

GRATERFRIENDS

A Publication of The Pennsylvania Prison Society

Promoting a humane, just and constructive correctional system and a rational approach to criminal justice since 1787

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Innocent Convictions

by Marissa Boyers Bluestine of the Philadelphia Innocence Project

People confess to crimes they didn't commit. Whether out of pressure from police through coercive investigative techniques, fear of the criminal justice system, or rarely - because the person wants the notoriety involved. (After Charles Lindbergh's baby was kidnapped, hundreds of people "confessed" to the crime.) Although the reasons vary, the impact on the criminal justice system is the same: innocent people get convicted and imprisoned.

And as much pressure on adults to confess to crimes, the pressure on juveniles being interrogated is even higher. A case in the national news may give the United States Supreme Court a chance to address the issue of juvenile false confessions head on. Brendan Dassey was convicted of taking part in a murder in Wisconsin with his uncle, Steve Avery. The only incriminating evidence against Brendan was his purported confession to police, given when he was just 16 years old. Brendan's lawyer abandoned him to the detectives - even encouraged Brendan to speak with them alone without a lawyer or his parent present. After highly suggestive questioning from police detectives, all of which was videotaped- Brendan "admitted" to taking part in the murder.

Many years ago, the Supreme Court ruled that police should take special care with juveniles when they are being questioned., and that courts should give particular caution when considering whether to admit a child's confession into evidence at trial. That's because the Court recognized that children are particularly susceptible to pressure from police. In *Haley v. Ohio*, police said the interrogation was constitutionally sound because the child had been given his Miranda warnings before talking. The Court disagreed, and famously wrote: "Formulas of respect for constitutional safeguards may not become a cloak for inquisitorial practices and make an empty form of due process of law."

Since Haley was decided, we have seen scores of convictions overturned where the defendant gave a provably false confession. Yet Brendan Dassey's interrogation was deemed legally and constitutionally sound and voluntary by the Seventh Circuit in a 4-3 ruling. The case is now pending before the United States Supreme Court, where the Court could lay out stronger rules for protecting juveniles in police detention from coercive tactics. A decision by the Court on whether to grant certiorari is expected this summer.

The Pennsylvania Innocence Project conducts post-conviction investigation and litigation in cases where people have been convicted of crimes they did not commit. To have your case considered by the Pennsylvania Innocence Project, write us a letter briefly explaining the crime(s) for which you were convicted, your sentence, why you say that you are innocent, whether you have completed your direct appeal, and what new evidence may exist to prove your innocence. Please do not send any documents until asked to do so, and do not copy the questionnaire for others to use—it only slows down our evaluation.

Marissa Boyers Bluestine
Executive Director
Pennsylvania Innocence Project

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From the Editor

On May 8, 1787, just weeks away from the start of the Constitutional Convention, our nation's founders established the Prison Society out of the conviction, that "The obligations of benevolence are not cancelled by the follies or crimes of our fellow creatures."

At our 231st Annual Meeting last month, we honored individuals who work to further the Society's mission of ensuring humane prison conditions.

Kirby Keller of SCI Dallas, the Julia Glover Hall Inmate of the Year, was honored for his integrity and encouragement to prison staff and inmates. Mr. Keller is a Lifer who has served 28 years, who has earned a degree in business administration and a certificate in cabinetmaking, and has taught cabinetmaking for many years. He is active with the Jaycees and has been a leader of the Dallas SCI Protestant church, where he has focused on his devotions and raising money for: a youth summer camp, a local food pantry, and a children's Christmas gifts program. He has qualified as a peer facilitator, probably his proudest achievement and has been instrumental in guiding the Long Distance Dads Group and helping individual inmates develop closer ties with their children. Mr. Keller's sister, Heidi Klopp, and his son, Kirby Keller, received the award on his behalf.

The Correctional Professional of the Year Award was given to **Danielle Miniarchick** for her outstanding commitment to helping current and former inmates. Danielle is a counselor at Centre County Correctional Facility where she has been employed for 13 years. Danielle tackles individual counseling with gusto. She is on the Life Skills committee of the Centre County Reentry Coalition where she was instrumental in compiling the Reentry Resource Guide. She

teaches Choices and Pride classes, helped start a weekly reentry group, and is an active member with the Heroin and Opioid Prevention Education Initiative. Centre County Prison Society Official Visitors nominated Danielle for this award, commenting, "this is someone who has a real ability to connect with inmates and devotes a remarkable amount of time and energy toward their welfare."

Rebecca Mitchell of Huntington County was honored as the Prison Society Official Visitor of the Year for her persistent compassion and tireless work in the name of people who are incarcerated. Rebecca has met with scores of incarcerated people, chiefly at SCI Smithfield, SCI Huntingdon and the county prison but also at six other SCIs (Albion, Somerset, Houtzdale, Fayette, Laurel Highlands and Mahoney) across the state to maintain contact with men who have moved. She displays remarkable compassion. With one challenging inmate, she asked the superintendent whether he thought her visits were worthwhile. He replied, "Oh, keep visiting him, you are the only person he will talk to."

At our core, the Prison Society is a group of compassionate individuals who are committed to helping those facing the most trying of circumstances. These three individuals exemplify the most important and most impactful contributions by the Prison Society to inmates and their families. It is an honor to lead this organization into its 231st year.

Sincerely,
Claire Shubik-Richards
Executive Director

GRATERFRIENDS

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Reports From the Inside

Editors' Note: We are revising the "Mailroom" column by abbreviating the entries to allow us to include more per issue and by sending complete submissions to the Official Visitor who is in the best position to follow up on the issue. This will be the PPS volunteer who is most familiar with that prison, its administrators, and its inmates. All inmates and supporters are welcome to serve as GF reporters by submitting articles to this column. Please note that GF is rarely able to verify the information in these submissions.

No Pay For Cleanups: Scott Black (LK-6465, SCI Greene) reports that while prisoners are doing more clean-ups of bodily fluids, they are not getting paid, even when their work has been verified. *"Since Greene has become the new intake prison for this region, the cleanups have become [more frequent]. We do our jobs and clean up the nasty stuff daily and put our slips in... inmate employment is refusing to pay us for the cleanups saying we are making too much money. If we refuse to do the cleanups, we could go to the hole (RHU)."* He notes that these cleanups are risky to one's health and the pay is low but all he wants is advice on how to get paid for the work that was performed.

Prolonged Administrative Custody: Eli Rosa (KZ-2618, SCI Houtzdale) reports that, *"Inmates here, along with myself, have been on Administrative Custody for over five months pending transfer!... Moreover, the counselors...deliberately delay the paperwork process. How do I know? Because I wrote the Office of Population Management...and they responded with 'paperwork hasn't yet been received.'"* He adds, such prisoners should not have to wait so long for visits, phone access, or special food orders. *"... I seek help. Whoever may know whom to contact, please inform me."*

Toilet Paper Shortage: Thomas A. O'Neel (SX-9230, SCI Frackville) reports that there is a toilet paper shortage at SCI Frackville. *"Once a week we receive one roll of toilet paper per person. Then when we run out, it is almost impossible to get another. When we ask a correctional officer, we are almost always told there is no more left...and there are none sold in the Commissary... Towards the end of the week, people go cell to cell trying to buy it."* He urges the DOC to provide two rolls per week.

