



TURNING POINT

The Newsletter of Missouri CURE

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants

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From the Board

by Hedy Harden

Scott Sisters – Free at Last!

On January 29 I attended the 31st Anniversary Celebration of the Organization for Black Struggle in St. Louis. The powerful speaker for this auspicious event was Chokwe Lumumba, an attorney and a long-time activist in the struggle for black liberation. Lumumba had spoken at an anniversary dinner some years ago, and I had looked forward to seeing and hearing him again. The theme of this year's program was Black Empowerment in the Age of Obama.



Now a member of the Jackson Mississippi City Council, Lumumba represents Jamie and Gladys Scott. The sisters were imprisoned for more than 16 years for a 1993 robbery that netted about \$11.00. After a protracted grassroots struggle they were released on January 7, making it possible for Jamie to seek a kidney transplant. Gladys hopes to donate a kidney to her sister. A condition of Gladys' release is that she must donate a kidney to Jamie within one year. However, it was not yet known whether the sisters' kidneys are compatible for transplant. Furthermore, there are legal and ethical considerations. Experts say the condition can be interpreted as trading an organ for freedom, which would violate federal laws that prohibit selling organs.

On January 25 Jamie was admitted to the hospital with excessively high potassium. A diabetic, she developed renal failure while in prison. Rather than take her outside the prison for dialysis, the Mississippi Department of Corrections (MDOC) brought in dialysis machines. Jamie had dialysis in a trailer three times weekly, although there were times the machines did not function

properly. Once Jamie was found unconscious in her cell after a shunt implanted in her neck to facilitate hemodialysis malfunctioned.

On Christmas Eve 1993 Jamie was 22 and Gladys 19. The two young mothers were shopping for heating fuel at a local Mini-Mart when two young men offered them a ride. Later that night three teens armed with a shotgun accosted the young men and robbed them. According to the Scott sisters, they had earlier been dropped off, walked home, and knew nothing about the robbery. The teens, ranging in age from 14 to 18, were arrested and charged.

Ten months later the Scott sisters were arrested and charged with masterminding the robbery. The 14-year-old boy later told Lumumba that he had been threatened by prosecutors that he would be sent to the penitentiary at Parchman and be made into a woman if he did not sign papers implicating the sisters. If he signed the papers, they promised to release him the next morning. He said he had signed the papers, written by someone in the county sheriff's office, without reading them. He later swore in an affidavit that neither sister had anything to do with the robbery. The 18-year-old also testified that he'd been pressured into fingering the Scott sisters. For his cooperation he was allowed to plead guilty to a lesser crime.

At the sisters' trial, the prosecutor demonized these "older women" who had "duped" three impressionable boys into robbing the victims at gunpoint. The jury took only 36 minutes to convict the sisters, who were each given two consecutive life sentences. The teens who actually committed

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the crime served less than three years each.

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Scott Sisters—from page 1

While the Scott sisters were imprisoned, their family moved to Pensacola Florida, where their five children were raised by the sisters' mother, Evelyn Rasco.

Unable to visit her daughters often due to time and money constraints, Rasco traveled to the prison in February 2010 with Jamie's 18-year-old son. On February 18, Jamie was sick but able to make it to the visiting room. Two days later Rasco had to visit her daughter in a cell in the infirmary. Jamie had developed an

infection in her catheter and was too weak to walk. Rasco found Jamie sitting on a bed with dirty linens. The sink and washbowl nearby had not been cleaned. Although Jamie had been given a list of heart healthy foods by the doctors at the outside hospital, these were not available. A tray was brought to her cell containing a hamburger swimming in grease and some side dishes. Jamie said it looked so bad she couldn't eat it, so she sat on her grimy bed eating a Snickers bar.

The Central Mississippi Correctional Center, where the sisters were incarcerated, contracts its in-house medical care

to a private company, Wexford Health Services, based in Pittsburgh. In at least four states, lawsuits have been filed against the company by prisoners, employees or former employees. With one of the highest prisoner death rates in the country, Mississippi's rate increased 34 percent in the year after Wexford took over in 2006 with a \$95 million contract.



