116**  
**Ballwin MO 63022-0116**

MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES



***Together We Stand — Together We CURE!***