

A Publication of The Pennsylvania Prison Society

GRATERFRIENDS

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

Special Report

DOC Mail & Book Policy: Ongoing Impact

Pennsylvania Prison Society Staff

The new policies from the Department of Corrections on personal mail, legal mail, access to books, and visiting continue to adversely affect families and friends with loved ones on the inside as well as the ability of incarcerated people to advocate for themselves, educate themselves, or stay connected to the outside world.

We continue to document these harms and to bring them to the attention of DOC and others. What follows is an update about what is happening and how the Department is responding.

IMPACT: FAMILIES NOT VISITING

As you know, the Prison Society charts 10 buses a month for Philadelphia families to visit loved ones behind bars. For many, these trips are the most meaningful contact they have with sons, fathers, mothers, daughters, siblings, friends, and spouses. The new DOC policies, which have eliminated vending machines from visiting areas and have barred visitors from bringing outside food, have resulted in families with small children, older people, or people with medical conditions to cancel their trips. The number of riders of Society chartered buses fell from 225 passengers in September 2017 to 103 passengers in September 2018. Ridership on Society buses is down 48% percent over this time last year.

The DOC states that these changes to visiting rooms are temporary. But while they

continue, if you have a medical condition, you can write the superintendent of the facility you would like to visit detailing and documenting your medical condition and requesting an exception. Prison Society volunteers can help you with this. If you would like assistance requesting an exception, please contact the Society at info@prisonersociety.org.

IMPACT: LETTERS BEING RETURNED, MISDELIVERED, COPIED ILLEGIBLY

Under the new policies, all personal mail is sent to a copying facility in Florida to be scanned and copied. The photocopy is then sent to the incarcerated mail recipient. During the last week in September the Prison Society had 12 letters from the Society to incarcerated members returned unopened. We have heard from 17 families that their mail has been returned or never delivered. Seven families and one educational provider have contacted us about poor copy quality. In each case, the photocopy the incarcerated person received of the photo, post card, and class assignment has been cut off or so dark it is illegible. Similar occurrences were reported by Bloomberg News: www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-10-08/paper-mail-still-matters-to-people-behind-bars.

According to the DOC, Smart Communications, the organization copying, scanning and distributing the mail, was confused about what to do with official looking mail, such as mail coming from

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the Prison Society. Initially, it was sending it back, thus the 12 letters the Society had returned. This confusion has been clarified, and the problem should not continue. In fact, the Society has not experienced this problem in the last week.

The DOC is aware of the problems with misdelivered mail and poor copy quality. They hope to have this resolved by the end of November and are getting new color copiers to help with the issue.

IMPACT: CONCERN WITH DOC SEARCHING MAIL

We have received several comments from people concerned that with letters being scanned and retained by the DOC, that the DOC will search these documents and otherwise use them against incarcerated people and their families. Previously, personal mail to incarcerated people has been readable by DOC staff, but there was not the ability to retain and word search the mail.

(See Special Report, continued on page 3)

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What a fall.

The lockdown. The new mail, book and visiting policies. The Graterfriends we had ready at the end of September probably made it to you only a few weeks ago. It was held in limbo at the printers as we worked to comply with new and changing DOC policies regarding newsletters.

While the book and subscription policies have essentially been reversed, the chaos around personal mail and photographs continues. The Prison Society and several other organizations on the outside continue to advocate for those of you on the inside impacted by these poorly thought-out and poorly executed changes.

Our partner organizations (the ACLU, Institutional Law Project, Abolitionist Law Center and the Amistad Law Project) have filed suit challenging the new policy of copying and retaining confidential mail from attorneys to incarcerated clients. Decarcerate PA, the Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration and others have organized public protests and kept the issues related to books and mail alive in the press.

And we at the Prison Society are in regular contact with the DOC, documenting ongoing issues, asking for explanations, and working on solutions. We have received 130 specific complaints regarding the new policies. The majority of complaints have been about mail returned, delayed or never delivered. We have also received many complaints regarding poor copy quality and about families having to cancel visits because of the elimination of food from the visiting rooms.

We see firsthand how the visiting room policies are further breaking strained family ties. We charter ten buses a month for families and friends in the Philadelphia area to incarcerated loved ones (see the bus schedule on page 18). Ridership is down more than 30% since these new policies were instituted. Our sister organization in Pittsburgh, Families Outside, has seen a similar decline in their bus ridership.

Please continue to let us know about your experience with these policies. You can write us, email us over the Connect Network at connectnetwork.com, (username: Graterfriends, password: PPSgraterfriends1), have people on the outside call us or use the survey on our website to let us know what's happening. We are here to amplify your voice, to let people on the outside know what's happening on the inside.

There is good news even as we have these new policies to combat. As you'll read, four major criminal justice reforms were signed into law during this session of the Pennsylvania General Assembly. This is major progress!

And we continue to have major progress here at the Society. This past month we welcomed a new editorial intern David Mack, who recently returned to Philadelphia after serving state time (David came home a week after the lockdown). In this issue you will note improvements in format and content, as we try to make Graterfriends more relevant, more useful, and easier to read. We have included a new survey to get your feedback.

Finally, in October, I had the pleasure to join Society Board Member David Davies; State Representative Chris Rabb and his staff;

GRATERFRIENDS

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Graterfriends is a publication from the Pennsylvania Prison Society. The organization was founded in 1787 to promote humane prisons and a rational approach to criminal justice.

We reserve the right to edit submissions. Original submissions will not be returned. We will not print anonymous letters. Allegations of misconduct must be documented and statistics should be supported by sources. All submissions should be no more than 500 words, or two double-spaced pages. Letters more than 200 words, or one double-spaced page will not be published in their entirety and may be shortened for clarity and space.

To protect Graterfriends from copyright infringement, please attach a letter stating, or a note on your submission, that you are the original author of the work submitted for publication. Please also date and sign the declaration.

If you have a question about Graterfriends, contact the editor at EditorGF@PrisonSociety.org.

Micah Mahjoubian, the Policy Director for State Senator Street, Chief Defender Keir Bradford-Grey and Society Official Visitors Liz Geyer and Bobby Harris at the SCI Dallas Lifers Association Banquet (Bobby is the former President of the Dallas Lifers). It was unbelievably moving to see him back for the first time since release). Thank you to the Executive Committee of the Dallas Lifers -- Bryan Hudgins, President; Robert Pezzeca, External Vice President; Jamar Sowell, Internal Vice President; John Bowen, Affairs Coordinator; Paul Schlueter, Secretary; Gary Green, Treasurer – for the exceptional hospitality and for including us in the meaningful program. (See story on page 6)

Until next time,

Claire Shubik-Richards

(Special Report, continued from page 1)

DOC states that mail will be kept for the grievance period. Currently 43 DOC staff members, most of them mailroom workers, have access to all inmate mail. This staff will continue to have access to the electronically saved mail. No additional staff will have access.

DOC further states that “mailroom staff and security have the ability to search mail. All pictures are searched to ensure the content of the photo meets our policy; however, not all mail is read. Only Inmates who are flagged for security supervision will have their correspondence read.”

IMPACT: ACCESS TO BOOKS

The Prison Society Thanks the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections for ending the restrictive book and publication policies of the last two months.

On November 1st, the DOC announced the end to the restriction of book, magazine and newspaper purchasing and distribution that were implemented in September as part of a larger effort to stem the smuggling of narcotics into state prisons.

Incarcerated people, family and friends can now resume ordering books, magazines and newspapers. Rather than sending these items to the facility where the recipient is incarcerated, all books, magazines and newspapers should be sent to:

Security Processing Center
Inmate name, Inmate #
268 Bricker Road
Bellefonte, PA 16823

Please see the DOC press release and policy memo for further details.

While the changes to the book policies is great news, there is still a lot to be fixed with the wider array of changes enacted in September. The ACLU of Pennsylvania has filed a lawsuit focused on the changes to legal mail.

WHY ARE THESE POLICIES NEEDED?

The Department of Corrections states that these new policies are designed to stem a recent wave of dangerous narcotics entering facilities. The DOC has failed to provide systemic evidence to support this claim. Rather, the Department of Corrections cites a number of shocking individual incidents: an example of liquid narcotics entering in a Bible, packets of drugs exchanged during a kiss on a visit. These incidents are troubling and it is a credit to DOC staff for intercepting them. But the Society would hope that the Department could provide real data to justify far reaching policies that have a very real and very adverse impact on incarcerated people and their families, and which will cost Pennsylvania tax payers more than \$14 million dollars. Rather, it appears that state legislature and Governor Wolfe have given the Department carte blanche after doing little more than uttering the words “drugs” and “safety.” We continue to ask the Department to provide systemic data to justify these costly and harmful policies.