Chokwe Lumumba speaking at the OBS 31st Anniversary Celebration in St. Louis.

Nancy Lockhart, a legal investigator and analyst from South Carolina, has worked with Rasco for several years, organizing a grassroots campaign on behalf of the Scotts. They fought to win decent treatment for the sisters as well as early release. She and Rasco set up a website and organized letter writing and e-mail campaigns to many state and prison officials. Supporters said the case was an extreme example of the "distorted justice and Draconian sentencing policies that have overloaded prisons, crippled state budgets, and torn families apart across the United States."

Mississippi Governor Haley Barbour is a conservative Republican who is considering a run for President in 2012. When announcing his plan to release the Scott sisters, Barbour cited the enormous cost of providing dialysis, which he said

is \$180,000.00 annually for each patient.

The Scott sisters have now moved to Florida to live with their family. According to Lockhart, they "have had a very rough time adjusting, with little funds to support themselves." They hope to secure Medicaid to help with Jamie's transplant.

Although Gladys could be sent back to prison if she is unable to donate the kidney, Lumumba and NAACP CEO Ben Jealous were assured by the governor's office that he would not enforce the transplant condition of Gladys' release.

The sisters recently learned that they will be required to lose a combined 140 pounds to even be tested for compatibility. Gladys will also have to quit smoking. They are working with a personal trainer, doing daily aerobics, and both are determined to do what is necessary to save Jamie's life.

Supporters demonstrated for months outside the Mississippi governor's mansion. Although they won early release, the sisters remain on parole and must pay the state of Florida \$52 a month for the rest of their lives.

Lumumba plans another protest on April 1. Supporters will march through downtown Jackson to the state capital, calling for a full pardon. ❖

March 8 is International Women's Day. New international standards have been developed for the treatment of women in the criminal justice system. For a copy email MO CURE and request the Bangkok rules.

Geriatrics at the Walls

Jefferson City Correctional Center, known by some as the "New Walls," now has a 36-bed geriatric wing. The "enhanced care unit" opened January 1, where elderly prisoners in wheelchairs, on oxygen, or otherwise incapacitated can have special needs met away from the general population. Set up as a small nursing home, the concept is to be expanded to five other prisons in Missouri. Eventually a geriatric hospital is planned, containing a dialysis lab and a dementia unit.

People in prison age much faster than the outside population due to many factors and are considered geriatric by age 50-55. Since 1998 the number of Missouri prison-

ers older than 50 has more than doubled to the current 4,700. This rise has been fueled by harsh sentencing laws rather than by an increased crime rate. Starting in 1979 the minimum sentence for those convicted of first-degree murder became life without the possibility of parole for 50 years.

In 1984 a new law removed any possibility for parole for these prisoners. Then came the Truth In Sentencing Act of 1994. This legislation

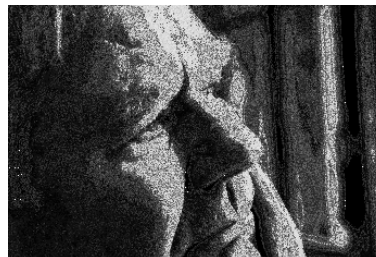
imposed mandatory minimum sentences for many crimes and required more time to be served before parole eligibility.

Michael Wolff,

Supreme Court Justice and head of the state's Sentencing Advisory Committee, questions whether Missouri can afford such moves. "I don't think the public is really all that keen on spending hundreds of millions of dollars on running nursing homes in

prison for – dare I say – harmless guys."

The recidivism rate for prisoners over 70 is just 3.5 percent. ❖





Behind the Scenes

by Dolores Owen

Winner of the Flag Afghan!

If you don't believe miracles happen in this day and age, then I've got a story to share with you. As you probably know, some lucky person won the crocheted flag that was raffled off at Missouri CURE's December 4th meeting. Her name is Susan Allison and she was baking cookies when Becky Williams called to tell her the good news.