Volume Control: For years, we have received reports of problems with GTL tablets. James Hardin (AJ-1593, SCI Forest) writes that the GTL Tablet 2.0, which was

supposed to have louder maximum volume, has a maximum that is three digital notches lower. This makes it even more difficult to hear music than before. He urges inmates and supporters to write to Christine Meukel, PA DOC Tablet Manager/Liaison, 1920 Technology Parkway, Mechanicsburg, PA, 17105. *"To get anything done will require a statewide effort by all those affected so if you don't take the time to write her, don't complain."*

Pay Raises and Bank Accounts: Shawn Jordan (BI-8942, SCI Rockview) laments long sentences, prison conditions, and violence but chooses to focus on two things inmates could achieve if they worked together: getting pay raises and getting their own bank accounts. *"We must start opening bank accounts. In solidarity we can start controlling our own funds and take a peaceful stance in asking for changes in the pay scale."*

Is There Anybody Out There?: Zechariah "True" Thompson (HV-3696, SCI Frackville) recommends civil disobedience to protest all the things that have been taken away (e.g., food, certain books, magazines, music and art programs, workshops). *"We are the ones cleaning the [prisons], cooking in them, cutting the lawn, fixing the plumbing [and electrical systems], and all we get is a 'pat down' afterward. Where is our incentive?"* He ends his letter with a 1970s quote from an Attica inmate: *"We need to wake up, because nothing comes to you in your sleep but a dream."*

Parole Denied: Terry Graham (JG-2267, SCI Pine Grove) says, *"My issue is it that it seems that it is very hard to get paroled at SCI Pine Grove right now. I see only a small number going home. I am interested to see if this is an issue in other SCIs in PA. Any help?"*

Graterfriends Special Edition House Bill 135/ Senate Bill 942

On April 7, 2017, State Representative Jason Dawkins (D-Phila) reintroduced legislation for Parole Eligibility for Life-Sentences House Bill 135 (formerly H.B. 2135). The bill will amend Titles 18 Pa.C.S. 1102.1 and 61 Pa.C.S. §6137 and 42 Pa.C.S. §9714, to eliminate life imprisonment without parole in Pennsylvania. If enacted the law would authorize the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole to review and release on parole prisoners sentenced to life imprisonment. Senate Bill 942, introduced by Senator Sharif Street (D-Phila) is a companion bill, meaning it reads exactly the same as the House Bill. If enacted both laws would apply retroactively. Both bills are pending in the respective judiciary committees.

Call to Action: Republicans control the Pennsylvania General Assembly (House of Representatives and Senate) by wide margins. Our challenge is to create a strategy, a message, and mobilization to persuade the General Assembly to move the bills. Efforts are being made to hold a policy hearing, perhaps in one or more of the SCI's. A majority of the inmate organizations at SCI Graterford have unified and created L.I.O.N. (Lifers Intra-Organizations Network) to advance the cause of parole eligibility for life sentences. Significantly, L.I.O.N. is encouraging, promoting, and assisting with "Community Educational Forums" aimed at getting our message throughout the Commonwealth. To date at least six forums have been held in Philadelphia and beyond.

What you can do: If your institution has an inmate organization or Activities Department that is willing to receive printed materials, you can write to the address below. Printed materials (strategy and messaging) may be sent to you. You can also do the following: (1) educate your family, friends, and loved ones about the two bills and encourage them to write, e-mail, or call their state representative and senator; (2) write your representative and senator for your home district and for where you are incarcerated (because the U.S. census counts you as a resident of that district); (3) write to local newspapers (e.g. Johnstown, Wilkes-Barre,

Harrisburg) and express your support for the bills. Remember, we need to convince as many legislators as possible, but it is not so necessary to convince those who already signed on to the bills.

Internet Action: Your family and friends can go online at www.PASSSB942.COM. Push button: "Take Action." Log in name and zip code and automatically the appropriate state senator for that district will receive an e-mail encouraging him/her to support S.B. 942. It doesn't get any easier than that! Information is also available at www.lifersincpa.org.

This can happen! Right now economic forces and justice reform interests are combining to seek solutions for the problem of mass incarceration. Life sentenced prisoners must work and commit to being a part of the conversations that leads to so-called solutions. Several commuted lifers, recently released juvenile lifers, advocates and supporters (old and new) are contributing. L.I.O.N. calls upon you to do the same.

****Please know that some parts or language of H.B.-135/S.B.-942 could change in the legislative process.**

The following is an excerpt from H.B.-135 and S.B.-942:

Section 3. Section 6137(a)(1) and (3) of Title 61 are amended to read:

§6137. Parole power.

General criteria for parole.

(a) The board may parole subject to consideration of guidelines established under 42 Pa.C.S. §2154.5 (relating to adoption of guidelines for parole) and may release on parole any inmate to whom the power to parole is granted to the board by this chapter, except an inmate condemned to death (or serving life imprisonment), whenever in its opinion:

- (i) The best interests of the inmate justify or require that the inmate be paroled.
- (ii) It does not appear that the interests of the Commonwealth will be injured by the inmate's parole.

The power to parole granted under this section to the board may not be exercised in the board's discretion at any time before, but only after:

- (a) the expiration of the minimum term of imprisonment fixed by the court in its sentence or by the Board of pardons in a sentence which has been reduced by commutation
- (b) fifteen years, in the case of an inmate sentenced to life imprisonment. Notwithstanding the date of conviction and notwithstanding any other provision of this title or other statute, any person serving a life sentence under the laws of this Commonwealth may be eligible for parole review after serving 15 years of imprisonment.



Think About It

Solace

John Maltese, MW-7489, SCI Houtzdale

While I am not a believer in any supreme creator or any version of God, I have come to find a great sense of peace in the churches of the state prisons of Pennsylvania.

While my first stop was SCI Graterford, where I was not allowed to go to church because I was in a “jumpsuit” (still not classified), I did visit the church once for a Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) “class” and discovered it was a fine old church, a large handsome building, adorned like most churches I’ve seen.

After 15 wasted weeks, doing nothing towards my classification, I was finally transferred to SCI-Camp Hell... no that’s not a typo! This church, much smaller and modern was also a very nice representation of a “church”. They had a good choir and band and offered a peaceful hour of self reflection. While there was often cross talk, mostly of nonsense, I myself guilty of cracking a few jokes (sorry), I began to feel a sense of peace, not found anywhere in either SCI I had known.

Unfortunately, there was a major discovery of contraband in the church, which not only caused loss of a Sunday service (many were lost for lockdowns), this put a bitter taste in my mouth. I became once again disenchanted with the idea of organized religion.

Then I was transferred to SCI Houtzdale and through no small act of congress (sic) was finally able to attend my first Sunday (Protestant) service. Well, surprise, surprise: this little nondescript plain Jane rectangular building held a certain kind of magic. The church was so fully attended that they actually had to organize the row of chairs lengthwise to fit all of the people!

Now on to the magic. The choir; spectacular. The songs not only sung, but alive with peace and love. The band, or should I say mini-orchestra complete with a brass section, was incredible as well. I will never forget the saxophone solo to “Rise Up”. I was

amazed, and that’s a word I use rarely. I even believe the likes of Kenny G. would have been impressed.