The Prison Society will continue to monitor the impact of these policies, bring them to the attention of the Department and the public, and continue to request that the Department justify its actions.

You can help. Please let us know if you experience a problem as a result of these new policies by filling out our online survey here:

<http://ow.ly/KfK430mMNfV>

And thank you for your ongoing support in advocating for the humane treatment of people behind bars in Pennsylvania and their families.

Were you recently transferred or assigned a new state ID number?

Did you just move from SCI Graterford?

Let us know!

The DOC does not alert us when inmates are transferred or assigned a new number.

Please write us so we can update our mailing list and ensure quick delivery of your Graterfriends!

REPORT FROM
MARISSA BLUESTINE
DIRECTOR OF THE PENNSYLVANIA INNOCENCE PROJECT

Pennsylvania Legislature Passes Landmark PCRA Legislation

On October 23, Governor Wolf signed into law legislation making changes to Pennsylvania's Post Conviction Relief Act (PCRA)- the first changes to the law in over a decade. Here are the major changes:

1. People who pleaded guilty will now be able to apply to get DNA testing. Traditionally, Pennsylvania caselaw has prohibited people who pleaded guilty from being able to ask a court for DNA testing. This law changes that.

2. People who have completed their sentences will be able to apply for DNA testing. Under the current law, a person must be incarcerated or on parole or probation to be eligible for post-conviction DNA testing. However, the collateral consequences of a wrongful conviction may continue long after state supervision is over. Innocent people wrongfully convicted may face mandatory sex offender registration, barriers to housing and employment, and social stigma. Now, even if someone has completed their sentence, they will be able to ask a court for DNA testing. Removing the restriction brings Pennsylvania in line with the majority of our sister states.

3. DNA testing will be allowed with newer technology. Mirroring provisions in 41 other states, this law clarifies that even if DNA testing was previously conducted, additional testing may be granted if new technology could produce substantially more accurate and probative results.

4. Any DNA profiles obtained through testing will be able to be uploaded to CODIS. Too many times, we know that just getting a DNA profile that excludes a petitioner may not be enough to justify a new trial. Because of the new law, Section 9543.1 allows courts to order DNA profiles be uploaded into national and state DNA databases to help petitioners establish innocence and identify real perpetrators.

5. The time bar for second or subsequent PCRA petitions has been extended from 60 days to one year. That means that if a convicted individual learns of new evidence to support a PCRA petition, they will now have up to a year to file that petition in court. The Legislature was quite clear that this provision is not retroactive. So if you filed a petition years ago, a court will not accept a petition if you refile now.

6. Another new provision has to do with reaching out to victims or their family members. Anyone doing outreach to a crime victim or witness on behalf of a person convicted of a crime -

whether for investigation or other reasons - will have to identify themselves by name, and on whose behalf they are contacting them.

We encourage anyone who has been denied DNA testing due to a guilty plea - or anyone who has not requested DNA testing because they pleaded guilty - to contact the Pennsylvania Innocence Project. While we cannot guarantee we will take on a case, we will review your letter and respond as quickly as we can.

.....

The Pennsylvania Innocence Project investigates and litigates cases of those convicted of crimes they did not commit. If you are serving a sentence for a crime you did not commit, please contact us to see whether we can assist you. All we need is a letter explaining (1) what you were convicted of, (2) why you say you are innocent, (3) what your sentence was, and (4) where you are in the appeals process. You can write to us at:

The Pennsylvania Innocence Project at Temple University
1515 Market Street, Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19102

We will respond to you as quickly as possible.

~ Marissa Bluestine, Executive Director



REPORT FROM
NICOLE SLOANE, ESQ.
CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Superior Court Affirms Suppression of Evidence Found During Search of Individual Who Had His Hand in His Pocket

In an opinion written by Judge Ransom, the Superior Court affirmed a Blair County suppression court's order suppressing drugs found on Tareek Hemingway. *Commonwealth v. Hemingway*, 2018 PA Super. 183, 2018 Pa.Super. LEXIS 717, 2018 WL 3121458 (Pa. Super. Ct. 2018). The decision informs that on October 8, 2016 at 2:00 am, Altoona Police responded to a noise complaint inside a building located in a high crime area. No additional information was provided about the offensive noise that led to the police call.

Choosing not to go inside the building to investigate the noise complaint, officers instead approached Hemingway and another man who were talking with two women in a car. Hemingway had his hand in his pocket.

One of the officers instructed Hemingway to remove his hand from his pocket and place his hands on his head so that officers could perform a pat-down search.

Rather than comply with police directives, Hemingway fled on foot. After a foot chase, the officers recovered Hemingway's shoe and four bags of cocaine. Hemingway was charged with the criminal offenses of possession with intent to deliver, resisting arrest, escape and disorderly conduct.

While affirming (agreeing with) with the suppression court's decision to suppress the evidence, the Superior Court reminded us about citizens' rights and responsibilities during a "mere encounter" with police. The Superior Court acknowledged that a "mere

encounter" is a "request for information" and while it does not need to be supported by any level of suspicion, the target of the attention is not required to stop and respond.

For police to conduct a pat-down search, police must have reasonable suspicion. In other words, police must have observed unusual and suspicious conduct leading officers to believe that there is criminal activity and that the target of the attention may be armed and dangerous. *Hemingway*, 2018 PA Super. 183, *6.

In this case, Hemingway already had his hand in his pocket and was simply talking to an occupant of a car. Importantly, the officer did not ask Hemingway any questions including whether he was armed. Instead, the interaction began when an officer commanded Hemingway to take his hand out of his pocket. As a result, the Superior Court found that the initial interaction between police and Hemingway was an investigative detention and therefore must be (but was not) supported by reasonable suspicion to be lawful.

The Superior Court held that officers did not have reasonable suspicion to detain Hemingway. The officer's order for Hemingway to remove his hand was found to be "improper." *Id.* Because police initiated the interaction without reasonable suspicion, anything that happened after that (including the fact that Hemingway ran) is of no consequence. The Court found that the "critical point" in the interaction between Hemingway and the officers was the officer's "improper command." *Id.* Therefore, the Superior Court agreed with the lower court's order suppressing the contraband.

Note about Legislative Highlights:

The Legislative Highlights section will return in the next issue of Graterfriends. Every two years, the slate is wiped clean until the next legislative session is opened. We expect that some (possibly many) of the bills pending in the last session will be re-introduced in the next few weeks or months, but under different numbers, and with possible changes to sponsors and text.

ADVOCATES

Support Senate Bill #293: Ending Life Without Parole

Tyreem Rivers, DK-2865, SCI Dallas

In light of the Senate Judiciary Committee's June 4th decision to allow SB 293 to move forward through the senate, we, the advocates of criminal justice reform, have decided to relaunch our public petition in support of Senator Daylin Leach's call to abolish Pennsylvania's brutal LWOP prison sentences under the current second degree felony murder law.

With respect to the 1100 men and women currently serving life without parole (for second degree "felony" murder), we are now seeking 2200 public signatures online in support of SB 293! These signatures will be used to further demonstrate to all Pennsylvania legislators that Senator Leach's SB 293 needs to be passed into law as a primary means of ending LWOP under the current second degree "felony" law!

We are now calling upon friends, friends of friends, and family members of those currently serving LWOP under Second Degree to please help by signing our petition at change.org!

Historic Legislative Policy Hearing at SCI Dallas

Robert Pezzeca, DX-1158, SCI Dallas

I want to update every PA lifer on the policy hearing held at SCI Dallas on August 22nd. Five members of the L.I.F.E. Association executive board testified in support of parole for lifers, criminal justice reform and prison reform. Five of us who are LIFE executive board members were selected by the PA Legislative Black Caucus to testify in front of fifteen state representatives, three state senators, eleven legislators' staff members, and six outside activists/advocates.

This policy hearing was a tremendous success. We testified and discussed the fact that lifers, senior lifers, men and women serving virtual life sentences are dying in prison. Representative Harris and Senator Street asked many questions about the commutation process, access to which deserving lifers are routinely denied. Senators Boscola and Blake pledged their support for SB 942 and Senator Street announced that he now has the votes to get this bill out of the judiciary committee and onto the floor of the senate. The L.I.F.E. Association here at Dallas wishes to thank everyone who was involved in helping to make this hearing possible.

Sadly, our membership was not allowed to attend this historic event but we hope to have them here in the future. Some of the attendees said that they had never before been invited to a prison so we look to all the lifers in Pennsylvania to invite legislators, legislative staff, and activists to such hearings.

The door is wide open.