This may not seem like a miracle, but I encourage you to look deeper. Miracles are hidden from our view on a regular basis, as we are busily consumed in our lives, struggling to survive. We may prod along, cynical in our attitudes because of the many devastating events we encounter that blind us to the unfolding miracles around us.

Direct your focus outward and you will discover how abundant miracles really are!

First let me share some facts with you:

- ◆ The Constitution guarantees the same rights to every American, no matter who they are.



- ◆ For hundreds of years, American soldiers have fought to protect these rights. Many lost their lives so that we can be free.

I crocheted my first flag to give to former Illinois Governor George Ryan, because of his actions in commuting death sentences. By presenting him with the flag, I wanted to convey the message that it signifies justice for *all* Americans. In fact, it's the very basis for our Constitution.

The second flag was crocheted for National CURE leaders Pauline and

Charlie Sullivan to honor them for a lifetime of service protecting those rights for prisoners.

This third flag was crocheted to raise money for Missouri CURE, so that we can buy stamps, print newsletters, and continue helping to keep prisoners and their families informed and strong. I was hoping that it would be won by

someone who would appreciate its value and know the sacrifices so many have made to protect our freedoms and rights.

The miracle is that Missouri CURE's first raffle was won by the mother of an American soldier who is fighting in Iraq. The miracle is that our flag, which stands for liberty, justice and freedom for *all*, was won by a person who knows only too well the sacrifice involved—a mother of an American soldier. She was busy baking cookies for him when she got the news that she'd won.

Belated as it is, I want to say, "Merry Christmas, Susan!" And please thank your son for us. I can't think of a better place for this flag to be. May God bless you and your family and may your son return home safe from harm.

Editor's Note: Dolores also donated \$50.00 for two second-place winners. These \$25.00 prizes were awarded to Billy Williams of Alton, Illinois, and Tammy Gillespie of Missouri Extension and the 4H-LIFE program.

Tammy had bought \$100.00 worth of raffle tickets. ❖.

Custody Level Changes

Missouri CURE secretary **Becky Williams sent the following E-mail to Lisa Jones on January 8:**

We have been hearing rumors regarding custody levels being changed (possibly this spring?) to only three levels, minimum, medium, and maximum security. We have heard that the men will be placed based on good behavior, not by length of sentence — basically back to how it was prior to 2003. These rumors are coming in from all different places and we just wanted to know how to respond.

Is there anything you can tell us regarding what the new policy will be, when it may take effect, and if there is any way that offenders who wish to stay where they are could possibly do so, kind

of like the grandfather clause that came with the last change?



Lisa Jones responded as follows on January 13:

I can tell you that the department is in the process of re-evaluating our classification system and trying to determine what factors actually place the biggest risks on an offender. As example, we've learned the older the offender

gets, usually the better their behavior gets, offenders who get visits get less CDVs, etc. A lot of things. Recommendations for a new classification system have been made which would completely revamp the entire classification process and allow for greater mobility and opportunity for promotion among the offender population. It is in the final stages of review, but I'm not sure when it will be enforced, if approved. I know they are having one of the final review meetings next week, so it is getting close. I'd say it is very likely it will be approved and should be put in place by early to mid-2011.

I'll try and keep you all posted on how it goes via the Inside Out Newsletter. Thanks for asking!

