

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

Meek Mill Freed: Plea Agreement Accepted

Pennsylvania Prison Society Staff



Thirty-two-year-old rapper, Meek Mill, born Robert Rihmeek Williams, has spent most of his adult life on probation or in prison in connection with his 2007 arrest. On August 27, he agreed to one count of illegal possession of a gun, all other charges were dropped, and he now faces no penalties in addition to the two years already served in prison.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Meek Mill started in career as one of Philly's most prominent underground rappers and has since become a multi-platinum selling hip-hop artist known all over the world.

According to the Reform Alliance, "When Meek was 19 years old, he was wrongfully arrested for gun and drug charges in his hometown. At his trial, Meek maintained

his innocence on all but one charge, but his arresting officer – whom has since been discredited – was the lone testifying witness in the case. As a result of the officer's testimony, Meek was sentenced to 11-23 months in prison with eight years of probation, which has been unreasonably extended through 2023. Despite never committing a crime as a probationer, Meek was sentenced to two-to-four-year prison sentence for technical probation violations in November 2017, which spurred an international #FreeMeek campaign and ultimately resulted in his release on bail in April 2018.

"As it stands, significant irregularities exist regarding Meek's initial arrest, including newly-discovered evidence indicating that the arresting officer lied on the affidavit

used to obtain the search warrant and on the stand at Meek's hearing. The officer was later investigated by federal authorities for corrupt behavior in several cases – including falsifying evidence, physical assault, perjury and theft – and resigned from the force after the Philadelphia Police Department found him guilty for engaging in criminal conduct. Due to his corrupt conduct, the officer was later included on the District Attorney's 'Do Not Call' list."

In 2019, both sides questioned the credibility of the arresting officer and the defense accused the trial judge of bias in sentencing him to prison over minor probation violations.

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FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Readers:

The most exciting news we have to report is that, in partnership with the Philadelphia Defenders Association and the Public Interest Law Center, we helped score a major victory in the fight for humane prison conditions. As any of you who have been incarcerated in the Philadelphia prisons know, the office where you can retrieve your belongings at release is open only a few hours a day. As a result, the majority of people released from the jail don't have their identification, clothes, phone, keys, or other items they came in with. Well, all of that is changing. Once the issue was publicized in *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, the Philadelphia Department of Prisons pledged to give people their belongings at release, no matter what time of day the release occurs. This will make a huge difference in the lives of thousands of people every year. Thank you *Philadelphia Inquirer*! Thank you Philadelphia prisons!

Over on the other side of the state, Prison Society volunteers in Allegheny County have done valiant work advocating for safe and considerate housing for transgendered people in the jail. Their efforts resulted in a particularly recalcitrant County Jail Oversight Board member resigning his position.

I had the pleasure of meeting with many of our Western Pennsylvania volunteers in July and joined a small group of for a meeting with men incarcerated at SCI Fayette and SCI Greene. It was clear from my meeting with incarcerated men and administrators at SCI Greene, that that facility is gradually changing its approach to be a more humane place. I was struck by the lack of inmate

organizations at SCI Fayette, and I appreciated the candor of those individuals living and working at that facility in speaking with me.

For those of you who waited a long time in getting your summer *Graterfriends*, we apologize. Changes in the protocols at the Security Processing Center were not communicated to the Society, despite our repeated calls to make sure that we were following Department instructions. The copies arrived at the Security Processing Center during the first week of August but were unexpectedly returned to the printer. The copies were mailed again and rejected again in mid-August. The third attempt was successful. With the help of several DOC staff members, we believe we are now able to get *Graterfriends* to our incarcerated subscribers without delay. We are also working to make the publication schedule more regular so that you know when to anticipate an issue.

If you or someone you know has had difficulty getting a magazine or a book delivered to an incarcerated person, let us know by writing us at 230 South Broad Street, Suite 605, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania 19102 or emailing us at info@prisonsociety.org. Please be sure to include the date the item was supposed to be delivered and, if you know, when it was either returned or finally received.

Thanks as always,

Claire Shubik-Richards

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 note, on your submission, stating that you are the original author of the work and that you give us permission to edit and print; date and sign the declaration.

If you have a question about *Graterfriends*, please contact our staff by mail, email, or phone.

(Special Report, continued from page 1)

According to the Philadelphia Inquirer, District Attorney Larry Krasner “agreed to a deal that required Williams to plead guilty to a misdemeanor gun charge Tuesday to end the legal limbo. He says the criminal justice system needs to ‘evolve’ like Williams has since his arrest as a teenager.”

Recognizing that many others had experienced difficulties with the criminal justice system, Meek Mill helped found the Reform Alliance with Jay-Z and others in 2019 to “help the people that helped me.”

From the Reform Alliance Website: “Today the U.S. criminal justice system controls the lives of 6.6 million human beings – by either imprisoning them or keeping them stuck in the revolving door of probation and parole. That’s a ridiculous number – much, much larger than any country on Earth. Our goal is to dramatically reduce the number of people who are needlessly trapped in the system. We will do this by changing the laws, policies, and practices that perpetuate injustice. Key to our strategy is changing hearts and minds to support real change.

“We are building an alliance of influential leaders in business, government, entertainment, sports, and culture to use our shared resources, energy, and platforms for massive impact. Our initial focus will be disabling the revolving door of probation and parole.”

PENNSYLVANIA PROBATION FACTS:

In 2016, Pennsylvania had 112,000 people on parole. Illinois, a state similar in population and geographic density to Pennsylvania, had fewer than 30,000 people on parole.

Pennsylvania spends over \$200 million annually on community supervision – far too much to spend on a system that hurts more people than it helps.

Pennsylvania law requires formerly incarcerated people to serve the remainder of their maximum sentence on parole. Lengthy periods of supervision increase the likelihood of people going back to jail and keep incarceration rates high.

Pennsylvania allows probation terms for as long as the maximum legal sentence. As of today, 31 other states cap probation at five years for most charges. In any of those states, Meek Mill’s case, as an example, would have been closed years ago.

Regulations governing the parole process present obstacles to the members of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole from granting parole. To start, board members are not required to meet with the person whose future they are considering. Although the law requires the input of prosecutors, it remains silent about whether family members, former employers, or prison staff can provide input. Under the current law, people seeking parole are not offered a way to challenge any false information provided to board members, thus giving less hope for approval of the board’s decision. For more information, see www.ReformAlliance.com.

CORRECTION NOTICE

We are grateful to Michael Drawbaugh, GZ-8636, SCI Camp Hill, for pointing out an error on page 3 of the June issue. We apologize for any confusion or delays that this may have caused. The DOC now recommends abbreviating addresses as follows, to ensure that they fit on the address labels. The correct addresses are shown below, with the corrected information in bold type.

For books and magazines being sent to the Security Processing Center:

SPC- John X. Smith/AB1234
268 Bricker Rd
Bellefont PA 16823

For letters, cards, and photos sent to Smart Communications:

SC- John X. Smith/AB1234
PO Box 33028
St. Petersburg FL 33733

If necessary, the acronym (SPC or SC) can be omitted entirely.

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

Do you have a reentry success story?

We are looking for articles written by or about former inmates about their lives after prison. If you have any advice about successful reentry or want to tell us your story, send us a submission!

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.

REPORT FROM FAMM

Important Campaigns

FAMM has two important campaigns that we hope will lead to meaningful justice reform in Pennsylvania—and we're hoping your loved ones can participate and help make it a success.

VISIT A PRISON CHALLENGE: We launched our #VisitAPrison challenge in July with a simple message to policymakers across the country: you don't know if you don't go. Too often, people who impact criminal justice policy—from lawmakers to district attorneys—don't know what prison or jail is like. They don't know what type of programming is available (or lack thereof), the meals served, the impact of restricting access to books and mail, or the distance families travel to visit their incarcerated loved ones.