So with this last paragraph, I will attest to wonderful peace and “brotherhood” found in Houtzdale’s little church that could bring peace to a place of such anger and violence. My sincere thanks to the pastors, guests, and most of all inmates that make a Sunday a better day for myself and many others.

A New Parole Eligibility Bill

By James Brown, CQ-3403, SCI Albion

Asking for 15 years eligibility for lifers’ parole per HB135 & HB942 is insulting to the lawmakers. From a person living this sentence, my perspective on the issue is as follows.

It’s important to look at the political environment. Asking members of the House or Senate to pass a “singular lifers bill” could be worrisome to many legislators, given their own political situations. For example, think back to the issues surrounding Robert “Mudman” Simon and Reynold McFadden.

The public can fear the idea of a lifer being released, potentially committing further crimes and showing up on the news again. When a legislator is running for office, they especially wouldn’t want to be responsible for such a thing if it were to happen.

A wiser bill could be one that supports everyone sentenced to serve time in the Commonwealth. It could be an incentivized “Good Time Bill,” like in the nearby New Jersey, where a prisoner could participate in programs, working, and staying clear of misconduct, with that person able to reduce up to 12 days off their overall sentence monthly.

This proposed bill is real change, and while it would instantly benefit lifers, they would not be the bill’s isolated focus. The bill could also promote safety for those who live and work in PA prisons. It’s common knowledge that our state prisons have one of the highest assault on staff rates nationally, and I believe this is due in part to the harsh nature of sentencing and the hopelessness that unhinges some incarcerated people.

The Mentally Ill vs. The Mentally Ill

By Augustus Simmons, KL-2144, SCI Greene

It baffles the mind what some of us witness inside these walls. What I've gathered from an observational standpoint is the cause of insanity that afflicts many of my brothers and sisters behind these walls. I've witnessed firsthand accounts of cruelty and oppression that could drive someone over the edge.

What continues to shock the mind is just how many of the correctional staff can be found facing the same issues as the inmates. Just think about how much of the staff is ex-military who could be coping with PTSD, depression, or other forms of mania that need to be kept under the surface for the sake of employment. What this creates is an environment of the mad, perpetuating the idea that either side is out to get each other.

For example, you could have one guard suffering from paranoia glaring at an inmate with the same condition, eventually boiling over into a confrontation that causes mass chaos. Just the other day, I witnessed in SCI Greene an African American officer working amongst an entirely white staff. It's my belief that the extended dissociation with his culture has filled that void with hate and resentment, sometimes manifesting in extreme measures under the cover of "it's my job."

I mention him because some of the most mentally anguished among us are those that are forced to forget their own needs for the sake of others, or for a job. I see this kind of thing everyday: the mentally ill battling the mentally ill and I wonder what the outside world would think if they knew where all this money was going.

Walking the Red Road

By Jeremy Fontanez, 56997-066, FCI Hazleton

I have been incarcerated for more than 15 years, since 2002. For almost 13 years, I have been walking the Red Road, the Native American spiritual way of life. When I read "Native American Circles in Prison" in the February 2018 issue of *Graterfriends*, I was compelled to share my story.

In 2004, the Federal Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania sentenced me to 35 years, and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania sentenced me to Life without parole, plus 24-28 years. Life was over. It was hopeless, there was nothing to look forward to in life. At least, that is how I was initially feeling. But life has a funny way of bringing into our lives that which we need. We only need to be willing to see.

My ethnicity is half Puerto Rican and half Italian. I'd only met one Native American in my life, up until that point. Then I met Chief Frank Bettelyoun. He introduced me to the Native American Sweat Lodge ceremony and taught me Lakota songs. At a time in my life when things couldn't seem any more bleak, the Creator brought an old Native American pipe carrier into my life. Since then, I have learned all I could about the Sacred Circle, even teaching others what I have learned over the years. I drum, sing songs, and can even run an Inipi ceremony. In a time when I wanted to die, Chief Frank taught me why I should live. The Native American Red Road saved my spirit. Chief Frank saved my life.

**Were you transferred or
assigned a new state ID number?
Did you just move from SCI Graterford?
Let us know!**

**Remember, the Department of Corrections *does not* alert us
when inmates are transferred or assigned a new number.
Make sure you write to us so we can update our mailing list,
and ensure quick delivery of your *Graterfriends*!**



Solitary Confinement Reality

By Ricardo Noble, BX-9351, SCI Greene

Whenever I read or hear prison staff, politicians, and others supporting solitary confinement (especially long-term solitary confinement) speak about it, they make it seem like being locked in a cell for 23 or 24 hours a day is “no big deal” or that it doesn’t have a physical or psychological effect on a person. And, of course, they never speak about the malicious and sadistic things that the prison staff does that causes and contributes to the negative effects of solitary confinement. Things like maliciously skipping a prisoner’s cell for meals, showers, yard time, contaminating prisoner’s food, tampering with prisoners’ incoming and outgoing mail, leaving the cell lights on 24 hours a day, and many other things.

They also tend to make it seem like it’s only corrections officers who subject prisoners in solitary confinement to malicious and sadistic treatment. But nurses, counselors, and other prison staff often initiate and/or join the campaign of harassment and cover up the mistreatment of prisoners.

Most of the abuse and deplorable conditions are recorded 24 hours a day on video cameras stationed throughout the solitary confinement cell blocks. All prison staff who come through the solitary confinement housing units daily or weekly have witnessed or are aware of the abuse, terrible conditions, etc. They don’t do, or at least, say anything about it. Even though their job description requires them to. So, they are just as guilty and vicious as the actual victimizers. They don’t even have to use their own names.

Department of Corrections policy states that everyone (prisoners and staff) can report abuse of prisoners, deplorable prison conditions, etc. anonymously. But the staff say and do nothing. Instead, they stay quiet and fool themselves into believing that they are still “good people” because they are not the staff member who or directly said

atrocities against prisoners. Most abuse of prisoners and terrible prison conditions are unreported and undocumented, so statistics don’t even scratch the surface of the reality of what’s going on. Also, judges and the courts encourage and allow prison staff and officials malicious violations of prisoners’ civil and human rights by pretending like prisoner’s lawsuits that have merit don’t have merit. This makes it harder for prisoners to file and get relief from lawsuits and other complaints, seldom punishing guilty prison staff, and giving prison staff/ officials punishments that are so light that they are meaningless.

Prisoners’ voices (pleas for assistance, relief) are often heard but ignored. So, the physical and psychological torture of prisoners continues to be a harsh reality allowed throughout the United States

Harassment and Retaliation

By Robert B. Mowrey FJ-1676, SCI Forest

It is well known that it is not necessary to lock down and punish 110 to 125 inmates every time one or two inmates decide to fight or assault an officer.

Recently, an inmate assaulted an officer and he was taken to the Restrictive Housing Unit. During this incident, several other inmates and I were actually in the dining hall eating and not even on the housing unit where the incident occurred.

As a result of this incident, we were placed on “lockdown” even when it was perfectly clear that we had nothing to do with it. Every time we get locked down we are denied access to: the dayroom rec, outdoor rec, phone calls, showers, and hot meals. They say the meals are hot but by the time we actually receive them, they are definitely cold. Our trays are often made up an hour or more before we receive them and they do not even get put in a warmer to keep them warm.