Lisa Jones
 Constituent Services Officer
 Missouri Department of Corrections

2011 Introduced Legislation: SB=Senate Bill; HB=House Bill
Missouri CURE Supports (S); Opposes (O)

Bill#	Sponsors	Detail	MO CURE Position
SB 89	Lembke	Abolishes state public defender system; requires circuit courts to provide legal defense for indigents.	(O)
SB 156	Rupp, Scott T.	Provides that suspended sentences may not be granted in statutory rape and sodomy cases.	(O)
SB 171	Crowell	Modifies provisions relating to private probation services.	(O)
SB 250	Kehoe	Requires sexual assault offenders to complete certain programs prior to being eligible for parole or conditional release (also HB 384).	(O)
SB 261	Goodman	Removes the element of good cause from the crime of nonsupport.	(O)
SB 338	Lager	Modifies requirements of the Supreme Court to accumulate and review certain types of cases.	(O)
SB 363	Justus	Modifies provisions relating to crime (provides alternatives to incarceration).	(S)
SB 381	Dixon	Allows a circuit judge to assess certain costs when the criminal case is dismissed and the criminal defendant consents.	(O)
SB 415	Crowell	Makes it a class C felony for a person on probation for a felony to knowingly possess a firearm.	(O)
HB 62	Nolte, Jerry	Adds citizenship information to the sexual offender registration form and requires the State Highway patrol to report to the federal government any non-U.S. citizen on the sexual offender registry.	(O)
HB 65	Curls, Shalonn	Requires the DOC to establish the Shock Time for Felony Probationers Program to give courts an alternative to imposing a sentence for nonviolent offenders who have violated their probation.	
HB 66	Curls	Allows the court to suspend imposition of an adult sentence in cases where there is dual jurisdiction and the offender has been transferred from juvenile court to a court of general jurisdiction.	(S)
HB 74	Curls/Carter	Specifies that certain felons will be eligible for federal food stamp program benefits.	(S)
HB 75	Curls/Nasheed	Authorizes expungement of certain criminal records including convictions for nonviolent felonies and misdemeanor, municipal or traffic offenses.	(S)
HB 159	Brandom/Day	Allows for house arrest with electronic monitoring or shackling for certain nonviolent offenders and requires the state to provide reimbursement for the total cost of house arrest in certain cases (also SB 387).	(S)
HB 178	Nasheed/Carter	Allows the expungement of certain criminal records.	(S)
HB 199	Kelley/Redmon	Specifies that a persistent offender of an intoxication-related offense must perform a specified minimum number of hours of community service as an alternative to imprisonment.	
HB 200	Kelley/Redmon	Specifies that gross negligence will be the standard of proof in actions for damages brought against a public or private correctional or detention facility as a result of death by suicide of any inmate.	
HB 247	Kelley	False identification to a Law Enforcement Officer.	(O)
HB 253	Cox/Kelley	Authorizes a prosecuting attorney, upon agreement with an accused or defendant, to divert certain cases to a prosecution diversion program and changes the penalties for various first offense misdemeanors.	(S)
HB 254	Cox	Requires restitution to be paid through the office of the prosecuting or circuit attorney and authorizes certain administrative costs to be assessed and restitution to be taken from an inmate's account.	(O)
HB 267	Cox/Lant, Bill	Repeals the provisions regarding the Sentencing Advisory Committee (also SB 349).	(O)
HB 297	Riddle/Ward	Revises the crime of abuse of a child to include knowingly inflicting cruel or excessive punishment upon a child younger than 17 years of age or knowingly causing physical injury by any means.	
HB 302	Black/Fitzwater	Authorizes the Director of the DOC to establish, as a three-year pilot program, a mental health assessment process (also SB 352).	
HB 308	Black/Pace	Prohibits an offender in the custody of the DOC from making a false report against any department employee for the purpose of implicating an employee in a crime.	
HB 445	Molendorp, Chris	Prohibits any person from smoking or using tobacco products in any area or on the grounds of a state correctional facility (also SB 289).	(O)
HB 457	Hodges/Schieffer	Specifies that certain provisions regarding the distribution of a controlled substance were enacted to create a safe zone around certain areas and serve as an enhancement of the punishment.	(O)
HB 502	Hubbard/Nasheed	Specifies that criminal nonsupport will be a class D felony if the total arrearage is in excess of \$10,000 and allows a person to expunge a criminal nonsupport conviction if certain conditions are met.	
HB 509	Carter/Curls	Specifies that certain felons must be eligible for food stamp program benefits.	(S)
HB 516	Ellinger/Nasheed	Prohibits any state agent from seeking the death penalty on the basis of race and permits the use of statistical evidence in certain criminal and post-conviction relief proceedings in death penalty cases.	(S)
HB 517	Ellinger/Nasheed	Changes the law regarding clemency in death penalty cases.	(S)
HB 538	Hubbard/Hughes	Prohibits the DOC from charging an intervention fee to inmates when they leave prison.	(S)
HB 539	Hubbard/Nasheed	Creates a two-year pilot project within the DOC and with the cooperation of the division of family services to increase the access children have to incarcerated mothers.	(S)
HB 650	McGhee/Talboy	Requires the board of probation and parole to make periodic reviews of certain convicted offenders serving sentences of more than fifteen years or life without parole.	(S)