But we believe if policymakers took the time to visit a prison or jail, and talk to those incarcerated and their family members who are visiting them, then they'd understand how badly we need to reform our prison and sentencing laws—and take action to do so.

So far, we've had over 80 policymakers take the pledge to #VisitAPrison in their states within the next 12 months. In Pennsylvania, 21 policymakers have pledged to visit a prison so far—including one district attorney candidate. That's over a quarter of all the pledges nationwide. This is because of the advocacy from your loved ones! They challenged lawmakers on social media and have written letters to their representatives urging them to take the #VisitAPrison challenge. But we need more Pennsylvania state lawmakers to accept the challenge. Please tell your loved ones to continue to pressure lawmakers to visit a prison. They can learn about how they can challenge lawmakers to #VisitAPrison at www.famm.org/visitaprisson.

PROBATION REFORM ADVOCACY: We are hosting a probation advocacy day in Harrisburg on September 24th. Probation reform has gained momentum in Harrisburg and we expect it to be a major reform that lawmakers consider this fall.

Pennsylvania's probation system urgently needs reform; it has the third highest probation population in the country. People on probation can be sent back to jail or prison for lengthy periods for minor technical violations and many people currently incarcerated have long probation terms awaiting them after they finish their prison sentences. Years and decades of probation supervision, burdensome conditions, and the fear of making a mistake that can lead to incarceration are stressful and traumatic for families and have no public safety benefit.

Family members, affected individuals, and representatives of PPS, FAMM, and 15 other organizations are joining forces on September 24th to call for: (1) an end to the revolving door between probation and prison and (2) to call for reforms to burdensome and unnecessary conditions of probation. Family members and affected individuals will have the opportunity to meet with

lawmakers, share their stories, and urge them to pass probation reform this year. Please tell your family and friends to attend the advocacy day. We'll provide advocacy training so your loved ones learn to tell stories that make lawmakers listen—and make reform a reality. Your loved ones can text REFORM to 21333 to RSVP for the probation reform advocacy day.

We'll be sure to keep you updated on the progress we're making in our #VisitAPrison challenge, and on probation reform.

REPORT FROM ACLU OF PA

An Introduction to Dealing with Fines, Costs, and Restitution

By Mary Catherine Roper and Andrew Christy

Do you owe fines, costs or restitution on a case? It would be unusual if you do not. Just about every person convicted of a crime in Pennsylvania owes some combination of fines, costs, or restitution. For most cases, the costs alone are over \$1000. This debt follows most defendants for years - in fact about 60% of people who had court appointed counsel still owe court costs ten years after sentencing. In this column, we will explain how the payment system works and how to avoid getting into trouble over unpaid fines, costs, and restitution when you are released.

While you are incarcerated, the Department of Corrections deducts money from your account to pay the court, and many people think they are free and clear when they are released. If you are paroled, or if you have probation after you leave prison, your parole or probation officer will require you to make payments. Even if you max out, you likely still owe the court money.

When you first get out and have so many things to take care of - housing, employment, transportation and everything else - it may seem like too much to even think about paying court debt, but ignoring it can have big consequences such as bench warrants for your arrest, imprisonment, probation extensions, or suspension of your driver's license.

The smart strategy is to ask for a payment plan from the court as soon as you can and to make a payment every month if possible, even if it is only a few dollars. If you have a parole or probation officer, they will put you on a payment plan. Try to work out an affordable payment plan and not over-promise: if you can only afford \$10 per month, do not feel pressured to promise \$100. You cannot be required to borrow money from friends or family, so focus only on what you can afford on your own. If you add up your income and compare it with your expenses like rent, utilities, food, transportation, and child care, you should be able to see what you can afford each month. You could also bring that calculation with you to help you work out a payment plan with the collections staff or parole or probation officer, who usually wants that information.

If you cannot work out a payment plan with collections staff, you can file a motion have a hearing with the judge to set a payment

plan (even if the collections staff wrongly claims this is not an option). It's their job to get you to agree, but you have a right to a hearing if they want you to pay more than you can afford.

The main way that most people get in trouble with fines, costs, or restitution is that they do not stay in touch with the collections staff or the court if they fall behind. No one wants to call the court to say that they are going to miss this month's payment because they lost their job or had an unexpected car repair. But if you ignore the payments and ignore the court, you are guaranteed to have trouble. Talk to them, and you might be able to avoid a warrant or a court hearing. The worst case scenario is that they will not work with you and you have to consider asking for a hearing with the judge.

If you do fall behind and get a court notice that you have a hearing due to nonpayment of fines, costs, or restitution, you should contact the public defender's office right away to get a lawyer and talk to the attorney to plan for the hearing. Do not wait until the last minute (or until the day of the hearing!).

At a hearing—whether it is a contempt hearing or a probation/parole violation hearing - the court will want to hear about your income and expenses. The judge will want to know why you have not been paying. Come with a calculation of what you bring in and what you spend each month, and bring paperwork if you can: paystubs, a lease, bills, paperwork showing you receive Social Security disability or food stamps, etc. If you have not been working, then come prepared to talk about why that is (such as due to disability or because you have to care for children) or what efforts you have been making to find work.

The judge will want you to pay as much as possible; do not promise more than you can afford. Do not tell the judge that you can pay money that you do not actually have. The judge does not know what you make and what you have to pay for - only you do, so you are the one who has to bring reality into the picture. If you are sure you can pay \$10 a month and no more, tell the judge that. And if you have a lawyer, let your lawyer take the lead and walk you through your financial picture. If the judge is threatening you with jail for not paying, you are entitled to a lawyer.

The law says a court cannot jail you or extend your probation for nonpayment if you cannot afford to pay the fines, costs, or restitution. The key legal question is if you have "willfully" failed to pay. It is a question about whether you intended to not pay, or if you simply cannot afford it. In other words, can you meet your basic life needs - without public assistance - and still afford to pay something to the court? If you cannot, you are likely unable to afford to pay the court (but you must still make a good faith effort to find work so that you can pay).

While some judges do jail people when they should not, most courts are more interested in just getting people to pay something on a regular basis. In our experience, judges become frustrated with defendants when they overpromise, do not make any payments, and do not communicate with the court before they get scheduled for a hearing. Whenever possible, try to stay in touch

with the court about changes in your income and expenses—including if you have an emergency bill, like car repair or a medical bill.

To aid defendants and their lawyers, we have put together extensive resources on our website: www.ACLUPA.org/FinesAndCosts. While the ACLU of Pennsylvania can provide representation in only a small number of cases, you can submit a complaint through our website.

Mary Catherine Roper, a graduate of the University of Pennsylvania Law School, is the Deputy Legal Director at the ACLU of Pennsylvania, where she coordinates litigation on a broad range of civil liberties issues, including freedom of speech, religious liberty, racial and ethnic justice, equality for lesbians and gay men, student rights, privacy, prisoners' rights, and police misconduct. Andrew Christy, a graduate of the Georgetown University Law Center, is the Criminal Justice and Poverty Attorney at the ACLU of PA, working on debtors' prison issues. Before joining the ACLU, he worked on disability rights issues at the Bazelon Center for Mental Health Law.

REPORT FROM DISABILITY BENEFITS HELP

Social Security Disability Benefits

By the Outreach Team at Disability Benefits Help

How to File After Being Released from Prison: If you are disabled because of a medical problem, you can file a claim for disability benefits from the Social Security Administration (SSA). The SSA administers benefits through two programs, (SSDI) and (SSI). Both of these programs have strict medical criteria that must be met, and also other specific criteria must be adhered to. In order to be approved for Social Security disability benefits, you must be able to show that you are unable to work for 12 months or longer, or you must show that you have a condition that will result in your death.

What Happens to Your Benefits While You Are Incarcerated? You cannot receive Social Security benefits of any kind while incarcerated for more than 30 consecutive days, but you can be reinstated one month after your release. However, that only applies to SSDI benefits. If you are on SSI benefits and then become incarcerated, you will have to reapply if your sentence is 12 consecutive months or longer.