Wiccan Discrimination at SCI Huntingdon

Harold Sanford Carter III, MR-4401, SCI Huntingdon

I have been a practitioner of Wicca for 20 years. Since my incarceration, I have been trying to request Wiccan services, literature and access to religious items. I am 13 months into my sentence and every request and grievance has been denied.

Islamic, Buddhist and Native American religious groups are allowed to meet in study groups in the chapel area. These particular groups do not have to have an outside faith leader to function. After seven months of litigation, I am told I am not allowed to have a study group until I find an outside faith representative. I am at the final stages of grievances and waiting on my final review from the central office. At every step in the grievance process, the prison administration had asked for extensions and the process has taken about seven months. Every time I hear on the PA system that other groups get to meet and practice their faith, I feel oppressed and very upset.

I have imagery sent to me from friends and family of my Gods and Goddesses. They are confiscated with no reason given other than that they are witchcraft card photocopies. In the PA DOC, Wicca is a recognized religion. If I have the right and freedom to practice my religion, why is there so much hardship? My handwritten religious journal was recently confiscated from me by security. It was returned three weeks later to my amazement. Still, for those three weeks I had no access to my prayers, my gods, my rituals of protection, nor my Enochian material to talk to my angels.

When I am interviewed for religious accommodations, I sit down with my chaplain one-on-one. Because of this, there is a lot of he said/she said and miscommunications. I asked for a witness, note taker, or audio taping to keep the chaplaincy accountable. Of course, I was denied. When I filed a grievance and refused the interview process as I was told to do so, my legal clergy denied every religious accommodation I have ever filed. I have been told to refile all my accommodations. This process takes about three and a half months. Candles, salt, incense, all the tools that make me a Wiccan have been denied. I sincerely believe my religious belief system is under fire.

I hope that other tree-hugging Pagans read this and keep up the fight for Wiccan religious rights in the PA DOC. File your religious accommodations. File your grievances. Write letters to advocacy groups and do not give up.

General Labor Pool is a General Joke
Augustus Simmons Enoch, KL-2144, SCI Forest

Since 2009, I've watched phone calls, cable, postage, food and hygienics and medical care costs increase over the years. What has remained the same without failure is the inmate general labor pool also known as GLP. It's impossible for one person to thrive on a \$10, or \$8 GLP per month. It's like giving someone on the streets a hundred dollars and wishing them the best of luck. We all know that, without the right support, the probability of failure is alarming.

Now don't get me wrong, there are jobs and classes that will help increase your monthly income per month but even that is not enough to maintain one human being within a prison setting.

We must unite and write our legislatures, pushing for

1. A GLP that pays for all cable for all inmates, or a yearly payment;
2. An increase in prisoner salaries so we can afford to pay for the things we are told we can purchase and create an avenue so prisoners can save and manage funds for when they return to society; and
3. Increase the GLP to make purchases more affordable and lift the burden from our family and friends.

The Department of Corrections continues to utilize our funds solely to benefit administration and staff but refuses to utilize the funds for prison rehabilitation and reentry. We need to put Mr. John Wetzel under the spotlight, so the right eyes and ears can ask him, 'why?'

Enough is Enough Already!
Casey Lee Hoey, FH-5454, SCI Houtzdale

I can confirm the information offered by Eli Rosa (KZ-2618, SCI Houtzdale) in the July 2018 issue of Graterfriends: there are 20 to 30 of us stuck in the RHU on AC status for over five months! It is not just due to counselors delaying paperwork, it is mainly because we are the ones chosen by management to grind up in retaliation for complaints and grievances. The Office of Population Management plays a role in it too, at least by going quietly along with it and doing plenty on their own to hold up transfers. It has been going on for decades, as they continue moving convicts to the types of jails that retaliate against prisoners. It has been called the Triangle of Hell: Greene, Fayette and Forest.

Out of all the agencies and places I have contacted, only the PA Prison Society and their Director of Official Visitors, John Hargreaves, have responded and have called prison officials on our behalf. Send PPS a letter that explains your situation and ask them to forward it to John Hargreaves. I hope that everyone will send their story to PPS so that we can drastically decrease these injustices.

Wondering about the status of a submission?



We think it is important for you to know that, because we receive so many submissions, we are unable to print every article.

You may receive a postcard like the one above in the mail as a thank you for your submission with either confirmation that it has been considered for publication or a reason for denial.

If we believe that the issue presented in a submission is of serious concern, your letter may be forwarded to an official visitor or relevant personnel for further inquiry.

Want to subscribe to Graterfriends?

See the order form on page 22.

OUR VOICES

Time Keeps Dragging On *David Lusik, CQ-3760, Albion*

Does anybody recall “Folsom Prison Blues” by the late Johnny Cash, who had done a stint in California’s legendary Folsom State Prison. One of the lines in the song goes, “I’m stuck in Folsom Prison and time keeps dragging on.”

I have been obsessed with the concept of time behind bars and its positive - or more likely negative - effects on the human psyche. Because we are doing time under an indeterminate sentence - which means serving a minimum and maximum sentence - time is often used as a weapon by parole boards and administrators. The initial intent of the parole system was to base parole decisions on the progress of the inmate, i.e., their good behavior and willingness to change. However, staff members often use the parole and review hearings to manipulate the prisoner into passivity and obedience to the regime.

When an inmate gets his hearing, his time acquires a new positive meaning. However, if the date to be released is denied, time perspectives are shattered. The inmate has to restructure his temporal strategies, to change his expectations of the future, and to employ further frustrating efforts to discover his fate. (See research by Marty Miller on the temporal strategies used by prisoners serving indeterminate sentences in California.) Inmates know what I am talking about; when parole gets denied, home plans must be resubmitted, family and friends start to give up hope.

In the words of immortal Johnny Cash, “When I hear that lonesome whistle, I just hang my head and cry.”

When is Enough Sufficient? *D. Ameen McKelvie, AF-5156, SCI Benner*

There are some exceptional men and women who have been residing in prisons for decades. Many were incarcerated during their early years, being callow, immature and naïve. They were forced to germinate in a precarious prison environment that was not only novel to them, but also dreadful and stressful. Unfortunately, some of them came from broken homes where there was no family structure or rapport in the household.

There are two African proverbs: “If children are not taught by their parents, they will be taught by the world,” and, “Knowledge is every child’s birthright. It takes a whole village to educate a child.” Some of us can remember those days when neighbors would look after each other’s children while the parents were at work or on an errand. Communities then functioned as a family or a village, showing love and concern for one another, and encouraging each other’s children to prosper. What happened to that tradition? How did we allow it to slip away?

Who will benefit from adolescents spending their entire lives in

prison due to a mischievous act that led to wrongful conviction? Do you believe a person deserves a second chance? Or are we living in a heartless society full of callous individuals? Forgiveness means a change of heart, letting it go, moving on, and not letting yourself stagnate. Progress is impossible without change, and those who won’t change their opinions can neither change themselves nor others. It is your delusion if you believe people can’t change.

I think of our beloved Sister Sharon “Peachie” Wiggins who was arrested as a juvenile and received a capital sentence with was eventually changed to life without parole. She became a paragon amongst her peers but she still was denied a second chance to demonstrate her worth to society. How many more deserving individuals will have to die in prison before things change?

Part of the Solution and Not the Problem *Claude Cuyjet, MX-5448, SCI Albion*

To err is human, to forgive, divine. Many people believe in prisons because they believe that people who do bad things should be punished. However, most prisons were not meant for punishment only. That’s why they’re called correctional institutions. People who are incarcerated need help in seeing the error of their ways. Many are mentally ill people who belong in state hospitals that no longer exist. Many prisons don’t require that all of their residents undergo mental health treatment, yet many inmates suffer from emotional problems that don’t magically disappear by keeping them behind bars for an extended period of time.

It’s no coincidence that very few rich people end up in prison. They can afford high-priced lawyers and high-priced psychiatrists to prevent them from having to do time. Our society always looks to blame someone or something when bad things happen. I submit that we need preemptive and proactive solutions to the criminal justice system’s problems. Many people that society labels as bad or evil are in fact sick. If a young person kills out of rage, there’s something wrong with that child and they should be treated as a child by people who can show them love as well as discipline. The overwhelming majority of men and women in prison are there directly or indirectly due to drugs and alcohol, yet how much money is spent treating the addiction?

Some of the money that is generated from prisons should be directed towards making prisons places where people who have made poor decisions can learn to change. The bail system is designed to generate lots of revenue, but it adversely affects the poor.