This is a partial list of bills we feel most relevant to our readers. We have noted Missouri CURE's position on bills as possible. Where our position is omitted, not enough information is known about the legislation or its ramifications to make a recommendation. We regret that space limitations do not permit further explanation of these bills. You may write Missouri CURE for further information on a particular bill.

Ex-Prisoner Helps Another Remain Free

by Hedy Harden

Shortly after our autumn issue of Turning Point went out, Missouri CURE received a call from a member who is a former prisoner. Alden Redfeld, who was affectionately known as “Doc” by his fellow prisoners, is due to be released from parole in April. Doc was a prisoner member for many years. I remember him well from the 90’s. He seemed to always remain positive and created numerous cartoons depicting prison life.

Many prisoner members are released at some point and we never hear from them again. This was not the case with Doc. Released after 13 years in prison, he remained a member, paying regular dues and contributing extra, even making suggestions to help us with fund-raising.

When Doc read the article “The Rich Get Richer and the Poor Get Prison” in the last newsletter, he was struck by the plight of David Tripp, whose mother Dolores Owen has been so generous with helping Missouri CURE. David had been

arrested and jailed for failure to pay child support after being seriously injured in July and unable to work. David’s lungs are now in bad shape, and he is unable to do physical labor. He hopes to go back to school with the help of Vocational Rehabilitation and become a paralegal.

Alden, 68, is now living with his wife, enjoying life, and active in his church. He also works in some type of fund-raising. He wanted to know how much David owed in child support. Besides the \$300.00 Dolores had paid to get him out of jail on October 21, David owed about \$2,000.00 in back child support, for which he has to pay \$100.00 per month. Doc wanted to help, and I gave him Dolores’ phone number and address. He quickly sent her a check for \$400.00 to keep David out of jail, and offered to send another \$100.00 per month to keep David free.

Since then Dolores told me that she refused the offer of an additional \$100.00 per month, feeling that Doc had done enough, but that the \$400.00 was a wel-

come relief. She was blown away by his generosity. On December 3 she wrote, “David’s court (hearing) was yesterday. He just had to pay \$100.00 for December back child support. Then he has to pay \$100.00 for January. If that gets paid before January 1st, they will cancel his next court date of January 6. I guess it will continue like that until he owes nothing else. His balance is about \$1,900.00 now.

“I think if I can get past February, I won’t be in such tight financial straits as I am now,” she added. Dolores offered to crochet another flag afghan to assist Doc in his fund-raising efforts. “Now,” she said, “I know I have that \$400 in reserve to get David through four months of payments. It’s certainly one less payment I have to worry about.”

Heartwarming stories like this personify the true spirit of the holidays. ❖



For to be free is not merely to cast off one’s chains, but to live in a way that respects and enhances the freedom of others.

Nelson Mandela

AP Investigates Medical Experimentation on Prisoners

For nearly a century U.S. government-funded doctors and corporations have shamelessly experimented on prisoners and disabled individuals – people seen as not having rights.

Although it’s been known for decades that such experimentation was done, a light has recently been shined on the practice. President Obama has appointed a bioethics commission to re-evaluate federally-funded international medical studies. This followed a government apology for injecting prisoners and patients in a mental hospital in Guatemala with syphilis back in the 1940s. The commission recently met in the White House, and a report is due to reach the President by September.