What Happens If You Have Dependents? If you are on SSDI or SSI benefits and you have a dependent who draws of your benefits, even though your benefits stop while you are incarcerated, the benefits for your dependents will not be affected. They will continue to keep receiving those auxiliary benefits as long as they remain eligible for them.

The Criteria for Social Security Disability Benefits: To be approved for disability benefits, your condition must meet the criteria of the medical guide. The SSA uses a guide, which is called the Blue Book, to determine if someone is disabled and qualifies for

benefits. When you complete your disability application, you must show that your condition meets the criteria of a listing. Remember to provide a detailed list of all medical providers that you have seen, including the dates of service and their contact details. The key to a successful disability claim is providing medical evidence that confirms the diagnosis, the prognosis, the plan of treatment, limitations and restrictions, and your symptoms and side effects.

The Pre-Release Process: If you are going to be released from prison in the near future and believe that you may qualify for Social Security Disability benefits, you can start the process before your release. Using this approach, you can apply for benefits and the SSA will start processing your application several months before your release. Using this approach, they can determine if you are eligible for benefits and if so, determine your monthly benefit amount. If your application is denied, you can file a request for reconsideration and get the appeals underway before you are even released from prison. Using this process, if you are approved for Social Security Disability, you may qualify for disability benefits as early as 30 days before your scheduled release date. If you have any further questions regarding the eligibility or the requalification process, you can call the SSA toll free at 1-800-772-1213.

The Outreach Team at Disability Benefits Help provides information about disability benefits and the application process. To learn more, please visit their website at www.Disability-Benefits-Help.org or by emailing them at Help@SSD-Help.org.

Resources:

On Auxiliary Benefits for Children: www.SSA.gov/OACT/ProgData/types.html

On the Social Security's Blue Book: <https://www.Disability-Benefits-Help.org/Glossary/Social-Security-Blue-Book>

IN THE NEWS

New Swedish Style Inmate Unit Research

In conjunction with researchers from Drexel University, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary, John Wetzel, has assigned \$163,000 in grant money from the Arnold Ventures Foundation towards sending twelve corrections officers to observe conditions and design of inmate units in Sweden and Norway.

Wetzel was motivated by a past trip to Sweden, Norway and Germany, where he noticed that prisons were less crowded and prison officials played more of a mentoring role. He is motivated by ideas about how conditions in American prisons can be improved for both inmates and staff. The hope is that changing conditions, procedures, and culture inside prisons will reduce recidivism rates, which are higher in the United States than in Europe.

The strategies observed by the researchers in Sweden and Norway will be randomly assigned for implementation in certain units of Pennsylvania prisons to determine if these changes have any effect on inmate experiences and rates of re-incarceration.

Clean Slate Act: PA Begins Automatic Sealing of Criminal Records

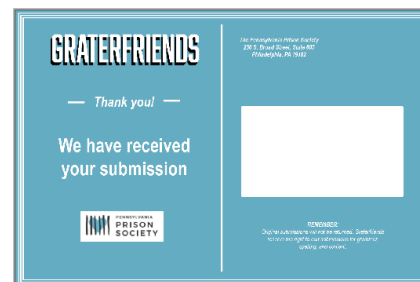
Beginning the weekend of July 1st, as a result of a provision in the Clean Slate Act, nonviolent misdemeanor records, fines that have been paid off, as well as charges and summary offenses that did not result in convictions that are 10 or more years older are now being automatically sealed from Pennsylvanian's criminal records - so long as the individual has not demonstrated having additional troubles with the law within the past 10 years. As opposed to expungement or pardoning, sealing of criminal records results in all published court records of the above caliber being sealed from public view.

While in the past criminal records were more difficult to obtain because finding them required visiting a courthouse to physically locate them, Online Court Dockets make it simple for anyone to check old records. This measure will help to lessen difficulty people with criminal records face when attempting to find employment, housing, attend school, obtain loans, and otherwise move on with their lives. The law affords a year for an automatic computer process to determine and seal the necessary records.

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.

Submissions without either of these two requirements will not be printed. We also cannot print copyrighted material. Original submissions will not be returned.

Wondering about the status of a submission?



We think it is important for you to know that, because we receive 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.

PROFILES

A Tribute to Superintendent McGinley, SCI Coal Township *Cindy Sanford, PPS Official Visitor*



My husband and I have been working with Supt McGinley for three years. He is the most accessible superintendent I have ever met. During each trip to Coal Township we are invited into his office to talk about the men we visit. If I need to reach him by phone or email, he always gets back to me the very same day. I've never had another superintendent be this considerate about getting back to us regarding the men we see.

The most impressive thing about him is how he treats the inmates. He is a hands-on type of leader. He is the only superintendent I have ever met who stops to talk to families and inmates when he walks through the visiting room. I have noticed that more of his assistants are now doing the same thing. It has definitely created a friendlier atmosphere in the visiting room and is something I have not seen at any other prison. Coal Twp is also one of the very few prisons with playground equipment outside the visiting room where men and their families can relax during a visit. That appeared shortly after he became the superintendent.

As soon as McGinley started work at Coal Twp, he made better communication between inmates and staff a top priority. He recognized that staff sometimes create problems for themselves by speaking harshly to the inmates. Right from the start, he instructed his staff to "treat the men here like you would your own son, if he erred and went to prison."

Under his guidance, there has been a substantial increase in inmate employment, now 75%. He said that, in most cases, "If an inmate goes to the RHU, they do not have to wait many months to get a job when they return to the general population. Idleness is a friend to no one." He recognizes the harm hole-time can cause and has instructed his staff to do their best to limit the isolation. He added TVs to some of the RHU pods, available to inmates who demonstrate good behavior.

He is fully aware of the value of an education and has encouraged classroom study, even for level four inmates. With his help, Coal Twp is one of the few prisons selected to participate in an Inside-Out Program. They are currently participating with Bucknell University, which transports some of their students to Coal Twp for classes with inmates. Next year, the program will be expanded to include Bloomsburg University.

So much of the culture is changing at Coal Twp. For example, McGinley created an honor block for lifers and "long-termers" and assisted them in creating the "Dare to Care" Program. The program focuses on mentoring younger inmates and giving back to the local community.

I had the honor recently of attending a Juvenile Lifers Family Day at Coal Twp and it was a remarkable contrast with the same event held at other prisons (including those at Greene and Mahanoy). After the program, families were permitted to visit for hours while they enjoyed a beautiful spread of food including deli sandwiches, pasta salads, and several desserts. I had never eaten so well inside a prison! At other prisons, the snacks were limited to potato chips, cookies and bottled water. Worse, we had to adjourn soon after the program, despite the fact that people had traveled a long way to get there, especially those who visited Greene. I asked Supt McGinley how it was possible that his prison was able to put on such a nice program. I expected that the inmates had contributed, but I was wrong. He told me he used his discretionary budget to fund the event. I think this shows his commitment to treating the families with respect and kindness.

I have witnessed him do some pretty extraordinary things, including resolving a problem when a woman and young child were denied entry to the prison because they had failed to bring the newly required forms of ID. The woman immediately began to cry because she had traveled three hours to see the girl's father and would now be leaving without a visit. One minute after she left the building to return home, McGinley walked into the room, and I told him what happened. Despite the fact that it was a cold, rainy day, he rushed out the door with no coat on, and scanned the parking lot in search of the woman and her daughter. He caught them just in time and I saw them later in the visiting room. Later while I sat in his office, he told me his rationale: "Rules are important, but so are people. We need to remember that too."

I have had many conversations with inmates about Supt McGinley. Most of the men really respect him and feel blessed to have him at Coal Twp. Prior to his arrival, this prison had a reputation for extreme harshness, but McGinley is doing his best to change the culture and give the inmates better opportunities. This is why my husband and I, and others, nominated him for Correctional Employee of the Year (see previous issue, page 3).