There are many different options for prison reform, but the biggest reform has to start in the minds and hearts of the public. Criminals are people who, for one reason or another, have made poor choices. Many of us know what it’s like to make mistakes and what it’s like to be forgiven and given another chance. Why can’t we extend the same spirit of forgiveness to the rest of society? Jesus said that the Good Shepherd will rejoice more over the one lost sheep that was found than over the remaining ninety-nine who never strayed.

LITERARY CORNER

Dedicated To All Prison Volunteers *John Griffin, Prison Literacy Project*

What does it mean to really care,
to endear,
and to share?
Inquire of those who've had to bear
all that seems patently unfair.
If they can compare
what is truly sincere,
about transmitted thoughts meant to prepare
minds that are normally elsewhere.
With blank faces of men and women who stare
into bright unseen lights, not there.
How pleasant the cheer,
felt with the coming of our volunteer.
Along with a thousand little courtesies to spare,
they bring a quiet compensation, so rare.

Does It Really Work? *Nahbeel Richardson, JS-0382, SCI Frackville*

Tossed are the keys
To freedom, I no longer possess
Forcing me, to take hold
A long look, at my reflection
And during my inspection
Do I detect, not only
The regrets of my misgivings
But, the product of my surroundings
Confounded, by the blatant
Comfortability of my counterparts
Do I seek to understand
Why this is?

It is only natural, I believe
To make peace, feel more at ease
In a place, where punishment
Is the main goal
Yet, from the depths of my soul
Do I wonder, if this place and places
Which holds millions
Really serves its purpose?

Know an inmate who wants to be profiled?

*Interview them and send in a submission to have their
story published in the next edition of Graterfriends.*

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

Letter Home

Ravetta Calvin-Stone, OY-7584, SCI Cambridge Springs

I looked for you
In this place
Closed my eyes
I'm trying to picture your face
It's getting harder now
Just to see past the time
While images of yesterday
Race through my mind
I reach for your hand
It's invisible to me now
Yet, I still find myself
Holding on somehow
I wanna cry sometimes
But, I can't let them see
That behind my smile
The fracture still bleeds
The wound is gaping
It's a hole that won't close
I think it's caused by secrets
Nobody knows
The past, the present
Whatever's to come
The memories I hold
Of all the shit that I've done
Who I hope to be
The girl I've left behind
The little one inside of me
I fear I'll never find
For Lord knows I need a savior
To come into my heart
Maybe He can save me
From myself
Before I tear me apart
Because the devil rages in my
veins
He stomps around in my head
That motherfucker won't be
happy
Until he sees me dead
But, I think of you

When my mind is troubled
And my heart starts to feel
colder
Scared to death
I'll still be this way
Once my children get older
See, in here there is no light
Just flickers of a flame
And I find myself wondering
If I too am just the same
When I really wanted
So much more
I really wanted to live
I just couldn't figure out
If I had anything left to give
You once said I was strong
Like that's the easiest thing to do
Did you ever stop and realize
I always got my strength from
you
I had no right to do that
Place all of my hopes at your feet
But, you were my everything
You're what made me feel
complete
And, I know I needed fixin'
I always felt like damaged goods
But, I wanted you to do
All the things I knew I should
So, here I sit still broken
Wishing I was with you
Wondering if we'll ever get
around
To doing what we never got to
do
It doesn't matter about before
Please ignore the hate mail I sent
Because, when I said I love you
Those were the words I meant.

A Tree's Work

Ellis Ramos, FB-2826, SCI Forest

The tree's summoned by the wind
Wind that dictates it's elegant dance
As the leaves fall, tumbling down
I wonder
Which side will inherit the sun and
All it's warmth until there is but
Earth left to provide the next tree
A place to grow
The wind will decide the fate of countless trees and
They in turn will dance and give the wind
This wonderful duty for
Centuries past and generations to come.

PROFILES

A Juvenile Lifer on Reentry

By Maria Goellner, Esq., Erie county public defender



Mr. Antonio H, formerly of SCI Huntingdon, was released in May 2018 at age 41 after 26½ years. He is living with family in his hometown of Erie, PA. His primary means of transportation are bicycle and rides, though he is studying for his license and saving for a car.

On what he could have done differently while incarcerated to better prepare for release: Sleep less, study more. Get as much education as possible, especially certificates and credits that are translatable. Learn to network. Practice soft skills – smiling, shaking hands, laughing at jokes that aren't funny to be polite, and letting go of needing to get the last word in.

On the hardest parts of reentry: Accepting the fact that I deserve to be out here. Navigating the complacency of other people. Pacing myself. Accepting that my vision of success can't happen overnight.

On employment: Adjust to the reality that there are jobs available to individuals with criminal records. I was released with the notion that there weren't. I expected the door to be slammed and instead I was offered a job at my first interview. I am now working for a dry cleaner and helping others with job skills. Get jobs in prison that require you to stand on your feet for a long time (many jobs out here are 12 hours a day and our competition is averse to hard physical work!). Don't sit a lot.

Avoiding negative influences: Wear a suit or professional clothing everywhere. Don't try to be "the man." Dressing up removes others' stereotypes of you. It helps avoid police contact. Have people you trust quietly signal who is a negative influence – even family members or old friends. Talk about things that make these negative people uncomfortable (algebra, why the N word is not ok, anything) so that they choose not to be around you. Stay low-key. Control your libido and be respectful.

Disappointment and surprises: Sometimes people who care about you want you to fail; not because they think you're garbage, but so they don't feel bad about not chasing their own dreams. There are people you would never have guessed who want you to succeed. But, you must work hard and show that you're committed before they come forward. Don't always accept money, goods, or things people offer you. Some people offer to be polite and don't really want you to accept; others keep score. Also, there are many more people with convictions and in positions of influence than you know. They'll quietly come out of the woodwork.

The best parts: The ability to physically touch loved ones. Not having to scrutinize people that love you or figure out angles. Relaxing.

Remember: Don't be lulled into complacency by the honeymoon phase. Pursue success and independence. Prison is one choice away. We represent everyone we've left behind, even those we don't like. How we behave out here affects others' potential release; their ability to be trusted by employers, women, children, and others. My promise to the other lifers is that those who are released after me will have an easier time than I did. I want my example to open doors.

Joseph Heckel

Bennie Brimage, AP-4841, SCI Mercer



Last June, a long-time prisoner advocate named Joseph Heckel passed away at age 92, a month after a family reunion and a week after his 67th anniversary. I have been in regular contact with him for forty years.

Joe was a convener for the Prison Society, leading a chapter of Official Visitors in the Pittsburgh area as well as founding Fight for Lifers

West and Fight for Juvenile Lifers West. He traveled all over the state offering assistance to anyone that he could, even using his own vehicle to transport family members to rallies for inmates. He spent his own money helping juvenile lifers with attorney consultations, newsletters, and transportation so their families could visit them when he was unable to.

Joe was one of the sailors who entered the death camp known to the world as "Auschwitz." His experience there led him to become a minister after the war and he spent his life fighting injustice wherever it was found. He received an engineering degree in 1949, married in 1951, and graduated from Western Theological Seminary in 1952. He served as a Presbyterian pastor at three churches in Pennsylvania and one in Alaska. In 1971, he earned a Master of Education degree and became a vocational counselor in several high schools.

He and his wife Joan worked passionately for Jubilee Partners in Georgia, a non-denominational, ecumenical community of Christians and seekers who provide ministry to refugees, inmates, and others. They were involved in mission work in Cuba and Central America, and traveled to Iraq to act as "human shields" to slow the decision to declare war.

He enjoyed gardening with his wife, in their own huge gardens and in the community garden in Bloomfield. He nurtured growth in these gardens, as well as in people while serving as a pastor, counselor, advocate, and friend. He shared the Word and love of God. Joe came to know thousands of us and now they need to know of his passing. We have lost another one of our champions.

Sonny Baker

Heather Lavelle, OK-8736, SCI Muncy

Brenda “Sonny” Baker was set free on July 11th, 2018 to go to her eternal home with God. Sonny died peacefully. She died like she lived – with dignity and on her own terms. I met Sonny when I came to SCI Muncy in 2006. My whole life had been shattered and she helped me pick up the pieces. She was a great observer of people and of life and a great predictor of human behavior. She gave me an education on things I would need to know about living in prison if I was going to survive this life sentence. Sonny told me to always be aware of my surroundings and to let people show me who they are, not to take anything at face value.

Our friendship stood the test of time, which can be difficult here. But through it all we knew we had each other’s backs. I refer to Sonny as my second mother. She took care of me when my own mother couldn’t. She taught me how to be strong when I didn’t think I had any strength left, courageous in the face of the scariest thing I ever faced, loving when surrounded by hate, holding my head high when the weight of the world wants to pull it down, staying true to my beliefs while the wind blows back and forth. Not many people got to know the real Sonny Baker, a woman of depth and character. Thank you, Sonny, for letting me in. I’m a better woman for having known you. Rest in peace my dear sister.