The Associated Press reviewed medical journal reports and old press clippings, uncovering more than 40 such experimental studies done in the United States. These include injecting gonorrhea into the penises of federal prisoners in Atlanta,

spraying Asian flu virus up the noses of Maryland prisoners, and having young men swallow unfiltered stool suspension in a reformatory prison in New York.

These studies were conducted by such notable researchers as Jonas Salk, who discovered the polio vaccine, and other prominent scientists. Salk co-sponsored a federally-funded study in Michigan that injected experimental flu vaccine into patients at an insane asylum, later exposing them to the flu to test their reaction.

Chronically ill patients in a New York hospital were injected with cancer cells. In Connecticut government-funded studies exposed mental patients to hepatitis. In Minnesota volunteers were injected with malaria, then starved for five days, some being subjected to hard labor. Malaria studies were also done on prisoners at Stateville in Illinois during WWII.



At San Quentin in 1920 the resident physician implanted into older prisoners testicles taken from livestock and from recently executed prisoners. As far back as 1915, Mississippi prisoners were put on special diets to test for development of the painful disease pellagra caused by dietary insufficiency.

By the 1960s prisoners were allowed to be used as guinea pigs by at least half the states. In congressional hearings in 1973, pharmaceutical companies admitted “using prisoners for testing because they were cheaper than chimpanzees.” Finally in the mid-70s the Bureau of Prisons banned drug companies and other outside agencies from doing research in federal prisons.

The studies uncovered by the AP review no doubt represent the tip of the iceberg. Besides medical experimentation, we know that prisons often used drugs to control prisoners.

See *Experiments*—page 8

Meet Missouri CURE's Advisory Board



Nelson Hopkins Sr. spent 15 years in prison in Missouri and Kansas. A former Marine, Hopkins went from rebellion during his early years in prison to activism, fighting for the rights of prisoners serving long-term or nonparoleable sentences. Released in 2007, he founded Operation Promise Land, which seeks to educate citizens of high-crime neighborhoods about their rights and reclaim those communities. At the same time Hopkins began Pardon & Parole Negotiation Services to assist prisoners in winning parole. His plan is to get ex-offenders to provide redress to their communities while providing jobs as part of re-entry. Nelson speaks to high school and college classes and provides instruction to Kansas City's Urban Ranger Corps, which provides summer employment and mentoring to at-risk youth.

Allen X McCarter

Paroled in 2003 after nearly 18 years in Missouri prisons, Allen was released from parole August 20, 2010. In April 2007 he co-founded Victory Circle, a Columbia MO offender-led peer support group. He worked as assistant program director for re-entry programs at Boone County Community Partnership from July '07 to December '08. Allen speaks monthly as a volunteer speaker at the Creamer Therapeutic Correctional Center in Fulton. Since December Allen has worked at Soul House as a residential aide for the Rainbow House Transitional Living Programs (TLP) for homeless teens, where he was a mentor since August '09. In January Allen was elected president of Boone County Offender Transition Network (BCOTN). He is also a full-time student studying business and sociology,



Dolores Owen had a son in prison. In 1996, he was suddenly sent to Brazoria Texas where the video of abuse surfaced. It was the start of a rude education for Dolores in the realities of the Missouri DOC. After voicing her anger in various publications and outlets, she was invited to attend a National CURE meeting where she met Hedy Harden. She became a member of Missouri CURE and other organizations that fight the injustices of the criminal justice system. Over the last 15 years, Dolores has served as chair, as secretary, and has donated money and equipment to ensure the survival of Missouri CURE. A lifetime member, she believes in the power of forgiveness and compassion.

Jamala Rogers

has been active in the issues of the prison industrial complex for nearly 40 years. This commitment grew out of her work against police brutality and unjust incarcerations. She has led the fight for freedom of victims of the US racist and unjust criminal system, such as Ellen Reasonover. Jamala was active in the efforts that freed Darryl Burton. Adamantly opposed to the death penalty, she was the first African-American president of the Eastern Missouri Coalition to Abolish the Death Penalty. She currently serves as coordinator for the Justice Campaign for Reggie Clemons, a prisoner on Missouri's death row. Jamala is a featured columnist for the St. Louis American newspaper and is on the editorial board of BlackCommentator.com.