This practice needs to stop now! It is causing more problems than it prevents. This also causes stress levels to go up every time we get punished for no reason. This treatment of inmates that do nothing wrong is “cruel and unusual punishment” which is a violation of our constitutional right to be free from this abuse of power.



House Bill 135/PN 1268

Blaine Norris, FT-0466, SCI Somerset

House Bill 135/PN 1268 has been sitting in the Judiciary Committee for months with no progress. Since this bill could mean real parole eligibility for all lifers, we need to mobilize our efforts to sway the Judiciary Committee. That means we, the lifers of Pennsylvania, need to write letters and we need to persuade our loved ones to write.

The chairman of the Judiciary Committee is:

Representative Ronald S. Marsico
4401 Linglestown Rd, Suite B
Harrisburg, PA, 17112

Flood his office with letters from inmates and voters in the community in support of HB135.

These are our lives. It's worth a couple of free envelopes and a few minutes of time to try for a chance at freedom.

Editor's Note: See page 4 for more information.

Effective PCRA Counsel

By Jules Jette EW-4679, SCI Houtzdale

I came across a case that struck a nerve again. In *Commonwealth v. Robinson* 139A.3d 178 (2016), the court touched on a subject that surfaced throughout my years working in the prison's law library: how do defendants enforce their "rule based right" to effective PCRA counsel? It became a cardinal roadblock in my own case, not unlike many others.

I've been waiting for the court to settle the issue, however they've conceded in numerous cases since the 1995 PCRA amendments that it's a troublesome topic. It is becoming evident the court is declining to set precedent or adopt a procedure for the "rule based right."

The only answer is that the General Assembly (GA) should amend the PCRA's statutory language to permit enforcement of the right to counsel where "it is axiomatic that the right...includes the concomitant right to effective assistance of counsel." *Albrecht* 720 A.2d at 699-700.

The GA could amend an exception to permit allegations of PCRA counsel representation after the filing of a timely PCRA petition, or one that meets one of the statutory timeliness exceptions (per the "Time Bar Rule" article in the May issue). This would allow the PCRA court to review and rule on a claim of counsel's ineffectiveness before an appeal. This procedure would also alleviate the burden on appellate courts who are struggling with PCRA counsel allegations of ineffectiveness raised for the first time on appeal. Consequently, failure to file a timely complaint would waive the issue.

This could be beneficial to the court and the defendant, because it could potentially eliminate hybrid representation or filings while giving the defendant the opportunity to proceed pro se before the conclusion of PCRA review. This could also be part of a rule 907 response, which is a supplemental form supplied by the PCRA court with "notice of intent to dismiss," thus keeping this avenue under the court's control. Unless prima facie is met, there would be no need to appoint counsel. The PCRA court could hold an evidentiary hearing if warranted, while giving meaning to the "rule based right to effective assistance of PCRA counsel," something few lawyers understand fully.

The PA Supreme Court gave me a Hobson's choice: fail with the PCRA counsel assistance I complained for or abandon the appeal. Justices Todd & Baer, as they've done before, understood my predicament, but Justice Castille wrote that the only avenue I had to raise PCRA counsel effectiveness was to file a subsequent PCRA which would have fallen to the time-bar rule. My conviction was finalized in 2003, and the initial pro se PCRA I filed a few weeks later spent 10 years in litigation.

To me, it's more than evident that the courts don't plan to settle the issue, so we must advocate for the GA to do so instead. Write to GA representatives, tell your friends and family to do the same, we have the ability to change things.

**Legal Tips for Pro Se Prisoners Filing
PCRA Petitions and Petitions For
Allowance of Appeal to the PA Supreme
Court**

*By George Rahsaan Brooks-Bey, AP-4884,
SCI Coal Township*

Pennsylvania's Rules of Criminal Procedure 905(b) are intended to provide petitioners with a legitimate opportunity to present their claims to the Post-Conviction Relief Act Court, in a manner sufficient to avoid dismissal due to the correctable defect in the pleadings or presentation. See *Commonwealth v. Robinson*, 947 A.2d 710-711 (Pa. 2008). There is a distinction between a petition being dismissed because the petition is time-barred and a non-time-barred petition. An untimely petition cannot be corrected because of defects in pleadings or presentation. See *Commonwealth v. Lippert*, 85 A.3d 1095 (Pa. Super.) app. denied, 95 A.3d 277 (Pa. 2004); *Commonwealth v. Simpson*, 66 A. 3d 253, 261 (Pa. 2013).

Recently, I read a pro se prisoner's argument in a PCRA Petition where he argued "sufficiency of evidence." Sufficiency of evidence is not cognizable under PCRA 42 Pa. C.S. § 9543 (a) (2); *Commonwealth v. Price*, 876 A.2d 988, 995 (Pa. Super. 2005) (holding that sufficiency claims not cognizable under PCRA without the claim that counsel on direct appeal was ineffective for failing to assert it), and *Commonwealth v. Bell*, 706 A.2d 855, 861 (Pa. Super. 1998).

Pro se petitioners are having their Petitions For Allowance of Appeal denied for going past the word limitation. Effective March 2, 2015, all Petitions For Allowance of Appeal must be less than 9,000 words and accompanied by a Certificate of Compliance. The Certificate of Compliance requirement is waived for petitions less than twenty pages. See Pa. R.A.P. 1115 (f)(g) of the Public Access Policy of the Unified Judicial System of Pennsylvania. Pursuant to a new rule that became effective on January 6, 2018, a Certificate of Compliance is required to be filed with your Petition For Allowance of Appeal, certifying that your filing complies with the provisions.

I encourage all pro se prisoners to read, *Commonwealth v. Jones*, 549 Pa. 58 (1997), 700 A.2d 423 (1997); *Smith v. Pa. Bd. of Probation and Parole*, 546 Pa. 115, 683 A.2d 278 (1996); *Commonwealth v. Johnson*, 860 A.2d 146 (Pa. Super. 2004).

Editor's Note: *A pro se litigant is one who represents themselves in court.*

The Banner of the Public Defender Act

By John Meyer, HW-5451, SCI Dallas

Inmates in Pennsylvania are entitled to counsel at their parole hearings, under the Public Defender Act (1968), Senate Bill 1769.

The General Assembly said to any prisoners or parolees who are covered by the Act. The importance of counsel and parole at proceedings has been recognized legislatively in §990.06, Duties (9), (10), and (11). Please see Supreme Court in *Commonwealth v. Tinson* 433 Pa. 328, and *Commonwealth ex rel. Patterson* 215 Pa. Super 532 (1969). Pursuant to the PDA, inmates have the guaranteed right to counsel at their parole proceedings. Inmates also have a right to judicial review under Article V. Section 9 of the state constitution, and the PDA applies equally to parole revocation and denials. The state has to provide what it is constitutionally compelled to offer pursuant to the PDA.

We have never been given a waiver form to sign off on these rights to counsel, and if we were given one we would ask the parole board to produce said forms. The parole board must produce relinquishment of a legal right through a waiver form, or else be in violation of the PDA.