RIP Aretha Franklin, Queen of Soul *William "Juicy Queen Bee" Coward, ML-5077, SCI Albion*

I grew up in Delaware, listening to Aretha Franklin, who started singing in her father's church. I listened to her gospel songs, her regular songs and watched her in the Blues Brothers movies. Her songs spoke to you. She was loved by many and was the godmother to the late Whitney Houston. After her death in August 2018, she had many tributes paid to her.

She gave people soul music. She sang for President and First Lady Obama. She paved the way for many women: Gladys Knight, Chaka Khan, Pattie Labelle, Tina Turner, Natalie Cole, Teena Marie and many more. She gave them reasons to believe, courage to follow their dreams, demanding respect everywhere they went. I love her music and will continue to listen to it.

When I first heard R.E.S.P.E.C.T, I thought she was singing directly to me, speaking about my life and I'm going to miss her. Rest in Peace, Mother Aretha.

BOOK CASE

Free & Affordable Newsletters

Prison Health News: Based in Philadelphia and previously affiliated with Philadelphia FIGHT (they recently have become independent), Prison Health News publishes quarterly and assists incarcerated people from the outside by promoting their right to physical and mental health care and reliable health information. They accept art, poetry, and written submissions from inmates struggling with or wanting to share their issues related to health overall. Prison Health News provides great resources, support, and information.

You can subscribe (for free!) or send submissions to:

Prison Health News
Books Through Bars
4722 Baltimore Ave
Philadelphia, PA 19143

Black and Pink: A nationwide organization, Black and Pink offers a free newsletter and pen-pal services for incarcerated LGBTQ+ and HIV+ people. They publish submissions from people in prison and include a calendar to ensure that people can keep track of the date. Pen-pals serve as a form of harm reduction and help incarcerated people build solid support networks on the outside.

You can subscribe (for free!) or send submissions to:

6223 Maple St #4600
Omaha, NE 68104
United States
P: 531-600-9089
W: www.BlackAndPink.org/PenPal-Newsletter

Hearts on a Wire: A grassroots organization with the goal of aiding transgender Pennsylvanians in prison, Hearts on a Wire fights for gender self-determination and equality, racial and economic justice, and excessive surveillance and policing of communities. They publish a seasonal newsletter with submissions from incarcerated people.

You can write in to subscribe (for free!) at:

1315 Spruce St.
William Way Center
Philadelphia, PA 1910
United States

News Inside & Life Inside: Newly initiated by The Marshall Project, News Inside is a nonprofit, nonpartisan, nationwide publication that keeps people on the inside updated about life on the outside and criminal justice issues. Life Inside is The Marshall Project's collective enterprise whereby incarcerated people, or those in conversation with the criminal justice system, can submit essays (they only accept art, poetry, op-eds, and essays related to criminal justice). They are looking for "1,000 to 1,400-word nonfiction stories about vivid, surprising, personal experiences you [have] had

with the system - whether you're a lawyer, prisoner, judge, victim, police officer, or otherwise work or live inside the system."

They can be contacted at:

Lawrence Bartley
The Marshall Project
156 West 56th Street, Suite 701
New York, NY 10019
P: 212-803-5200

Prisoner Express Newsletter: A nationwide organization focused on fostering a sense of the shared aspects of humanity and community in the prison population, Prisoner Express disseminates information, runs educational programs, and publishes a biannual newsletter that includes writing, art, and poetry from incarcerated people. They also have a journal program whereby prisoners can send in reflections about their life or their experience in prison. Prisoner Express is a volunteer-run organization.

You can subscribe (for free!) at:

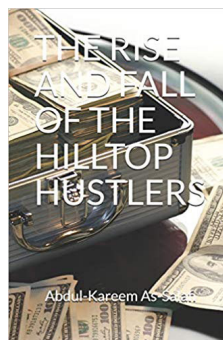
Prisoner Express
130 Anabel Taylor Hall
Ithaca, NY 14853
W: www.PrisonerExpress.org/Programs/Newsletter/Enrollment

Incarcerated Worker Newsletter: "The Incarcerated Worker features writings of prisoners, welcoming contributions of writing and art particularly from a revolutionary labor perspective."

You can subscribe (\$20 a year - sharing and distributing throughout prisons is encouraged by the IWOC) at:

Kent Books to Prisoners
CSI Box X
KSU Student Center
Kent, OH 44242
W: www.IncarceratedWorkers.org

The Rise and Fall of the Hilltop Hustlers by Abdul-Kareem As-Salafi



On February 2nd, 1982, FBI agents arrested Abdul-Kareem As-Salafi (also known as 'Kay') along with his co-defendants, Jack Jamison ("J'Love"), Larry Hobbs, Michael Stevens and others.

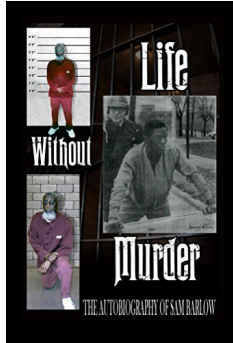
The arrests occurred following a meeting of the men, which had been recorded and videotaped by the FBI. On February 17th, 1982, the Honorable United States Magistrate Judge, Karen S. Brown, held a pre-trial 'Bail, Detention and Probable

Cause' hearing. Kay sat at the Defense table in the Courtroom alongside his co-defendants, Jack and Larry, and their team of attorneys, who were the very best legal team in Philadelphia.

At this hearing, the Court heard testimony from Michael Stevens,

a cooperating witness for the government who was a longtime friend of Kay's, and who played a major role within the business. He testified that he had been threatened throughout the conspiracy by certain co-defendants. (Available from Amazon for \$19)

Life Without Murder: The Autobiography of Samuel Barlow



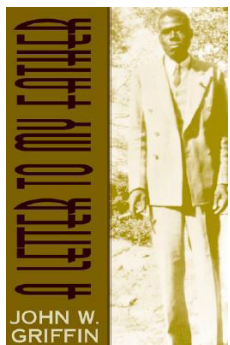
Although incarcerated for 50 years, he never lost faith that he would be free. While in prison, he found a way to mentor those inside and outside. His autobiography *Life Without Murder* was published in March 2018. Prof. Carl Milofsky, a sociology professor at Bucknell University, calls him a “complex visionary.” Karen Lee, a PPS Official Visitor, describes him as “one of the most humble and intelligent people I’ve ever had the pleasure of meeting.”

From the Author: The decline and promise of Society can be best gauged by entering its Prisons. This is a story about an innocent (innocent of murder) man unlawfully locked up for life.

Describing 50 years in prison is the hardest thing that I’ve ever had to do. It’s akin to explaining how you became a grandfather without ever having sons and daughters. There is no such thing as a “how to” manual to guide you through an unbroken nightmare. No guide capable of explaining the impossible, the unthinkable.

In this brief biographical sketch, I attempt to chronicle a long and complicated story. I shout, even though no one hears me, whisper in no-privacy spaces, and cry until my tears inundate my entrails. Maybe that’s enough to make others see it, feel it? I wouldn’t wish it on my worst enemy. My bad, I’m getting ahead of myself, I am only 47 years in.” (Available from Amazon for \$12.99-13.79)

A Letter to My Father By John W. Griffin



This is an extraordinary autobiography of a young black man growing up in a loving and supportive close-knit family, who finds himself struggling through what he sees as the minefields established by the racial and oppressive nature of White America.

As the title denotes, “A Letter To My Father” is a revealing conversation of a son to his father. However, the father is deceased and the letter conveys to him

what happened to their family after his death. The author shares his personal memories, as well as those told to him by his mother, brother, and extended family. He writes his father about a loving and caring mother, her struggle to raise their two sons alone and about a big brother who protects him and tries to become the

father they both never had.