Paula Skillicorn was a reporter for the Kansas City Star when she was assigned to investigate the case of Dennis Skillicorn, a man on death row. Eventually she became his wife and a champion for abolition of capital punishment. Paula and Dennis were a dynamic team that got things done. They were instrumental in establishing 4H-LIFE at Potosi Correctional Center, a parenting program that has since won national awards and has spread to other Missouri prisons. Despite her heroic efforts, Dennis was executed in May of 2009. A remarkable man and a leader in prison, Dennis had helped to found and participated in numerous programs. He was a father to Paula's son Regi through the years of their marriage. Regi, who has become an accomplished musician, has written a poignant song about Dennis, called "Always a Dad." A former chair of MO CURE, Paula is a prize-winning journalist for the Daily Journal, based in Park Hills, which covers news from six Missouri counties.

Jon Marc Taylor

has earned numerous college degrees while incarcerated during the past 30 years. When Congress removed Pell grant eligibility for prisoners, Taylor began a crusade to get them back. He has fought tirelessly to inform the public of the importance and necessity of educating prisoners. He received the Robert F. Kennedy and The Nation/I.F. Stone Journalism Awards for his reporting on "Pell Grants for Prisoners." In 2010 Taylor led the Crossroads Correctional Center's NAACP chapter in making history when it sponsored an in-prison seminar as part of the NAACP National Convention being held in Kansas City MO. Taylor remains active in Restorative Justice initiatives and grant writing to benefit various prison organizations. He authored the Prisoners' GUERRILLA HANDBOOK To Correspondence Programs.



Parents in Prison – Children in Crisis

by Hedy Harden

What does it do to a child to have a parent in prison? How does s/he see the world when society refers to imprisoned people as the worst of the worst? How does the child see him/herself?

My stepdaughter once told me the kids at school used to tease her, saying, “Your daddy’s a jailbird!” She ended up doing well for herself, but what if she’d been a boy? Would he have tried to shrug it off or thug it off, ending up imprisoned himself?

Boys, especially African American males, already suffer from a lack of male role models because of absentee fathers. But when that father is behind bars, boys don’t need gangsta rappers to emulate. They need only look at their own fathers.

Some 1.7 million minor children have a parent in prison in this country. When I visit my friend in a prison that holds 2,000 men, I count 22-26 prisoners

in the visiting room on any given day. That’s hardly more than 1 percent of the population, and only a handful of them have child visitors. . Yet 53 percent of prisoners have at least one minor child. What does that say about how often children get to see their incarcerated parents?



The number of children with an imprisoned parent has grown by 80 percent since 1991. These children are three times as likely to engage in anti-social or delinquent behavior, including violence or drug abuse. They are twice as likely to develop serious mental health problems, and have a

greater chance of experiencing failure in school and unemployment.

Black children have a one in four chance of having a parent in prison by the time they reach their teens. With white children, the odds are one in 25.

A recent report reveals the overwhelming impact that incarceration has on children as well as the larger

community. “Children on the Outside: Voicing the Pain and Human Costs of Parental Incarceration” contains first-hand testimony by children, parents and caregivers. When a parent goes to prison, the family becomes both impoverished and destabilized. Children may experience feelings of worthlessness and be unable to trust adults. The loss of a parent to prison is similar to losing one to death or divorce in terms of grief, but with less community support and greater stigmatization.

Patricia Allard, co-author of the report, urges tackling the problem of crime from a public health and safety strategy, increasing treatment options and reducing reliance on incarceration. The study compares New York, which has decreased its prison population with drug reform — saving money and reducing crime in the process — with Alabama, which has higher imprisonment rates.