"Squeaky wheel gets the oil." I would also like to add that a court may not, under the guise of statutory construction, rewrite a statutory provision, nor should a court "act as editor for the General Assembly, even where doing so would create an improvised statute," per 1 Pa C.S. §1921 (a & b) §1932 and §1922. I hope someone will hear and get our rights back

Corrections or Business Projections?

By Thomas A. O'Neil, JX-9230, SCI Frackville

Overcrowding in Pennsylvania State Prisons has always been an issue. There have been a great many changes in our prison regulations to attempt to accommodate the surge in prison populations these past years, but in the end, populations are still rising.

Our elected officials and the DOC don't seem to see this as an issue. Instead, they see this as an opportunity to profit, a way to provide more in-state jobs, a way to receive more funding from the federal government. I believe our state government will instead change laws and procedures to mask the recidivism rate, beginning with parole violators.

As of 2012, a person with less than a 2-year minimum sentence can be sent to state prison, a move made to free up space in our county jails. In doing so, however, state prisons become "clogged up," and in turn the procedures for parole violators were changed.

Technical parole violators are now sent to county contracted jails to give state prisons more bed space, effectively "shuffling" prisoners. Why? As numbers go our state prisons are housing fewer parole violators than in county jails. What this means is that the DOC can report this lower number of violators and make it seem, on paper at least, that the recidivism rate is dropping. They haven't so much cured the problem as they have created the illusion of such.

The DOC can now receive more new inmates by taking those with low sentences, as well as the federal funding that comes with it. More and more people are being put away while this happens. I hope that one day things will change, and state prisons will no longer prioritize income and focus harder on rehabilitation. One day our corrections system will correct like they should.

How to Begin Legal Research

*By Nicholas Edwards, GM-8660,
SCI Benner Township*

Learning how to do research, especially if you are unfamiliar with the idea of statutes and precedents, is important for gaining a thorough understanding of a legal matter. If and when you find a case that is factually similar to your own, it is called being "on-point." An on-point case could potentially provide you with a treasure trove of information, as if a judge personally explained the state statute to you and how it applies to your case, as well as other avenues for additional research. The higher up the court where the case was decided is, the more weight the precedent may carry. As such, here is a basic research plan:

- Find a digest to look up the subject that you need to research;
- Find the key number for your subject;
- Look up the annotated version of the statute that the synopsis relies upon;
- Shepardize the case to be sure the information is current;
- Study any rulings, case laws, jury instructions, and legal standards as they apply to your case; and;
- Remember to find out if the information you plan to cite was subsequently changed, affirmed, or reversed after shepardizing.

Editor's Note: *Shepardizing is a legal research method of locating reports of appeal decisions based on prior precedents from Shepard's Citations.*

Digests are the major means of accessing case law by topic.



Report from **Nicole Sloane, Esq.** Criminal Defense Attorney

State Parolees Continue to be Denied Credit for Time Served

By Nicole Sloane

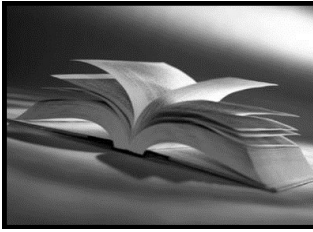
It is important for state parolees who were charged with new criminal offenses to carefully review how much time they spent incarcerated and whether they were held on bond, a state detainer or both. The complicated considerations that sometimes arise are nicely illustrated in **Jason Lang v. Pa. Board of Probation and Parole**, 927 C.D. 2017, 2018 Pa. Commw. Unpubl. LEXIS 154 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2018). In the unpublished decision authored by Commonwealth Court Judge Anne Covey, the Court reminds us that confinement due to a Board detainer only (even if served in the county prison) must be credited to the parole violator's original sentence. In other words, when a parolee held on a Board detainer either satisfied bail requirements for a new offense or the bond was unsecured but he remained incarcerated because of a Board detainer, he must receive credit for that confinement applied to the original (detainer) sentence.

On the other hand, if the parolee is incarcerated on a new charge as well as a state detainer, the trial court must apply jail credit towards the new sentence. Indeed, the Board is without the authority to award the credit should the trial court fail to do so. I have written about this multiple times and yet I have found in the county where I practice that the trial court judges are still denying time credit for time spent on both a detainer as well as bond. See **Commonwealth v. Marcus Gibbs**, 2018 PA SUPER 62, (Pa. Super. Ct. 2018). While the Pennsylvania Superior Court remands for confinement credit, the convicted parole violators wait months for favorable appellate decisions thereby delaying parole eligibility. It should be noted here that the failure to award time credit where required implicates the legality of a sentence so it is an issue cognizable in a timely PCRA.

An exception to the rules stated above would be if a parole violator is confined on both the Board's

warrant and new criminal charges but *it is not possible for all of the credit to be applied towards the new sentence. Should the period of pre-sentence incarceration be greater than the maximum sentence imposed for the new sentence then the credit must be applied to the detainer sentence. See **Matthew Armbruster v. Pa. Bd. Of Prob. & Parole**, 919 A.2d 348, 355 (Pa. Commw. Ct. 2007).*

Editor's Note: *Some judges will not allocate credit on the bench but rather, will rely upon other departments to calculate the credit. That is why it is important to check both your sentencing order as well as the credit acknowledged by your institutions' records department to make sure that the credit has been applied where appropriate.*



Literary Corner

The Armored Author

By Cory Lambing LF-1319, SCI Forest

When it comes to poetry,
I am but a knight.
Constantly armed with my pencil,
Carrying it wherever I go.
Cutting wounds into paper,
As if it is soft pink flesh.
Rising at dawn,
And honing my skills,
In the meadow.
My weapon of choice,
The composed word.
As if it just an extension of myself.
I would that I shall die,
With pencil in hand.
In an epic battle of verses and sonnets.
So that I maintain my dignity.
Hold my honor,
And stay true to my sworn vows.

Dark Noise

*By Christopher Edward Henriquez, P-81961,
San Quentin*

Blossoming nocturnal sounds
Gloomy verbs, pleasant nouns.
Conscience in collective vows,
Wise souls in the here and now.
How else will our voices crowd,
Speaking fearlessly out loud
On relevant pertinent issues
Of unworthy presidential pistols.
On nuclear codes and ballistic missiles
Of blaspheming God defaming temples.
On school shootings reversing ill mental.
Of life to our planet's rich crystals.
Earthly natives challenging the powers,
Organizing humanity by the seconds, minutes,
hours.
To salvage love, hate shall be devoured.
Cultivating support so families flower.
Poetical flaming colors, raining amazing
showers.

We would like to inform our
subscribers that our quarterly publica-
tion, *Correctional Forum*,
has been **suspended**.

The staff here at the Prison Society are
working on finding another publication
that is as informative and respected as
Correctional Forum was to take its place.

If you have any questions or concerns,
please write to us at:

The Pennsylvania Prison Society
RE: *Correctional Forum*
230 S. Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Or give us a call at
(215) 564-4775

Thank you for your patience,
understanding, and continued support of
the Prison Society.

2018 SURVEY RESULTS

Thanks to all who responded to the survey provided in the last three issues of Graterfriends. A total of 104 individuals answered the six multiple-choice questions and the request for suggestions. All of this will be enormously helpful as we continue to make the newsletter more responsive to readers' needs and interests. The results from the multiple-choice questions are shown below.