The book in its unique format, tells of a young man’s experiences while growing up in the streets of Philadelphia, PA, surrounded by racial images and trying to find his place in a struggle for political and economic equality against the odds of being black, poor and uneducated in the 1960’s. When his search leads him to the black nationalist ideology of the Nation of Islam, he becomes involved in both community activism and crime. Soon this results in his being arrested, charged, and convicted for one of the most heinous crimes ever committed. The case became known as the Washington, D.C. Hanafi Muslim Murders, and although he would eventually be acquitted, he still found himself trapped in, and swallowed up by a repressive, and counterproductive prison system.

As the result of governmental manipulations, he is convicted in the jail-house murder of a government informant, and left to deal with the harsh and brutal realities of prison life. While desperately trying to maintain a positive relationship with his wife and children, he educates himself, helps to establish literacy programs for other prisoners, becomes a teacher, and involves himself in the fight for prison reform.

In writing *A Letter To My Father*, the author acknowledges personal responsibility for how his life turns out. He also reveals society’s role in arresting the economic, social, and political development of black people in America. Through the eyes of a young black fatherless male, he expresses the frustrations he felt as a member of an outcast minority, who after realizing history’s lie, sets out to deal with it in a world full of confused and misguided concepts.

The book ends with the deaths of his beloved mother and brother. After being incarcerated for over 26 years, and always having their love and support, he has to deal with and accept the loss of both of them in a six-week span. While he reaffirms his fight for freedom, he realizes that not only have his mother and brother taught him how to stand firm and face the harsh realities of life, but also how to stand firm and face the inevitable reality of death. (Available from Amazon for \$12.99-13.79)

First Shot Fired By John W. Griffin



Sulle Niger gets entangled in his friend Jerron’s schemes to rob drug dealers, fronts for mortgage brokers and drug suppliers, and launders money for drug cartels. When Jerron is shot and rendered comatose, Niger recruits his brother, PI Russ, to help investigate the murders for which Jerron is falsely accused. Our hero not only finds himself in the middle of a drug war, but also needs to solve the murders of which Jerron is innocent. (Available from Amazon for \$15)

OUR VOICES

Community Substance Abuse Prevention

Kermit B. Gosnell, LJ-1445, SCI Houtzdale

Athletics and hobbies are examples of positive activities that are beyond mere diversions. All such involvements possess the potential for altering consciousness and for helping individuals develop coping skills. Communities ought to orchestrate positive involvements for youth so there is less opportunity and less need for negative activities.

Traditional incentives are primarily based on competition – prizes for first, second, and third places. It would be more effective to offer equal awards to all participants, as long as the awards or rewards were highly desired by the target population. Ideally, there would also be positive media publicity and positive role modeling by parents, surrogate parents, and mentors.

A major deterrent to success is the availability of drugs. The pharmaceutical industry's main priority is profit, so they develop and market drugs for each and every symptom and disorder. Unfortunately, it is much easier to swallow a pill than to alter one's consciousness by enjoying a yoga session, winning a chess match, or swimming a medley.

Depression, grief, isolation, loss, and suicidal ideation are all common consequences of normal life stresses. Sharing feelings with individuals having identical (or similar) suffering cannot be overestimated as an effective coping mechanism for community interventions.

Author Abdul-Kareem As-Salafi

*Abdul-Kareem As-Salafi, 60084-066,
Federal Correctional Institution, Fairton NJ*

My given name is Earnest Key but many years ago I changed my name to Abdul-Kareem As-Salafi. I have been incarcerated in a federal prison in New Jersey since November of 2004 for a crime I very much committed. It took a long time, but through counseling and a lot of self-evaluation, I came to accept and take responsibility for what I've done and came to realize that many others were affected by my actions.

I am married to an amazing woman. We have six children and 23 grandchildren, one of whom we lost in a tragic fire just over a year ago. The loss of this wonderful little girl united our family and made me see the importance of others. I have learned that the strength of one's reliance upon God is determined by the strength of his or her faith. I have always had a connection with God but somehow I allowed the streets to become a false deity in my life and because of those choices, my faith became weak. It took many years for me to realize that I was in fact being tested by a higher being - just as we will all be tested someday, in many different ways. For me it was loss of life, wealth, and loved ones. I am sharing this story, where I admit and accept my weaknesses, so I can gain true strength, love, and respect for others.

For many years, I have been fighting with the courts. My case is simple: I was sentenced for a crime that I did commit but was given an enhancement for a 1986 case. The Supreme Court has ruled that such an enhancement is illegal. The Third Circuit Court will not allow me back in court with my Pro Se motions and I need help from a lawyer. So, I wrote a book and have it for sale on Amazon, hoping I can earn the money required for legal help. (See *The Rise and Fall of the Hilltop Hustlers* by Abdul-Kareem As-Salafi on page 8 of Bookcase.)

Correction Care and Security, the DOC Lie

Rev. Augustus Enoch, KL-2144, SCI Forest

"Correction, care and security" may be the motto of the Department of Corrections, but what does it mean? Really? Are the Corrections Officers truly here to correct, care and uphold security? It is something that came to my mind while standing at the door of my solitary confinement cell as I witnessed three things:

A young man was threatening to commit suicide and a young officer told him he "didn't care."

At a meal, an inmate who normally keeps to himself was missing food items in his tray. A corrections officer told him he was incorrect and refused to help.

A man who held his hands up in a defensive stance, told an officer he didn't want to get hurt. He was then pushed, beaten and sprayed by a member of the correctional staff, under the pretense that he was posing a threat to security.

Have we come to a point in today's so-called civil society that we must question the DOC's claim that their top priorities are to provide correction, care, and security? If correction was their number one goal, why is it that when an inmate is proven innocent, the staff still believe they are guilty? If you turn a blind eye to the abuse, corruption, and calamity caused by these staff members, you could be ignoring serious dangers faced by someone you love.

Building Beyond Solitary Confinement

Johnnie Artece McCollum, LW-9176, SCI Somerset

When the phrase "solitary confinement" is mentioned, it is usually in connection with one's feelings about the prison system. I want to share how I use my time in solitary to cultivate intellectual growth, seek tranquility, and equip myself with the proper tools to effectively navigate my reentry. I make it my duty to rise early and meditate so I can begin my day with a calmed body and a mind fortified against error and weakness. By doing so, my energy is mobilized toward extracting the maximum benefit out of the next 24 hours I am blessed with.

My body is the only part of me in solitary confinement; mentally I took the initiative to get out of my own way, foster genuine self-growth, and calibrate my attitude toward the inaction in the outside world. This time has to be accounted for. I don't have the luxury of being distracted by institutional appeasements while in the process of laying the groundwork for my legacy. I am building beyond solitary confinement!

ADVOCATES

Ground Zero of America's Incarceration Crisis: America's Obsession with Locking People Up

Brian Rowe, 63555-054,
Fort Dix Federal Correctional Institution, NJ

The Reagan administration's "War on Drugs", namely the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986, has proven to be broken. It has proven to be a racially biased system that is guilty of overcharging largely poor people, black people, and other vulnerable populations. Almost 90% of the people sentenced under the inflexible mandatory minimum sentencing laws are black. Bryan Stevenson of Equal Justice Initiative said, "Slavery didn't end in 1865, it just evolved." To my surprise there are now more black men under criminal supervision than there were slaves in 1850. "Mass incarceration is probably one of the largest civil rights atrocities that currently exist," said Inimai M. Chettiar, Director of the Justice Program at the Brennan Center for Justice.

It's quite obvious that the "War on Drugs" has only proved to be a war on the poor and on people of color. It has left families who were already struggling completely dismantled, and well over 2.7 million children without a parent. The US has 5% of the world's population but 25% of the world's prisoners. The system allows prosecutors to hold all the cards. The government may not always have sufficient evidence, yet people plead guilty for fear they'll receive a draconian type sentence. The Attorney General must hold the USA accountable and must not assume the integrity that is expected is the integrity that is being practiced. The unjust, harsh, and unbalanced sentences apparently feed the egos of those with power to the point where the morals of justice no longer exist. In the past, institutional and structural racism has been much harder to address.