The full report can be requested by E-mailing Matt Nelson at mattnelsoncoc@gmail.com or calling 414-721-6630. ❖

Missouri Death Penalty

Your voice is important. The Associated Press recently wrote about the records they obtained from Governor Nixon’s office through the Sunshine Law related to the Rick Clay commutation.

Clay was scheduled for execution on January 12. Hundreds of people, including some legislators, wrote, called, faxed and emailed the Governor asking him to spare Clay’s life. Many of them raised the issue of doubt that has been a shadow on the case for years.

On January 11, one day before Clay’s scheduled execution, Gov. Nixon commuted Clay’s sentence to life without parole. We applaud the governor for this courageous and humane decision. Despite this victory, however, the State of Missouri executed Martin Link on February 9.

The American Bar Association (ABA) is conducting a study on the death penalty in Missouri. A report is

due in April. Missouri ranks 5th in executions in the U.S.

Criteria for the ABA study include:

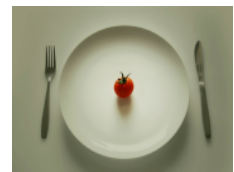
- ◆ Demographics of death row
- ◆ DNA processes
- ◆ Law enforcement procedures
- ◆ Crime labs and medical offices
- ◆ Prosecutorial conduct
- ◆ Defense services
- ◆ Direct appeal process
- ◆ State post-conviction proceedings
- ◆ Clemency
- ◆ Capital juries
- ◆ Judicial independence

The ABA has previously reviewed death penalty systems in Alabama, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Indiana and Ohio. Missouri and Kentucky are being reviewed this year.

To get involved in fighting the death penalty in Missouri, contact Missourians for Alternatives to the Death Penalty (MADP) online at www.madp.mo.org or call 816-931-4177. Chapters meet monthly in St. Louis, Kansas City, Columbia and Springfield. ❖

Feeding the Hungry

Joe Eddy, Budget and Resource Officer for the DOC, reports that Missouri spends \$44.68 per day for each prisoner. Of that, \$12.14 supposedly goes to pay for medical and mental health services. Actually, some \$28.00 of the total goes for administrative costs, like staff salaries and utility bills.



Of the reported \$16.39 direct costs, only **\$2.54 per day** is spent on feeding each prisoner. That’s less than 85 cents per meal! How many people on the outside could live on and feed family members on 85 cents each per meal? If we deduct the DOC’s cost of cooking, freezing, storing and shipping the food from the cook-chill facilities, the cost of the food itself becomes practically nil. In contrast, a person on the outside with no income receives \$150.00 per month in food stamps, an average of \$1.67 per meal, and we have access to food pantries as well. No wonder prisoners complain about the amount and quality of the food they’re offered.

No one is free when others are oppressed.

Alternative Sentencing

Once again, Missouri Chief Justice Ray Price Jr. has called for alternative sentencing for nonviolent offenders. In his annual address to the legislature February 9, Price said, "This prison-based strategy is not working and it is costing us an arm and a leg." He renewed the call for more drug courts to fight prison overcrowd-

ing. Missouri continues to incarcerate too many people, said Price, many of whom should be in diversion programs to help them kick drug and alcohol addiction.

From 1982 when the state had 5,953 prisoners and a budget of \$55 million, Missouri now incarcerates 30,432 at an annual cost of \$665 million. ❖



Experiments—from page 5

How do such things happen? President Obama, when confronted with the evidence of the Guatemala study, asked if such things could happen today.

It is clear that so long as there is dehumanization of prisoners and others, and so long as people are locked away from public oversight and monitoring, such atrocities can and will happen again.

MO CURE Meeting

The next meeting of Missouri CURE will be held from 10 AM to noon on March 26 at Bob Evans Restaurant, 1003 Veterans Blvd. in Festus MO (exit 175 from Interstate 55).

Please email missouricure@hotmail.com or call us at 877-525-CURE (2873) if you plan to attend, so we can reserve enough room. All are welcome — we hope to see you there.

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 \$ _____

* 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
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MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES



Together We Stand — Together We CURE!