Would you like us to include information on:

Statistics on prison population and other facts? Yes 93% No 5% Blank 2%
The latest technology? Yes 70% No 21% Blank 9%
Organizations that assist prisoners? Yes 96% No 2% Blank 2%
Book or movie reviews? Yes 44% No 47% Blank 9%

Editor's Note: Percentages may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

How important is Graterfriends to you (rate from 1-10)?

Very? 52%
Somewhat? 15%
Not Very? 13%
Not? 18%

Editor's Note: Very is 1-2, Somewhat is 3-5, Not Very is 6-8, Not is 9-10. Most respondents who selected 9 or 10 were very positive about Graterfriends; they may have interpreted the higher numbers as meaning more or very important.

What is the main reason you read Graterfriends (least to most important)?

To learn what others are talking about.

Most 26% Somewhat 20% Not Very 21% Least 7% Yes 12% Blank 14%

For legal news and advice.

Most 58% Somewhat 9% Not Very 3% Least 5% Yes 16% Blank 10%

For resources,

Most 26% Somewhat 26% Not Very 17% Least 3% Yes 15% Blank 13%

Nothing else worth reading in my mailbox.

Most 7% Somewhat 1% Not Very 7% Least 49% Other 4% Blank 33%

Editor's Note: Some respondents gave no rating, just answered "yes".

Suggestions for improvement included: (a) publish more frequently; (b) report on the demographics of subscribers and authors, (c) expand the audience to include families not directly affected by incarceration; (d) provide more information for inmates' families, lifers, and sex offenders; and (e) provide more information: resources (especially regarding reentry issues), case law, legislation, pro bono attorneys; health issues, criminal justice statistics, the financial and human costs of incarceration, and updates on DOC policies and procedures re: parole, probation, and grievances.

We cannot thank you enough for your very thoughtful and useful suggestions. We are not able to incorporate all of them immediately but hope to incorporate most of them by the end of the year. We encourage you to continue to send us suggestions and to answer future surveys.



Legislative Highlights

*Edited by Nicole Sloane, Criminal Defense Attorney &
Dwayne Heckert, Legislative Liaison for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*

Several current laws are listed below. Note that this list has new and moving legislation. The bills are current and updated as of 6/8/18.

Bill & Printer No.	Description	Prime Sponsor	Action	Position
SB 62 PN 43	Provides additional reasons to avoid termination of parental rights for incarcerated parents.	Sen. Stewart J. Greenleaf (R) -Bucks (part) & Montgomery (part) Counties	Passed Senate Judiciary 1/24/17; Tabled in the full Senate 3/22/17. On hold on the Senate table.	Support
SB 121 PN 104	An Act amending Title 61 (Prisons and Parole) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, in State intermediate punishment, amends addicted incarcerated offender treatment to including gambling addictions in addition to drug and alcohol.	Sen. Vincent J. Hughes (D) -Montgomery (part) & Philadelphia (part) Counties	Passed Senate Judiciary 5/9/17; On the Senate Floor for first consideration as of 5/9/17, but on hold on Senate Table.	Support
HB 135 PN 1268	Gives Board discretion to parole prisoners who were sentenced to life after 15 years of imprisonment.	Rep. Jason Dawkins (D)	Referred to House Judiciary 4/7/17.	Support
SB 1011 PN 1824	Joint Resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, providing for additional rights of victims of crime. Allows victims to refuse interviews, depositions and other discovery requests; further reduces defendants due process protections.	Sen. Guy Reschenthaler (R)	Reported as committed from Senate Judiciary 01/20/18 <i>Note: Companion bill in the House is HB 1993, Rep. Sheryl Delozier.</i> Re-referred to appropriations 1/31/18. Referred to Judiciary 3/26/18.	Oppose
SB 1071	Provides for automatic parole without a hearing for short sentence offenders once they reach their minimum sentence. In order to be eligible, the offender cannot have committed violent offenses, gun offenses, high-volume drug delivery offenses, certain sexual offenses, or misconduct while in prison. Streamlines placement of appropriate offenders in drug treatment in state prison. Successful completion of the program leads to an earlier release from prison. Establishes clearer guidelines for probation conditions to determine when violators should return to jail or prison.	Sen. Stewart J. Greenleaf (R) -Bucks (part) & Montgomery (part) Counties	Passed the Senate unanimously 4/25/18. Referred to Judiciary 4/30/18.	Support



Legislative Highlights

*Edited by Nicole Sloane, Criminal Defense Attorney &
Dwayne Heckert, Legislative Liaison for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*

Bill & Printer No.	Description	Prime Sponsor	Action	Position
SB 522 PN 875	An Act amending Titles 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) and 61 (Prisons and Parole) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes Merger Bill. The consolidation of the Department of Corrections DOC and the Board of Probation and Parole BPP into the Department of Criminal Justice will increase cost savings, decrease overlapping functions, and increase efficiencies. The BPP will maintain independent decision making and Corrections will oversee agents supervising parolees	Sen. Stewart J. Greenleaf (R) -Bucks (part) & Montgomery (part) Counties	Passed Senate Judiciary, 3/16/17; Passed Appropriations 5/8/17. Moved through the Senate 5/24/17 (38-12). Referred to House Judiciary 5/25/17.	Incorporated into Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget
SB 523 PN 867	An Act amending the act of November 24, 1998 (P.L.882, No.111), known as the Crime Victims Act, Merger Bill. An Act amending the act of November 24, 1998 (P.L.882, No. 111), known as the Crime Victims Act; further advancing the merger of the DOC and the BPP. Provides for the Office of Crime Victims and costs of offender supervision programs.	Sen. Stewart J. Greenleaf (R) -Bucks (part) & Montgomery (part) Counties	Passed Senate Judiciary, 3/16/17; Passed Appropriations 5/8/17. Moved through the Senate 5/24/17 (48-2). In House Judiciary 5/25/17.	Incorporated into Fiscal Year 2017-18 budget
SB 529 HB 1419	An Act amending Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, Clean Slate Clean Slate calls for automatic sealing of most non-violent misdemeanor convictions for individuals who have remained conviction free for at least 10 years. It would also automatically seal records of arrests that do not lead to convictions. It includes a provision for employer immunity for liability. Sealed records are hidden from the public, but still available to law enforcement. Clean Slate reduces the burden on the courts and expands on expungement legislation which passed in 2016.	Sen. Scott Wagner (R)- York (part) County	Passed Senate Judiciary 5/6/17. In Senate Appropriations Committee 6/12/17. On the Senate floor 6/20/17. Moved through the Senate on 6/28/17. In house Judiciary as of 6/29/17.	Support
HB 2005 PN 2873	Act establishing guideline & procedures governing investigations & interrogations of correctional officers by the Dept. of Corrections; authorizing civil suits; & providing for impact of collective bargaining agreements & summary suspensions. Corrections Officers under investigation would be given notice of interrogation and the name of the complainant 24 hours in advance of interrogation. Correctional Officers would not be required to submit to polygraph tests. Correctional Officers would be able to sue the complainant if the complaint is unsuccessful.	Rep. Karen Boback (R)	Introduced and referred to House Labor and Industry 01/9/2018.	Oppose