Down to One

Terri Harper, OB-7637, SCI Muncy

Who’s counting the lives lost inside more than those of us left behind? Maybe only family and loved ones care to even consider the question, and that’s fine, because it makes what I am about to say all the more important.

Brenda “Uncle Sonny” Baker passed away after pain and anguish rendered her speechless but not unaware. A handful of us were blessed to be able to properly say goodbye, but two special people she loved “nursed” her to the end. To them I say, “thank you Pie and Code for your love for Sonny.”

Sonny was one of three oldheads that made it a point to check my attitude and behavior early in my sentence. At first, I scoffed at her words, but her facial expressions and overall demeanor got into my head and won me over. We subsequently got close over food and quilting (she was a pro with patterns, cutting and construction), and then nurtured our friendship by sharing. “Unc,” as she was called by many, didn’t like everybody, but she didn’t play about those she loved, and I’m grateful to be the latter. She wasn’t free from shortcomings, but they were overshadowed by her wisdom and realness. The tactics she employed to keep herself safe and relatively drama-free made me appreciate her more as a human being, mentor and friend. I’m not the only one who lost her, but those who never knew her really lost out!

Thank you God for her life, the guidance she gave us, her style, her humor, and the peace you’ve now given Uncle Sonny. “My Sonny,” I will miss you!

REPORTS FROM THE INSIDE

–A Small Victory: Thomas A. O’Neil (JX-9230, SCI Frackville) updates us on his story: “In the May issue of Graterfriends I told my story of an off-duty correctional officer using his power to give me an assaultive behavior violation. I decided to stand my ground and fight this violation by having a full-panel violation hearing. I did this because I truly did not threaten this man as he claimed I did.

After waiting seven months to face my accuser, I had my hearing. The hearing lasted over an hour and, at times, was intense and emotional. I felt as if things went well but never thought the parole panel would believe me over a Pennsylvania state correctional officer.

Three and a half weeks after the hearing I received my board action and to my surprise, the assaultive behavior violation was dismissed! The parole panel actually believed me over the CO. I was still given a year hit for being in an establishment that serves alcohol, as I admitted, but to me this was a victory.

Many people, including my lawyer, told me that there was a minimal chance that I’d get the violation dropped. But because I did not commit it, I stayed my ground and fought it and won. This just goes to show you that nothing is impossible and if you feel that you are right you need to stand your ground and fight for justice.”

Back Pay: Scott Black (LK-6465, SCI Greene) updates us on pay for cleanups: “We finally got all of the back pay owed for blood and body fluid cleanups. It took a lot of pressure from the medical department supervisors to get this done.

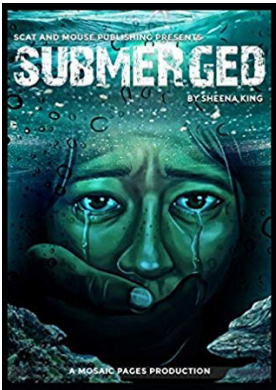
Now the deputy superintendent has done away with the extra pay for cleanups. As a medical janitor, I am exposed to more cleanups than anyone else. I am already making top pay at \$.42 an hour, eight hours a day, five days a week, for general cleaning, floors, bathrooms etc. Now if a bodily fluid incident happens, we have to clean it up as part of the job, with no extra pay. I think this is outrageous.

Management’s solution to this is to hire more janitors. Plus, all bodily fluid cleanup crew members got a raise up to the top pay of \$.42 per hour for maybe doing one cleanup a month. So, the prison is now spending more money than before. None of this makes sense to me.”

BOOKCASE

Book Review: Submerged

Heather Lavelle, OK8736, SCI Muncy



Sheena King's memoir, *Submerged*, is an inspirational account of a woman who has overcome the extreme adversity of childhood sexual abuse in the most inhospitable of environments, a maximum-security women's prison. It's the story of the author's journey from abuse and incarceration to the transcendence of her circumstances through therapy and recovery. Heartbreaking at times, this story of sexual abuse and its consequences is also a story of love, mercy and an

unconquerable soul.

Gripping from the start, the book begins with the author's powerful reflections about her mother, expressing the anguish of a woman whose childhood was a living hell. Ms. King captures the disillusionment and sadness that come from a life where Mom didn't protect, couldn't love enough. She beautifully describes her movement from the uneasiness of wanting a capable, caring mother to realizing that her mother, with limited capabilities, did the best she could.

Ms. King portrays her abuse from the child's perspective, removing any clinical safety barriers for the reader. Easily moving from the perspective of adult to child, she poignantly describes her feelings of betrayal, abandonment and loss – the loss of childhood's innocence, the progression of abuse, the building of a misguided trust, the pact of secrecy between abuser and victim, the isolation that leads to a deep longing and loneliness. Interspersed with journal entries and poetry by the author and other sex abuse survivors, the honesty portrayed in these pages lays bare the horrors of childhood sexual trauma. The poetry is introspective and at times disturbing in its frankness about topics that have long been considered taboo.

In *Submerged's* pages we see that the trauma of childhood exists in the adult. With treatment, that trauma can be used to help others. We travel with the author as she learns to break her patterns of self-destructive behavior, help other women to recover, and become a good mother, all while navigating a life sentence.

This book is a must-read for everyone, particularly those working in the criminal justice and mental health fields, survivors of abuse, and anyone who loves someone who has been a victim of abuse. For those who have been victims of sexual abuse, it is a call to stop living in the shadows and know that there is help and hope.

Submerged shows us all that a willingness to heal old wounds, with support and guidance, can liberate us from the oppression of

our deepest hurts. Once you start reading *Submerged*, you won't be able to put it down. The honesty of its poetry and prose will become a part of the fabric of your soul.

Submerged by Sheena Monique King is available on Amazon.com for \$9.99.

Before Orange was the New Black

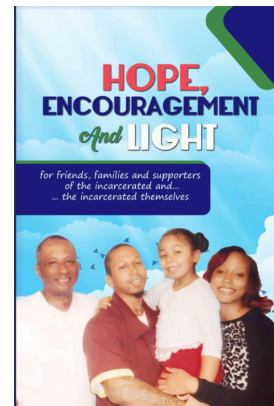
Derrick Gibson, JP-2190, SCI Retreat



Derrick Gibson announced that his book, *Before Orange was the New Black*, is now available at Amazon.com (Kindle \$3.99 and Paperback \$15.00). He describes a prison riot in central Pennsylvania in 1989 that was so devastating that it caused millions of dollars in damages to the prison complex. It was humiliating and embarrassing for prison officials. The officials went out of their way to keep this incident out of the mainstream news; most inmates in the same county prison system had/have not heard about the 1989 riot. To this day, talking about this riot is taboo in prison. The author's writing skills and storytelling skills are sure to impress. This book will peak your interest, captivate, humor and even anger you.

Hope, Encouragement, and Light

Marquis Burnett, Ex-Inmate Author



Incarceration is an epidemic and is ruining our people which is greatly impacting our communities. As a man who has served a decade in prison I walk you through what the change process looks like for an incarcerated individual. An incarcerated individual is more than just a number and a means to a profit. Embarking in to this new world where your freedom, ideals and voice is stripped of you it is essential to utilize this time to the best of your advantage. This guide will "help you get your mind right and not return to prison". I also touch on the value that friends, families and supporters bring to the table. If your loved one needs hope and encouragement then please send this to them.

Hope, Encouragement and Light by Marquis Burnett is available on Amazon.com in paperback for \$15.00.

PENNSYLVANIA JUDICIARY COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Majority = Republicans, Minority = Democrats.

Senator Daylin Leach

Minority Chairman - Senate Judiciary

**PO Box 203 017
P: 717-787-5544**

- Represents 17th Senate District- Delaware (part), Montgomery (part).
- First elected in 2008
- Voted for Clean Slate legislation (HB 1419).
- Voted for Senator Greenleaf's package of legislation enacting items from the work of the Justice Reinvestment Working Group (SB 1070-1072).
- Co-sponsored SB 63 which adds a provision relating to drug dealing that gives the sentencing judge discretion to impose a lesser sentence than the mandatory minimum.
- Co-sponsored SB 942 which permits an individual sentenced to life imprisonment under the laws of this Commonwealth to be considered for parole after spending at least 15 years in prison. Senator Street parole bill.
- Co-sponsored SB 1043 which clarifies that criminal records may be used to justify an adverse employment decision against current employees only if the criminal records are relevant to the employee's suitability for the particular position.
- Co-sponsored SB 1070-1072, Legislative package enacting legislation from the Justice Reinvestment Working Group.