\$80 billion is spent on prisons and jails each year and nearly 700 thousand people are released every year, but most come out no better than they went in. Long sentences for low-level, non-violent drug offenses (such as the 360 month sentence I received) do not promote public safety or deterrence rehabilitation. Moreover, the rising prison costs have resulted in the reduction of spending on prevention and intervention rehabilitative programs for those who need them the most.

To fix this crisis requires more than electing new officials and striking down old laws. We must require leaders who possess power along with compassion - leaders that have morals, ethics, and a vision for all humanity. We need a judicial system that delivers rehabilitative results without all the systematic injustice that has long plagued African-American communities, people with mental disabilities, and other vulnerable populations. Because it is easy to work hard at the wrong things, we need leaders who seriously demonstrate where their true commitment lies. It's not good enough to have the spirit of freedom and not move in the spirit of freedom.

My aim has never been to expose the system but rather help

make it work efficiently instead of continuing to waste lives, waste taxpayers' money, and waste valuable resources. I believe when the politicians, police officers, business men and women, as well as communities abroad work together, we will reduce crime, enhance public safety, increase opportunities and improve the lives of all Americans.

There has been great hope. High profile people have been supporting this movement, cause, and vision of re-shaping America. Meek Mill, Kim Kardashian-West, Michael Rubin, Van Jones, Jay-Z and many many more, thank you! A higher moral goal is bound to arise as a result of your investments. No way will the segregated social, political orders and economic structure remain the same with your presence.

This cauldron has forged such a priceless quality of character that I shall emerge mature, experienced in life lessons, socially aware and dedicated to a higher cause. My clemency is in the Office of the Pardon Attorney and as the time comes, I will continue to encourage those around me as well as continue to build up myself so that I may come out to our society an asset, not a liability.

Grievance Issues

Mark Rokita, LJ-8688, SCI Houtzdale

It has become a prevalent issue at SCI-Houtzdale to file a grievance with a legitimate issue and that grievance is given to the same person or department whom we are grieving to be in charge of the grievance. No surprise the issues are denied. Then on appeal to our superintendent and even Harrisburg the staff is backed by their coworkers. I have even cited the policy which holds, "the staff member who serves as the grievance officer shall not be involved in or named in the grievance." (see DC-DM-804 Section 1.C.3.)

Our administration has become too comfortable with circumventing their own policy as long as it is in favor of their fellow coworkers. If this is a familiar issue, I suggest filing a petition for review with the Commonwealth Court pursuant to C.S.A §763(A) (1). Be sure to claim your constitutional rights are being violated, such as the U.S Fourteenth Amendment rights to due process (if the staff whom is a part of the grievance is the one to review, you cannot possibly be afforded adequate due process it would be like the jury and the judge made up of the alleged victim/accuser's friends and family.)

You could also file with the Commonwealth Court to join my class action where the relief I request is a new grievance system where the review committee is made up of both staff and inmates. Your caption must be; Mark C. Rokita Jr.; and all other similarly situated V. PA. Dept. of Corr. No. 307 M.D. 2019 and write/type that you want to offer supplementary evidence to the aforementioned case then list your similar grievance issue with copies of the grievance for proof. They should send you a copy of this petition.

LITERARY CORNER

You Can't Imagine

James Arthur, 457097, Riverbend Maximum Security Institution

Can you imagine a world made of concrete and steel,
Where humans bet on the next to be killed?
Can you imagine the sounds of madness, and its screams,
Where no one cares, much less intervenes?

Can you imagine being lost, and forgotten?
Where saying, "Out of sight, out of mind" is common and heard often?
Can you imagine seeing raw hate
Over the color of one's skin, or the complexion of one's face?

Can you imagine being truly alone,
Where no one loves you, and there's nowhere to call home?
Can you imagine being conditioned in a way,
That you ignore others being hurt, where you're programmed to stay out of their way?

Can you imagine a place where the time stands still
Yet the clock continues to tick on, year after year?
Can you imagine a planet where kindness is perceived
As a weakness and exploited for another's gain?

Can you imagine being so numb and dull,
That you test the limits of physical pain?
Can you imagine a place where the morals of conduct no longer apply,
And most will stay there until they die?

Can you imagine being the remnant of a distant memory,
Where you're left out of your family's history?
Can you imagine your stories going untold,
As your child begins to grow old?

Can you imagine being surrounded by dust and mold,
While wiping your nose as it drips from your tears and the cold?
And, as you sit within the walls of your tomb,
And the depression starts to loom,
While that guilt continues to consume you,
And these memories inside follow you to bed,
Your imagination endorses the war that goes on inside your head.

Can you imagine a weapon made of ink and tears,
Where your pen produces sentences in an attempt to neutralize your fears?

Try to imagine that pen as an instrument of peace,
Immersed within the pressure, searching for any release.
Now awake from that dream and KNOW that place is REAL.
You should NEVER assume you've won at life's cheap thrills!
See, when you think you have won, you've really lost.
Because, in that world, the gain is hardly ever worth the cost.

The Essence of My Dreams

Joseph A. Mander, NS-4160, SCI Somerset

Can't want to fall asleep,
cause you're the essence of my dreams.
I try to make you happy by all and any means.
When I go to sleep,
you're the one who makes me smile.
And just to be with you,
I would walk a thousand miles.
Or maybe walk a million,
because you're worth every step,
And if you're in my dreams,
I don't care if I overslept.
I'd gladly sleep forever,
if I had you on my mind.
And happy is the only feeling that I ever find.
I'm always overjoyed at the very thought of you!
It's like you're doing everything that you oughta do.
There's nothing I could say that you don't already know.
I love you more than ever,
hope you never let me go.
I'm planning for the future,
having you right by my side.
You know me in and out so there's nothing I can hide.
I'll keep it real with you:
I would have to creep,
and cheat on you.
I wouldn't.
I would rather fall asleep!

I Miss You More than Ever

Joseph A. Mander, NS-4160, SCI Somerset

I miss you more than ever,
I thought we'd never be apart.
I miss you more than ever,
and it hurts me to the heart.
I hope that we'll do better,
and can have a fresh new start.
Because Cupid doesn't lie,
and now I'm finding the truth.
Like a fairy gives you money,
when they find a missing tooth.
Or like Santa gives you presents,
on December twenty fifth.
Only thing I know is true,
is that true love isn't a myth.
If it weren't for your love,
I still would think that it's a lie.
But I seen it for myself,
and I know true love doesn't die.
It just festers in the heart,
until it hits you in the soul.
And there is no fighting true love,
because true love takes control.
So this feeling that I have,
I know will never go away.

And I feel just like a sheep,
because I'll never go away.
Everyday I think of you,
and I imagine that we kiss.
And there's one thing I can tell you:
You're the one thing that I'll miss!

Never to be Forgiven

Brandon Mays, 82062, Lincoln Correctional Center, NE

As I pray to my God, my Higher Power,
For all my sins to be forgiven,
But first, I must forgive myself for my evil deeds,
Preparing for my final breath,
but can't stop sinnin' in this life I'm livin'.

Paying my debt to society with my freedom.
Deep down can't live with myself.
Asking the victims I've affected for me to be forgiven.
Knowing in the depths of my soul I can't
be forgiven.
But hopefully with God's help.

For the pain and misery I've caused on my
loved ones by my crimes.
I can never ask for their forgiveness,
for I'm not deserving.
Wishing my sins would wash away,
but my soul is forever stained from my
worst of times.

If only I could just ask and I would be forgiven.
Forever my conscience is livin'
with the guilt, shame, regret, and remorse
of my most sadistic actions.
If only I could be forgiven.
Maybe one day.
Hopefully before I pass away and become a corpse.