Legislative Highlights

*Edited by Nicole Sloane, Criminal Defense Attorney &
Dwayne Heckert, Legislative Liaison for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*

Bill & Printer No.	Description	Prime Sponsor	Action	Position
SB 59 PN 0040	Amending Title 61 (Prisons and Parole) of the Pennsylvania Consolidated Statutes, establishing the Prison Industry Enhancement Authority; providing for employment of prisoners by private industry and for subcontracts with correctional agencies; establishing guidelines for prisoner compensation; and providing for location of private sector prison industry.	Sen. Stewart Greenleaf (R)	Voted favorably from Senate Judiciary 01/24/17. Laid on the table 1/31/17.	Support
SB 357 PN 351	Amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) to provide for the offense of aggravated assault by a person in the custody of law enforcement.	Sen. Robert Tomlinson (R)	Referred to Judiciary 2/15/17. First consideration 3/19/18. Second consideration 3/19/18. Re-referred to appropriations 3/27/18. Re-reported as committed 5/22/18.	Support
SB 220 PN 0203	Amends the Administrative Code, in powers and duties of the Department of Corrections, providing for notice of public hearing for State Correctional Institution closure.	Sen. Wayne Fontana (D)	Introduced and referred to Senate Judiciary on 01/27/17	Oppose
SB 897 PN 1199	Amends Title 18 (Crimes and Offenses) and Title 42 (Judiciary and Judicial Procedure) Expands restitution for victims to include government agencies, non-profits and others.	Sen. Patrick Stefano (R)	Referred to Judiciary 11/25/17 Passed over in Senate Judiciary 01/30/18 Reported as committed 4/17/18 ; First consideration, 4/24/18; Third consideration and final passing 5/22/18; Referred to Judiciary 5/23/18.	No position
SB 1070 PN 1707	Creates an Advisory Committee that will approve and finance the use of best practices in probation supervision statewide. Uses evidence-based practices to enable county probation departments to assess the unique risks and needs of each offender on probation.	Sen. Stewart Greenleaf (R)	Passed the Senate unanimously 4/25/18. Third consideration and final passing 4/25/18. Referred to Judiciary 4/30/18.	Support
SB 1072 PN 1650	Improves the flow of information to crime victims by prosecutors and police, as well as improving victim compensation for losses incurred during the crime. Changes the statute of limitations for making a victim compensation claim from 2 to 3 years, and allows for a good faith extension. Decreases the minimum loss for compensation from \$100 to \$50. Grants flexibility in the amount of emergency awards, adds eligibility for recipients of sexual violence and intimidation order, and adds crime scene clean-up for vehicles.	Sen. Stewart Greenleaf (R)	Passed the Senate unanimously 4/25/18. Referred to Judiciary 4/30/18.	No position.



Legislative Highlights

*Edited by Nicole Sloane, Criminal Defense Attorney &
Dwayne Heckert, Legislative Liaison for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*

Bill & Printer No.	Description	Prime Sponsor	Action	Position
SB 922 PN 1762	Nonnarcotic Medication Substance Abuse Treatment Program. Providing court assessments for substance use disorder treatment. Also providing supervisory relationship.	Sen. Wayne Langerholc (R)	Referred to Judiciary 10/11/17. Reported as amended 3/27/18. First consideration 3/27/18. Second consideration 5/21/18. Third consideration and final passage 6/5/18 (unanimous).	Support
SB 961 PN 1585	Increases minimum sentence for homicide by vehicle DUI for repeat DUI offenders. Increases grading of some DUI offenses to felony. Increases for certain offenses with DUI if the driver is not licensed.	Sen. John Rafferty (R)	Passed Senate 4/18/18. In House; referred to Judiciary 4/19/18.	Oppose

Have an inmate who wants to be profiled? Interview them and send in a submission to have their story or profile published in the next edition of *Graterfriends*!

Please be sure to include permission to publish from the author and the person profiled.

Resources

Life Without Parole (LWOP)

Women Lifers Resume Project of PA

PO Box 324
New Hope, PA 18938

Reconstruction, Inc

ATTN Fight for Lifers.
PO Box 7691
Philadelphia, PA 19101
P | 215-223-8180

Juvenile Law Center

The Philadelphia Building
1315 Walnut Street, 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
P | 800-875-8887 (toll free)

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

1319 F Street, NW Suite 303
Washington, DC 20004
P | 202-289-4677

Inmate Authors

If you are a prisoner who has written a book, Prisons Foundation wants to publish it! There is no charge to publish or read your book. Your book will be scanned and published exactly as we receive it. Any language is acceptable. It may contain drawings and photos. For more information, contact:

Prisons Foundation
1600 K St. NW #501
Washington, DC 20006

Prisons Foundation
2512 Virginia Ave NW Suite 58043
Washington, DC 20037

staff@prisonsfoundation.org

Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM)

FAMM, a DC-based sentencing reform organization, is working to fight mandatory minimums in Pennsylvania, but needs case examples to help convince lawmakers to support fair sentencing.

If you are serving a long mandatory sentence for a drug or gun offense, please send 1) your name, 2) your contact information, 3) contact information for an outside friend or family member, 4) a brief description of your offense, and 5) your sentence (example: I received a 10-20-year mandatory minimum), to:

FAMM

Attn: Pennsylvania Stories
1100 H Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

Note: FAMM does not offer direct legal assistance and cannot respond to every letter received, but the organization will contact you by mail if they'd like to learn more about your case.

The Prison Society does not provide compensation for conditions in the Philadelphia Prison System.

It's a rumor.

Contrary to what you may have been told, no compensation is available from the Prison Society—or any other agency—for the individuals who have experienced poor conditions while housed in the Philadelphia Prison System.

For more information on previous class action suits, please contact the organization below.

The Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project
The Cast Iron Building
718 Arch Street, Suite 304 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106

Resources

State Officials

Governor Tom Wolf

Governor's Correspondence Office
508 Main Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
P | 717-787-3391
F | 717-772-8284

Attorney General Josh Shapiro

PO Box 22635
Philadelphia, PA 19110
P | 215-886-7376

Senator _____

Senate PO Box 203 ____*
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Representative _____

PO Box 202 ____*
Harrisburg, PA 17120

*If you know the three-digit district number for your Senator or Representative, add it to the PO Box number. If you do not know, information for Senators is available at www.pasen.gov; information on Representatives is available at www.house.state.pa.us.