Representative Timothy Briggs

Minority Chairman - House Judiciary

**PO Box 202 149
P: 717-705-7011**

- Represents 149th Legislative District- Montgomery County.
- First elected in 2008.
- Voted for Clean Slate legislation (HB 1419).
- Voted against Rep. Stephens (R) bill reinstating mandatory minimums (HB 741).
- Voted against Rep. Deluca (D) bill adding mandatory sentence of five years upon conviction of a violent crime with a firearm consecutively to any other sentence imposed by court (HB 348).
- Co-sponsored HB 135 which eliminates the sentence of life imprisonment without parole and grants the board the ability to grant parole after fifteen years, in the case of an inmate sentenced to life imprisonment.
- Co-sponsored HB 1581, HB 2214 and HB 2307 which put certain situational requirements on the use of solitary confinement.
- Co-sponsored HB 1802 which further provides eligibility for relief and for jurisdiction and proceedings in post trial matters.



Senator Lisa Baker

Majority Chairman - Senate Judiciary

**PO Box 203 020
P: 717-787-7428**

- Represents 20th Senate District- Luzerne (part), Pike, Susquehanna (part), Wayne and Wyoming Counties.
- First elected in 2006.
- Voted for Clean Slate legislation (HB 1419).
- Voted for package of legislation strengthening protections for victims of crime in 2018.
- From 2014—"Kevin's Law." Increased mandatory minimum sentence for drivers who fatally hit an individual and then flee the scene. Sen. Baker was a co-sponsor of this law. (SB 1312).
- Voted for and co-sponsored SB 748, which became law. Precludes a governor from closing a prison — or a state police barracks — without first conducting a year-long public study and a hearing schedule. Became law. Note: Most of the co-sponsors faced the prospect of a prison closure in their communities when Wolf and Wetzel announced plans to close two institutions in 2017.



Representative Rob Kauffman

Majority Chairman - House Judiciary

**PO Box 202 089
P: 717-705-2004**

- Represents 89th Legislative District- Franklin County.
- First elected in 2004.
- Voted for Clean Slate legislation (HB 1419).
- Voted for Rep. Stephens (R) bill reinstating mandatory minimums (HB 741).
- Voted for Rep. Deluca (D) bill adding mandatory sentence of five years upon conviction of a violent crime with a firearm consecutively to any other sentence imposed by court (HB 348).
- Co-sponsored HB 129 which amends the Public Welfare Code to prohibit benefits eligibility for individuals convicted of drug distribution.
- Co-sponsored HB 565 which amends Title 42 to add knowingly desecrating or mutilating a corpse to aggravating circumstances under sentencing procedures for murder of the first degree.
- Co-sponsored HB 1125 which amends Title 42, in sentencing, further providing for life imprisonment for homicide by including third degree murder or voluntary manslaughter of an unborn child.



CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM INITIATIVES

These non-profits are working on behalf of prisoners towards criminal justice reform.

From the Equal Justice Initiative

More than 2.2 million Americans are imprisoned, most serving excessively long sentences that advance no public safety purpose and come at great expense to taxpayers. The politics of fear and anger in the 1980s and 1990s led to so-called “tough on crime” sentencing policies that are now being recognized as harsh, counter-productive, discriminatory, and fiscally irresponsible.

EJI challenges excessive sentences and advocates for sentencing reform, including abolishing the death penalty, restricting the use of life-without-parole sentences, abolishing Truth-in-Sentencing and Three Strikes laws, encouraging parole boards to release people, eliminating mandatory minimum sentences and habitual offender statutes, and allowing the elderly prison population to return home.

The Equal Justice Initiative is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society. For more information, see <https://eji.org>. If you are seeking legal assistance, you can email us at intake@eji.org or address a letter to the attention of the Intake Department at EJI, 122 Commerce Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104 (Phone: 334-269-1803). We receive many requests for assistance and we regret that we have limited resources and are unable to assist in most cases. Please do not send legal materials relating to your case, as those documents will not be maintained.

From The ACLU of Pennsylvania

[We] released a new report [on September 5, 2018] that outlines how Pennsylvania can cut incarceration in half by pursuing reforms to the commonwealth’s drug sentencing laws. The report also includes recommendations to reform the laws that in recent years have led to Pennsylvania having the third-highest per capita rate in the nation of people on parole, probation, or other community supervision “From systemic racial disparities to sentencing that is heavily tilted towards retribution instead of restorative justice, to harsh parole and probation rules that set up too many of those attempting successful reentry for failure, it’s clear that we need deep and meaningful reform in Pennsylvania. We’ll look to the legislature, the courts, district attorneys, and voters to fuel this reform.”

The report is a part of the ACLU’s Smart Justice 50-State Blueprints project, a comprehensive, state-by-state analysis of how states can transform their criminal justice system and cut incarceration in half....[It] is the first-ever analysis of its kind and will serve as a tool for activists, advocates, and policymakers to push

for transformational change to the criminal justice system. They are the result of a multi-year partnership between the ACLU, its state affiliates, and the Urban Institute to develop actionable policy options for each state that capture the nuance of local laws and sentencing practices.

Key findings from the Pennsylvania blueprint include the deep racial disparities in the criminal justice system in which Black people make up 47 percent of the prison population but only 10 percent of the total adult state population and that Pennsylvania has the second largest population of people serving life without parole in the country, as of 2012. For more information see: www.aclu.org/issues/smart-justice or contact the ACLU of Pennsylvania at PO Box 60173, Philadelphia, PA 19102 or info@aclupa.org or 215-592-1513.

From the Abolitionist Law Center September 19, 2018

Death-By-Incarceration is more than a failed policy or a well-meaning yet excessive response to violence. Instead, DBI is central to the system of mass incarceration in Pennsylvania; a material, institutional, and ideological pillar of a regime of state violence that systematically targets the poor and communities of color. DBI sentencing exemplifies the logic of fear, vengeance, and social death that underlie and sustain the institutions of policing and prisons in this country.

The final section of this report discusses a multi-strategy, movement-building approach to ending DBI sentences and establishing parole eligibility for all in Pennsylvania that includes legislation, litigation, commutation reform, and organizing. Identical legislation introduced by State Representative Jason Dawkins (HB 135) and State Senator Sharif Street (SB 942) would end life-without-parole in Pennsylvania by establishing parole eligibility for all those serving DBI after 15 years of incarceration. While this legislation is the optimal approach to ending DBI sentences in Pennsylvania, its passage will take years of patient, methodical, and strategic organizing.

The situation of permanent imprisonment for more than 5,300 people in Pennsylvania is untenable. It does not have to be this way. In the vast majority of the world, it is not. Even within the U.S., Pennsylvania is an outlier, both in terms of the absolute numbers of incarcerated people serving DBI sentences and the proportion of people in state custody serving DBI sentences.

The consequences of DBI sentencing extend far beyond the prison walls. The total absence of redemptive opportunity hardens punitive attitudes in society by legitimating the most destructive and divisive impulses within people: fear, vengeance, racism, and

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM INITIATIVES

These non-profits are working on behalf of prisoners towards criminal justice reform.

cruelty. Ultimately, the fight to abolish DBI sentences is a fight over what type of society we want to live in, whether we will organize around values of restoration and redemption and healing or continue down the path of fear and stigma and vengeance.

Excerpted from “A Way Out: Abolishing Death By Incarceration in Pennsylvania (A Report On Life-Without-Parole Sentences)” by Quinn Cozzens, ALC Staff Attorney, and Bret Grote, ALC Legal Director. For more information, go to www.prisonpolicy.org.

From Philadelphia’s Conviction Integrity Unit

The Philadelphia District Attorney’s Office’s Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) investigates and reviews convicted offenders’ legitimate claims of innocence and wrongful conviction. In addition to reviewing cases, the unit makes recommendations about ways the office can operate more efficiently, effectively and adopt nationally-recognized best practices.

All requests to the CIU must be submitted in writing by the petitioner using the CIU Submission Form (See: www.phila.gov/districtattorney/aboutus/Pages/CIU.aspx for a copy of the form and the mailing address of the CIU).

Requests for review will not be accepted by third parties including friends and family members. If a petitioner is represented by counsel, the submission must come from his or her attorney. Submissions will first be reviewed by the following criteria before the unit conducts an in-depth review: (1) The conviction must have been in the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas (First Judicial District), (2) There must be a claim of actual innocence or wrongful conviction, and (3) The claim must not be frivolous.