Solitary

Brandon Mays, 82062, Lincoln Correctional Center, NE

As I'm locked in solitary, in the solace of my own mind,
Never to be free, never to embrace my loved ones,
Sentenced to over a decade of my life,
My freedom, losing my time.

To feel the loving touch of a woman,
is a gift I'll never get.
To see my children laugh and grow in years,
Is a luxury I'll never be afforded.
Forever a convict,
Society misfit.

As my loved ones pass,
closure I'll never receive.
Labeled a danger to society,
My soul rots away in this hole,

With only one hope,
One ray of light,
My faith and what I believe.

Locked in this hole,
But for the first time finally able to see.
Blinded were my eyes,
Clouded by a thick fog surrounding my whole self,
Mind, body and soul to a higher power,
Allah, the most holy God.

I, Lifer

Zechariah Thompson, HV-3696, SCI Coal Township

Small cell painted gray,
heart beating to the water droplets
from a sink that I use all day.
Feeling so out of context,
enough to develop a complex.
Holding in years of steam
that I've compressed
because I'm not free.

It's days like this, I need you.
These dark thoughts that rob my spirit.
If I reach out, will I even reach you?
If I scream out, will you even hear it?

Days go by, all sleep deprived.
A ghost in a fixed community.
Nights go by, I'm deep in my mind
15 years and it's still all new to me.
I pay in pain for past mistakes,
the slack I pick up for myself.

As I flashback, I sense the house by smell.
Then I soldier on in this hell.
Others have time to play with,
while my dark days end with a plea
to myself to not become my own enemy
or for I, not to hurt me...

Quick to forget the things I say
to whom I know not, I pray
I wouldn't be shocked if he left this place

I watch men go home
with little on their minds
and nothing in their hand.
And spin the revolving door,
and do my kind of time
on the installment plan.

It's a double-edged knife
when I wake up
and it's I that has to see
that I'm not in prison with them,
they are in prison with me.

THINK ABOUT IT

Forgiveness

Walter Everett, Lewisburg PA

In 1987, my 24-year-old son, Seth, was shot and killed by a man who was high on drugs and alcohol. The offender, Mike, received a relatively light sentence (ten years suspended after five) as part of a plea bargain. At his sentencing, Mike made a sincere statement of apology. I wrote to him in prison, said that I forgave him, and told him of God's love and forgiveness. That was the beginning of my healing. After a short period of correspondence, I began to visit him. Eventually I spoke on his behalf before the Parole Board, and he was released early.

Now came the hard part for Mike. He applied for a job with a trucking firm in Connecticut. He chose to be honest and told the boss his complete history, including years of addiction. The boss said, "I like your honesty I'm going to give you a try." Within a year, Mike became a supervisor and today he supervises 180 people. He also sponsors up to six people in various 12- step programs.

Today we are good friends who often join each other in speaking at a variety of events. The most important part of this story is that two people were healed by God. Mike and I have been given a new lease on life.

The Coyote's 13 Cyclic Teachings to Destroy a Native American Prison Prayer Circle

Rev. Bernie Ryan, Affiliate Pan American Indian Association

Anger (The Savage Coyote) - Resentful or revengeful attitude in words and actions.

Hostility (The Unfriendly Coyote) - Ill will or opposition towards newcomers or any members of a Native American Circle. A Circle is strictly a religious worship service and is all-inclusive for anyone to celebrate Native spirituality.

Prejudice (The Blood Quantum Coyote) - Discrimination against any members of a Circle because they do not have Native American Blood. The unreasonable bias or irrational hatred of other races, cultures, spiritual pathways, or religions.

Egoism (The Selfish Coyote) - The tendency to be self-centered, or consider only oneself and one's own interests.

Politics (The Campaigner Coyote) - Detractors that form cliques. They recruit individuals of like mind and dictate to the timid. They secretly solicit votes through aggressive persuasion in order to achieve a self-appointed council under the guise of fairness and to keep a ruling hierarchy. Once elected, they create subclasses in a Prayer Circle.

Sycophantism (The Funny Coyote) - A person with hidden agendas who wants leadership recognition. A skilled manipulator and

underhanded "snitch" to chaplains. They use humor, flattery, and false praise to gain likability from a Native Chaplain and Facility Clergy. They memorize and parrot plagiarized wisdom and mimic spirituality but do unprincipled things to others behind their backs.

Fraternization (The Friendly Relations Coyote) - A cagey person who will go to great lengths to form a personal bond with any chaplain in order to gain favoritism for a leadership position and insulate himself from wrongdoing. This is the much sought-after "free pass" or "immunity" accommodation often unintentionally allowed by Chaplaincy staff.

Favoritism (The Unfair Coyote) - Guarantees problems in any Native Circle. There is no such thing as a "hierarchy" in a Circle. Facility Chaplains should be very careful to never give special recognition or indulgences to inmates or permit them to speak for the entire group. This perpetuates inmate control issues. Everyone in a Native American Prison Prayer Circle should be treated with equal consideration, participation and veneration as other faith groups in the facility. Chaplains should always sit in and talk to the group and address any concerns accordingly.

Lies (The False Face Coyote) - A person who cannot be trusted to tell the truth. The liar slings arrows forged in trickery, double-dealing, insincerity, and betrayal.

Gossip (The Yipping Coyote) - Malicious talk used by detractors to achieve some end to benefit them at the expense of others. They manufacture and repeat rumors to keep a Circle and Clergy off balance and uninformed about the truth.

Treachery (The Intimidation and Control Coyote) - Bullies and thuggish inmates with a gang or club mentality. They masquerade as Native practitioners, band together and hijack a Prayer Circle. Their conduct undermines tenets and all spiritual principles and practices. Their hostile attitudes and demeanor create a chilling atmosphere that results in lack of attendance for some and, in some Circles, exclusion of targeted sex offenders.

Ignorance (The Half-Witted Coyote) - The dependable instructor of stupidity and moronic lore. The "know-it-all" individuals who claim their way is the only way to conduct ceremony or a Prayer Circle. They are captious critics and show-offs and pretend to be knowledgeable and spiritual but are shameless hypocrites.

Chaos (The Feeding Frenzy Coyote) - Inmates who are trying to learn about the many traditions and reconnect with their heritage and culture are deprived of meaningful religious services because everyone is enslaved by the coyote's 13 teachings that always result in the same cycle of abuse over-and-over again.

REPORTS FROM THE INSIDE

Possible Contract for PCRA Counsel: Jules Jette, EW-4679, SCI Houtzdale, submitted a suggested contract with an attorney who has been appointed to assist a defendant with a PCRA petition. The version below has been edited by GF editors and has been reviewed by lawyers who understand the PCRA petition process. It has not been tested in the courts.

As appointed counsel, representing _____, I will fulfill the following four obligations, understanding that a failure to do so may result in a claim of ineffective assistance of counsel and breach of contract (since my representation is governed by contract law, according to the U.S Supreme Court). I will: (1) perform a detailed review of the defendant's case history and pro se PCRA petition, (2) communicate with the Defendant verbally at least once, (3) communicate with the Defendant when necessary to assist my research as well as to keep the Defendant informed of important developments, and (4) permit the Defendant to review submissions before they are filed by me to the court on his/her behalf, including obtaining a signed release form from the Defendant.

(Add date and counsel's printed and signed name here.)

Release Form: I, _____, have read the accompanying documents (_____) prepared by counsel, _____ and I approve his/her intention to file it on my behalf and waive the right to object at a later date.

(Add date and defendant's printed and signed name here.)