*Editor's Note: *The three-digit district numbers are available at: www.PAsen.gov for senators and www.house.state.PA.us for representatives.*

DOC Officials

DOC Secretary John Wetzel

19020 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
P | 717-728-2573
W | www.cor.pa.gov
E | ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov

Prisoner Book Programs (these offer books on requested topics)

Book'Em

PO Box 71357
Pittsburgh, PA 15213

Books to Prisoners

c/o Left Bank Bookstore
92 Pike Street Box A
Seattle, WA 98101

Ithaca College Books Thru Bars

c/o Ithaca College Library
Brooktondale, NY 14817

Books Through Bars

4722 Baltimore Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Books Behind Bars

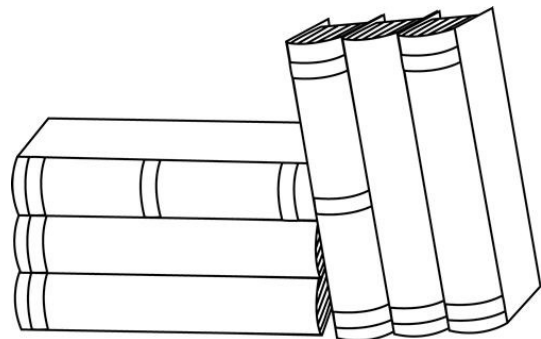
Prison Mindfulness Institute
PO Box 206
South Deerfield, MA 01373

Prisoner Literature Project

c/o Bound Together Books
1369 Haight Street
San Francisco, CA 94117

Prison Book Program

c/o Lucy Parsons Center and Bookstore
1306 Hancock Street, Suite 100
Quincy, MA 02169
Also offers free list of prisoner resources.



Resources

PA Statewide Pro-Bono Services

Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership

436 Seventh Avenue, 400 Koppers Building
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
P | 412-402-6677

Philly VIP

1500 Walnut Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19102
P | 215-523-9550

Refers indigent individuals to volunteer lawyers, paralegals, and others who provide legal services free of charge.

National Pro Bono Services

American Bar Association

W | <http://www.findlegalhelp.org>
Allows site users to search for a list of resources available in their state, including pro bono or inexpensive lawyers, help in dealing with lawyers, legal information, and self-help materials.

University of Virginia School of Law

P | 434-924-3883
E | probono@law.virginia.edu
W | www.law.virginia.edu/html/publicserv/probono.htm
Law students that perform pro-bono work.

Pro Bono Institute

1001 G Street NW, Suite 305 West
Washington, DC 20001
P | 202-729-6699
E | probono@probonoinst.org
W | <http://www.probonoinst.org>
A small non-profit organization at Georgetown University Law Center that administers projects that “support, guide, and inspire legal institutions to enhance access to justice.” They do not provide direct legal services themselves. They do, however, hold an annual seminar that focuses on pro bono legal work and the issues contained therein.

Justice Denied (magazine)

PO Box 66291
Seattle, WA 98166
W | <http://www.justicedenied.org/probono.htm>
They offer a list of attorneys who take cases on a pro bono basis.

Prisoner’s Rights

Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration

c/o Decarcerate PA
PO Box 40764
Philadelphia, PA 19107
P | 267-217- 3372
W | www.decarceratePA.info
E | decarceratePA.pgh@gmail.com (Pittsburgh)
E | CADBIphilly@gmail.com (Philadelphia)
E | decarceratePA@gmail.com

PA Institutional Law Project: Philadelphia

The Cast Iron Building
718 Arch Street, Suite 304 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106
P | 215-925-2966 (Philadelphia)
F | 215-925-5337 (Philadelphia)
P | 570-523-1104 (Lewisburg)
P | 412-434-6004 (Pittsburgh)
W | www.pailp.org
E | alove@pailp.org

Prison Activist Resource Center

PO Box 70447
Oakland, CA 94612
P | 510-893-4648
W | www.prisonactivist.org/resources
E | info@prisonactivist.org

Pennsylvania Legislative Process

Excerpted from Drexel Legal Research Center (drexellaw.libguides.com)

The Pennsylvania state legislature is called the Pennsylvania General Assembly. There are two houses: the House of Representatives and the Senate.

This is a summary overview of the Pennsylvania legislative process:

Step 1: The idea for a bill is conceived and developed by one or more legislators.

Step 2: At the request of the sponsoring legislator(s), the text of the bill is drafted by the Legislative Reference Bureau.

Step 3: Chief Clerk of House (or Senate) assigns a bill number to the bill.

Step 4: Speaker of House (or President Pro Tempore of Senate) assigns the bill to a standing committee.

Step 5: The Committee considers the bill, holds hearings, takes evidence, and decides whether to support the bill.

Step 6: If the Committee supports bill, it is presented to the entire chamber (House or Senate) on three separate days for consideration.

Step 7: If the bill (1) requires an expenditure of funds or (2) results in a loss of revenue for the Commonwealth, the bill must be sent to the Appropriations Committee while it is being considered. The Appropriations Committee provides a fiscal note for each bill it receives that indicates how much the law would cost the Commonwealth if enacted.

Step 8: During its days of consideration, legislators may debate or comment on the bill. These debates and comments are recorded in the

House and Senate Journals.

Step 9: On the third day of consideration, the entire chamber votes on the bill.

Step 10: If the chamber approves the bill, it is sent to the other chamber for approval – Steps 4 through 8 are repeated.

Step 12: Once both chambers have passed identical versions of the bill, it is sent to the Governor.

Step 13: If the Governor signs the bill, it becomes law and is given at “Act” number.

Please remember that any submissions we receive will NOT be published without permission to print and a note stating that you are the original author.

If we receive a submission without either of these two requirements, we will not print it.

Original submissions will not be returned.

Thank you.

2018 Family Transportation Schedule

DATE	DESTINATION
July 2, 2018	Laurel Highlands & Somerset
July 6, 2018	Greene
July 9, 2018	Forest, Frackville & Mahanoy
July 12, 2018	Muncy
July 13, 2018	Albion, Coal Township
July 16, 2018	Huntington & Smithfield
July 20, 2018	Fayette
July 28, 2018	Waymart
August 3, 2018	Greene
August 6, 2018	Laurel Highlands & Somerset
August 9, 2018	Benner & Rockview, Houtzdale
August 10, 2018	Albion
August 13, 2018	Forest
August 17, 2018	Fayette, Pine Grove
August 20, 2018	Cambridge Springs & Mercer
August 27, 2018	Dallas & Retreat
September 7, 2018	Greene
September 10, 2018	Forest, Laurel Highlands & Somerset, Frackville & Mahanoy
September 11, 2018	Muncy
September 14, 2018	Albion, Coal Township
September 17, 2018	Huntington & Smithfield
September 21, 2018	Fayette
September 22, 2018	Waymart

*For more information, contact Emily Cashell at: (215) 564-4775 x 1002
ecashell@prisonsociety.org
or visit www.prisonsociety.org*

Programs

Transportation Services

What prisons do you visit?

We have buses to all Pennsylvania State Prisons except Camp Hill, Chester, Graterford, and Quehanna Boot Camp.

Who can travel?

Anyone can travel as long as he or she is on the inmates visitor list, including infants and children. **Please check with whomever you are visiting prior to purchasing a ticket to ensure that you are on his or her list.** You will not get a refund if you are unable to visit because you are not an approved visitor.

How can I pay for a ticket?

Cash, debit, or credit card in the office. There is a \$2 surcharge per ticket to use a credit card, online or over the phone.

How do I get a seat?

Can I mail in my payment?

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Official Visitors

Volunteer visitors, known as Official Visitors, are trained advocates for the just and humane treatment of prisoners. As part of the Prison Society, Official Visitors address issues and concerns raised by the family, friends, and the inmates themselves in order to ensure a more just and transparent criminal justice system. Vital information and advocacy are enhanced by regular communication and frank discussions with prison administrators.

Future issues of *Graterfriends* will provide information on the history, functions, and successes of the Official Visitor program.

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