Note from the CIU: Due to the high volume of submissions we receive, we will not send confirmation upon receipt of submission forms. Instead, we will contact the petitioner if we require additional information or when we are ready to communicate our final decision. We do not provide updates over the phone.

From the Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project

In response to the Miller and Montgomery decisions, the Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP) and the Atlantic Center for Capital Representation (ACCR) have partnered to coordinate mitigation services for private, pro bono and court appointed counsel representing individuals sentenced to life in prison without parole as juveniles* (“JLWOP”) on resentencing. In each case, YSRP provides its intensive service delivery model, including comprehensive mitigation and reentry planning, to juvenile lifer clients and their families.

Until recently, the United States was the only country in the world in which children received mandatory life sentences without the possibility of parole (JLWOP). In *Miller v. Alabama* (2012), the Supreme Court held that this mandatory sentencing scheme is unconstitutional. In *Montgomery v. Louisiana* (2016), the Court guaranteed re-sentencing for over 2,000 juvenile lifers throughout the country. The Montgomery decision is of particular significance in Pennsylvania, as the state has sentenced more than 500 children to die in prison. Of the approximately 500 juvenile lifers throughout the state, more than 300 of these individuals were sentenced in Philadelphia, making the city “ground zero” for JLWOP.

The JLWOP Reentry Navigator: As a result of Montgomery, individuals—some of whom have spent decades in prison—are returning to their communities. The Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP) created the Pennsylvania JLWOP Reentry Navigator in response to the critical need for a source of tailored reentry resources for juvenile lifers in Pennsylvania. The Navigator is a product of YSRP’s discussions with juvenile lifers post-Montgomery; the 13 resource categories reflect the areas in which juvenile lifers identified an interest in information and support. The Navigator is designed for use by juvenile lifers and their loved ones, attorneys, and advocates supporting their return home.

Email: info@ysrp.org

Phone: (215) 804-9093

Fax: (267) 543-7939

Mailing Address: The Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP), 1528 Walnut Street, Suite 515, Philadelphia, PA 19102

Website: www.ysrp.org

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.

We also cannot print copyrighted material.

Original submissions will not be returned.

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

THE PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY



WHERE WE VISIT

We have buses to all PA state prisons except Camp Hill, Chester, Phoenix, and Quehanna Boot Camp.

WHO CAN TRAVEL

Anyone can travel as long as he or she is on the inmate's official 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 be refunded if you are unable to visit because you are not an approved visitor.

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased over the phone, in person at our office or online at www.prisonssociety.org/transportation. Cash, debit, and credit cards are accepted. There is a \$2 surcharge per ticket to use a credit card. If you would like to mail in your payment, please note that we only accept money order payments via post mail. Do not send cash in the mail.

SEND PAYMENTS TO:

Attn: Family Transportation
Pennsylvania Prison Society
230 South Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA, 19102



Please make money orders payable to: PA Prison Society at the address listed above.

When sending payments through the mail, please include your full name, the prison you are visiting, and your phone number. We may need to contact you.

For more information, see bus schedule on page 19 or contact Hannah Snyder by phone at (215)564-4775 x1002 or email at hsnyder@prisonssociety.org, or visit www.prisonssociety.org.

FAMILIES OUTSIDE



ABOUT FAMILIES OUTSIDE

The Families Outside program provides low-cost transportation for families to visit their incarcerated loved ones at state correctional facilities. Children and older adults are welcome. Children must be accompanied on the visit by a parent, other caregiver, or caseworker. Ticket prices are affordable because of a contract with the PA Department of Corrections.

WHERE THEY VISIT

The program provides transportation to the following institutions: Albion, Cambridge Springs, Greene, Fayette, Houtzdale, Laurel Highlands, Somerset, Forest, Mercer, Rockview, Benner, Phoenix, Frackville, Mahanoy, Muncy, Coal Township, Smithfield, Huntingdon, Camp Hill, Dallas, and Retreat.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Anyone with an incarcerated loved one is able to participate. In order to utilize the program, a first time individual must complete a free orientation session.

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

For information on how to purchase tickets, please contact Families Outside by phone or email with the information listed below.

CONTACT

Families Outside
221 Penn Avenue
Wilkinsburg, PA 15221
Phone: (412) 458-6456

Website: wfspa.org/service/families-outside

For more information, see bus schedule on page 20.



PRISON SOCIETY 2018/2019 BUS SCHEDULE (PHILADELPHIA)

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be posted on our social media pages and the website ASAP.

BENNER/ROCKVIEW

Bimonthly, 2nd Thursday,

4am-9:30pm, \$40/person

Oct 11, 2018	April 11, 2019
Dec 13, 2018	June 13, 2019
Feb 14, 2019	Aug 8, 2019

FOREST

Monthly, 2nd Monday,

2am-9:30pm, \$50/person

Sept 10, 2018	April 8, 2019
Oct 8, 2018	May 13, 2019
Nov 12, 2018	June 10, 2019
Dec 10, 2018	July 8, 2019
Jan 14, 2019	Aug 12, 2019
Feb 11, 2019	Sept 9, 2019
Mar 11, 2019	

MUNCY

Bimonthly (Pending),

5am-7:30pm, \$35/person

PLEASE NOTE: All tickets must be purchased 5 days in advance.

Sept 11, 2018	May 14, 2019
Nov 13, 2018	July 11, 2019
Jan 8, 2019	Sept 10, 2019
Mar 12, 2019	

PINE GROVE

Bimonthly, 3rd Friday,

2am-9pm, \$50/person

Aug 17, 2018	April 19, 2019
Oct 19, 2018	June 21, 2019
Dec 21, 2019	Aug 16, 2019
Feb 15, 2019	

GREENE

Monthly, 1st Friday,

2am-9:30pm, \$50/person

Sept 7, 2018	April 5, 2019
Oct 5, 2018	May 3, 2019
Nov 2, 2018	June 7, 2019
Dec 7, 2018	July 5, 2019
Jan 4, 2019	Aug 2, 2019
Feb 2, 2019	Sept 6, 2019
Mar 1, 2019	

FAYETTE

Monthly, 3rd Friday,

2am-9:00pm, \$50/person

Aug 17, 2018	Mar 15, 2019
Sept 21, 2018	April 19, 2019
Oct 19, 2018	May 17, 2019
Nov 16, 2018	June 21, 2019
Dec 21, 2018	July 19, 2019
Jan 18, 2019	Aug 16, 2019
Feb 15, 2019	Sept 20, 2019

LAUREL HIGHLANDS/SOMERSET

Monthly, 1st Monday,

4am-9:30pm, \$40/person

Sept 10, 2018*	April 1, 2019
Oct 1, 2018	May 6, 2019
Nov 5, 2018	June 3, 2019
Dec 3, 2018	July 1, 2019
Jan 7, 2019	Aug 5, 2019
Feb 4, 2019	Sept 9, 2019*
Mar 4, 2019	

CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS/MERCER

Bimonthly, 3rd Monday,

1am-12:30am, \$50/person

Aug 20, 2018	April 15, 2019
Oct 15, 2018	June 17, 2019
Dec 17, 2019	Aug 19, 2019
Feb 18, 2019	

FRACKVILLE/MAHANAY

Bimonthly, 2nd Monday,

6am-7:30pm, \$35/person

Sept 10, 2018	May 13, 2019
Nov 12, 2018	July 8, 2019
Jan 14, 2019	Sept 9, 2019
Mar 11, 2019	

HUNTINGDON/SMITHFIELD

Bimonthly, 2nd Monday,

5am-9pm, \$40/person

Sept 17, 2018	May 20, 2019
Nov 19, 2018	July 15, 2019
Jan 28, 2019*	Sept 16, 2019
Mar 18, 2019	

DALLAS/RETREAT

Bimonthly, 4th Monday,

6am-7:30am, \$35/person

Aug 27, 2018	April 22, 2019
Oct 22, 2018	June 24, 2019
Dec 17, 2019*	Aug 26, 2019
Feb 25, 2019	

COAL TOWNSHIP

Bimonthly, 2nd Friday,

5:30am-7:30pm, \$35/person

Sept 14, 2018	May 10, 2019
Nov 9, 2018	July 12, 2019
Jan 11, 2019	Sept 13, 2019
Mar 8, 2019	

HOUTZDALE

Bimonthly, 2nd Thursday,

4am-9:30pm, \$40/person

Oct 11, 2018	April 11, 2019
Dec 13, 2018	June 13, 2019
Feb 14, 2019	Aug 8, 2019

WAYMART

Bimonthly, 4th Saturday,

6am-8pm, \$35/person

Sept 22, 2018	May 25, 2019
Nov 24, 2018	July 27, 2019
Jan 26, 2019*	Sept 28, 2019
Mar 23, 2019	

ALBION

Monthly, 2nd Friday,

1am-12:30am, \$50/person

Sept 14, 2018	April 12, 2019
Oct 12, 2018	May 10, 2019
Nov 9, 2018	June 14, 2019
Dec 14, 2018	July 12, 2019
Jan 11, 2019	Aug 9, 2019
Feb 8, 2019	Sept 13, 2019
Mar 8, 2019	

* These are exceptions to the usual schedule, due to holidays.

FAMILIES OUTSIDE 2018/2019 BUS SCHEDULE (PITTSBURGH)

This schedule is subject to change.

CAMP HILL

Bimonthly, Wednesday,

6am-7:30pm

July 25, 2018	Mar 20, 2019
Sept 19, 2018	May 22, 2019
Nov 28, 2018	July 24, 2019
Jan 23, 2019	

BENNER/ROCKVIEW

Monthly, Thursday,

6:45am-6pm

July 12, 2018	Mar 14, 2019
Aug 16, 2018	April 18, 2018
Sept 13, 2018	May 16, 2019
Oct 11, 2018	June 13, 2019
Nov 15, 2018	July 18, 2019
Dec 13, 2018	Aug 15, 2019
Jan 17, 2019	Sept 19, 2019
Feb 14, 2019	

LAUREL HIGHLANDS/ SOMERSET

Monthly, Sunday,

8am-5pm

July 29, 2018	Mar 24, 2019
Aug 26, 2018	April 28, 2019
Sept 23, 2018	May 19, 2019
Oct 28, 2018	June 23, 2019
Nov 18, 2018	July 28, 2019
Dec 30, 2018	Aug 25, 2019
Jan 27, 2019	Sept 29, 2019
Feb 24, 2019	

ALBION/CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS

Monthly, Saturday,

6:45am-5:30pm

July 14, 2018	Mar 16, 2019
Aug 18, 2018	April 13, 2019
Sept 15, 2018	May 18, 2018
Oct 20, 2018	June 15, 2019
Nov 17, 2018	July 13, 2019
Dec 8, 2018	Aug 10, 2019
Jan 12, 2019	Sept 21, 2019
Feb 16, 2019	

FOREST

Monthly, Sunday,

7am-5:45pm

July 15, 2018	Mar 17, 2019
Aug 12, 2018	April 14, 2019
Sept 9, 2018	May 12, 2019
Oct 14, 2018	June 9, 2019
Nov 11, 2018	July 14, 2019
Dec 9, 2018	Aug 11, 2019
Jan 13, 2019	Sept 15, 2019
Feb 10, 2019	

MERCER

Bimonthly, Monday,

7:30am-6:30pm

July 16, 2018	Mar 11, 2019
Aug 13, 2018	April 15, 2019
Sept 10, 2018	May 13, 2019
Oct 15, 2018	June 17, 2019
Nov 12, 2018	July 15, 2019
Dec 10, 2018	Aug 12, 2019
Jan 7, 2019	Sept 16, 2019
Feb 11, 2019	

PHOENIX

Bimonthly, Sunday,

3:30am-9:30pm

July 22, 2018	Mar 17, 2019
Sept 16, 2018	May 19, 2019
Nov 18, 2018	July 21, 2019
Jan 20, 2019	Sept 22, 2019

FRACKVILLE/ MAHANAY

Bimonthly, Sunday,

4am-9:30pm

July 22, 2018	Mar 17, 2019
Sept 16, 2018	May 19, 2019
Nov 18, 2018	July 21, 2019
Jan 20, 2019	Sept 22, 2019

HUNTINGDON/ SMITHFIELD

Bimonthly, Sunday,

6:45am-6:30m

Aug 12, 2018	April 14, 2019
Oct 14, 2018	June 9, 2019
Dec 9, 2018	Aug 11, 2019
Feb 10, 2019	

DALLAS/ RETREAT

Bimonthly, Friday,

3:30am-9pm

Aug 24, 2018	April 26, 2019
Oct 26, 2018	June 21, 2019
Dec 21, 2018	Aug 23, 2019
Feb 22, 2019	

COAL/MUNCY

Bimonthly, Saturday,

4am-9pm

Aug 18, 2018	April 20, 2019
Oct 20, 2018	June 15, 2019
Dec 22, 2018	Aug 17, 2019
Feb 16, 2019	

HOUTZDALE

Bimonthly, Saturday,

7am-6:30pm

July 28, 2018	Mar 23, 2019
Aug 25, 2018	April 27, 2019
Sept 22, 2018	May 25, 2019
Oct 27, 2018	June 22, 2019
Nov 17, 2018	July 27, 2019
Dec 22, 2018	Aug 24, 2019
Jan 26, 2019	Sept 28, 2019
Feb 23, 2019	

FAYETTE/GREENE

Monthly, Saturday,

8am-5pm

July 14, 2018	Mar 16, 2019
Aug 11, 2018	April 13, 2019
Sept 22, 2018	May 11, 2019
Oct 20, 2018	June 15, 2019
Nov 10, 2018	July 13, 2019
Dec 8, 2018	Aug 10, 2019
Jan 12, 2019	Sept 14, 2019
Feb 9, 2019	

RESOURCES

PA State Officials

Governor Tom Wolfe

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 22653
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 for Representatives is available at www.house.state.pa.us.

DOC Secretary John Wetzel

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

Expungements

Juvenile Law Center

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

Expunge Philadelphia

Juvenile Expungement Hotline
P: 267-765-6770

Community Legal Services

Center City Office
1424 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102-2505
P: 215-981-3700
North Philadelphia Law Center
1410 W. Erie Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19140
P: 215-227-2400

Reentry

Uplift

700 Delsea Drive
Westville, NJ 08093
P: 856-471-2008
E: info@upliftsolutions.org

Presbytery of Philadelphia

915 East Gowen Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19150
P: 215.242.1400
F: 215.242.1444
E: office@presbyphl.org

Broad Street Ministry

Begun in 2008, BSM's Hospitality Collaborative incorporates stabilizing services that not only meet basic human needs, but also strive to move lives forward. Along with our nutritious meals, guests can benefit from a mailing address, change of clothes, and personal care items. And we partner with other best-in-class non-profit organizations to offer medical and behavioral health care, legal assistance, and assistance with housing, public benefits, and personal identification.

Prison Foundation

315 South Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
P: 215-735-4847
W: www.broadstreetministry.org

PPS Mentoring Program

Families and Individuals Reintegrating Successfully Together (F.I.R.S.T.), our mentoring program, is a voluntary program for men currently in the Transitional Housing Unit (THU) at SCI Chester and SCI Graterford.

The program helps prepare incarcerated individuals for successful re-entry mentally, emotionally, and logistically. After a series of workshops on relevant topics (such as social media, applying for medical benefits, securing housing, and obtaining education and jobs) mentees are assigned to mentors, to meet one-on-one for at least six months to develop and achieve a personalized goal plan. We are also working with soon to be released juvenile lifers across the state to help them bridge into life outside in the community.

We are always seeking mentors and mentee participants. For more information, or for a mentor application, please contact:

Joseph Robinson, Mentoring Program Case Manager
P: 215-564-4775, ext. 1005

RESOURCES

Life Without Parole

Women Lifers Resume Project of PA

PO Box 324
New Hope, PA 18938
P: 814-393-5400 (Cambridge Springs)
P: 570-546-3171 (Muncy)
W: www.wlrpp.org

Reconstruction Inc.

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

Juvenile Life Without Parole

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

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.prisonactivists.org/resources
E: info@prisonactivists.org

Families Against Mandatory Minimums

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) you 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.

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.

American Bar Association

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

Inmate Authors

If you are a prisoner who has written a book, the Prison Foundation wants to publish it! There is no charge to read or publish 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

Prison Foundation

2512 Virginia Avenue, NW Suite 58043
Washington, DC 20037
W: www.prisonfoundation.org
E: staff@prisonfoundation.org

READER SURVEY

We welcome comments and suggestions from all readers. Please complete this form and mail it to PPS.

How do you feel about the new Graterfriends design?

1 2 3 4 5
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
Hate it Neutral Love it

Explain:

How relevant to you do you find the content of Graterfriends?

1 2 3 4 5
|-----|-----|-----|-----|
Not at all relevant Neutral Very relevant

Explain:

Is there any information you would like to see in Graterfriends that is not already included?

Anything you would like to share with us regarding the recent DOC mail policy updates/restrictions?

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Philadelphia, PA 19102

January 2019

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