Enough is Enough: We were unable to announce the nonviolent protest scheduled for June 1st at Houtzdale by the "Enough is Enough" movement but can mention it in this issue. According to Joseph Redman, MK-1999, SCI Houtzdale, the plan was to refuse to leave cells, refuse to move in protest of the way the DOC keeps taking things away from inmates: tobacco, boots, mail, music videos, and decent food portions and for charging us more to have money and pictures sent to us. *"Our grievance and hearing examiners only look out for their co-workers. [The DOC has] refused to raise our pay in almost 30 years but continue to raise commissary prices to profit margins that must be illegal. They are the criminals... They are the people who allowed their staff to fake being sick from 'drugs' and refused to let anyone see the toxicology report...in order to take another \$15 million from taxpayers for a complicated and slow method for processing (photocopying and re-ending) the mail. Our lives matter too!"*

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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

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 Phoenix.

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

The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

An idea conceived in a prison classroom over twenty years ago has now grown into an international movement comprised of more than 100 correctional and higher education partnerships, hundreds of trained instructors, over two dozen think tanks, and more than 35,000 students worldwide who have benefited from these life-changing courses.

For more information, contact:

The Inside-Out Center

1938 Liacouras Walk

MB 299-06, Suite 301

Temple University

Philadelphia, PA 19122

P: 215-204-5163

E: insideout@temple.edu

W: www.insideoutcenter.org

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

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

Reentry Services

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

Jubilee Ministries

235 South 12th Street,

Lebanon, PA 17042

P: 717.274.7528

E: jubilee@jub.org

Fair Shake

PO Box 63

Westby, WI 54667

P: 608.634.6363

E: information@fairshake.net

The National Reentry Resource Center

New York (Headquarters)

22 Cortlandt Street

Floor 22

New York, NY 10007

P: 212.482.2320

E: info@stepuptogether.org

ACLU

For nearly 100 years, the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) has been our nation's guardian of liberty, working in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country.

Whether it's achieving full equality for LGBT people, establishing new privacy protections for our digital age of widespread government surveillance, ending mass incarceration, or preserving the right to vote or the right to have an abortion, the ACLU takes up the toughest civil liberties cases and issues to defend all people from government abuse and overreach.

ACLU Pennsylvania Central Office

P.O. Box 11761

Harrisburg, PA 17108

P: 717.238.2258

W: www.aclupa.org

E: hbginfo@aclupa.org

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

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) 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.

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.

Broad Street Ministry

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

PENNSYLVANIA JUDICIARY COMMITTEES

Contact Information for their Harrisburg PA Offices

House J.C. Majority Members (Republicans)

Member	PO Box	Zip Code	Phone
Hon. Rob W. Kauffman, Chair	20 2089	17120-2089	717-705-2004
Hon. Kate A. Klunk, Secretary	20 2169	17120-2169	717-787-4790
Hon. Sheryl M. DeLozier*	20 2088	17120-2088	717-783-5282
Hon. Tedd C. Nesbit*	20 2008	17120-2008	717-783-6438
Hon. Todd Stephens*	20 2151	17120-2151	717-260-6163
Hon. Matthew D. Dowling	20 2051	17120-2051	717-783-5173
Hon. Torren C. Ecker	20 2193	17120-2193	717-783-8875
Hon. Johnathan D. Hershey	20 2082	17120-2082	717-783-7830
Hon. Barry J. Jozwiak	20 2005	17120-2005	717-772-9940
Hon. Jerry Knowles	20 2124	17120-2124	717-787-9029
Hon. Natalie Mihalek	20 2040	17120-2040	717-783-1522
Hon. Paul Schemel	20 2090	17120-2090	717-783-5218
Hon. Tarah Toohil	20 2116	17120-2116	717-260-6163
Hon. Jesse Topper	20 2078	17120-2078	717-787-7076
Hon. Justin M. Walsh	20 2058	17120-2058	717-783-3825

House J.C. Minority Members (Democrats)

Member	PO Box	Zip Code	Phone
Hon. Tim Briggs, Dem. Chair	20 2149	17120-2149	717-705-7011
Hon. Melissa L. Shusterman, Dem. Secretary	20 2157	17120-2157	717-787-7524
Hon. Tina M. Davis*	20 2141	17120-2141	717-783-4903
Hon. Jason Dawkins*	20 2179	17120-2179	717-787-1354
Hon. Gerald J. Mullery*	20 2119	17120-2119	717-783-4893
Hon. Ryan A. Bizzarro	20 2003	17120-2003	717-772-2297
Hon. Summer Lee	20 2034	17120-2034	717-783-1914
Hon. Dan L. Miller	20 2042	17120-2042	717-783-1850
Hon. Christopher M. Rabb	20 2200	17120-2034	717-783-2178
Hon. Mike Zabel	20 2163	17120-2163	717-783-8099

Senate J.C. Majority Members (Republicans)

Member	PO Box	Zip Code	Phone
Hon. Lisa Baker, Chair	20 3020	17120-3020	717-787-7428
Hon. Wayne Langerholc Jr., Vice Chair	20 3035	17120-3035	717-787-5400
Hon. Joseph B. Scarnati III	20 3025	17120-3025	717-787-7084
Hon. Camera Bartolotta	20 3046	17120-3046	717-787-1463
Hon. John R. Gordner	20 3027	17120-3027	717-787-8928
Hon. Scott Martin	20 3013	17120-3046	717-787-6535
Hon. Joe Pittman	20 3041	17120-3041	717-787-8724
Hon. Mike Regan	20 3031	17120-3031	717-787-8524
Hon. Gene Yaw	20 3023	17120-3023	717-787-3280

Senate J.C. Minority Members (Democrats)

Member	PO Box	Zip Code	Phone
Hon. Lawrence M. Farnese Jr., Dem. Chair	20 3001	17120-3001	717-787-5662
Hon. Maria Collett	20 3012	17120-3012	717-787-6599
Hon. Art Haywood	20 3004	17120-3004	717-787-1427
Hon. John P. Sabatina Jr.	20 3005	17120-3005	717-787-9608
Hon. Steven J. Santarsiero	20 3010	17120-3010	717-787-7305

* House J.C. Subcommittee Chairs

Family Law - Hon. Sheryl M. DeLozier, Majority; Hon. Tina M. Davis, Minority
 Crime and Corrections - Hon. Tedd C. Nesbit, Majority; Hon. Jason Dawkins, Minority
 Courts - Hon. Todd Stephens, Majority; Hon. Gerald J. Mullery, Minority

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

PPS is partnering with FAMM, ACLU of PA, Americans for Prosperity, the Commonwealth Foundation and others to support positive reforms. In January, representatives from all five of these organizations spent a day at the state capitol sharing their priorities with lawmakers and expressing their bipartisan support for criminal justice reform. [Note: SJC = Senate Judiciary Committee, HJC = House Judiciary Committee, see page 16 for members of each committee.]

SB 8 would reinstate mandatory minimum sentences for trafficking fentanyl, mixtures of drugs containing fentanyl, or fentanyl analogues. Mandatory minimum sentences would range from two to nine years, depending on the weight of the drugs and the person's criminal record.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Mike Regan (R). Introduced and referred to the SJC on 2/5/19. Opposed by PPS.

SB 14 would reform both probation terms and prison terms for probation violations. It would:

- (1) require ending a person's probation sentence if he/she has they have no violations or revocations over an 18-month period;
- (2) limit prison stays to 30 days for probation revocations based on administrative violations of probation conditions (e.g., missing a meeting with a parole officer);
- (3) limit the length of prison stays for revocations based on the commission of new crimes; and
- (4) cap probation sentences at five years for felonies and three years for misdemeanors.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Anthony H. Williams (D). Introduced and referred to the SJC on 1/24/19. Supported by PPS. See companion bill HB 1555. Note: In June the HJC held a two-day hearing on SB 14 and HB 1555. On September 24th, FAMM and PPS will host an advocacy day in Harrisburg to encourage lawmakers to support probation reform. See report from FAMM on page 4.

SB 93 would make drug delivery resulting in serious bodily injury a third-degree felony and require the state's sentencing commission to enhance sentences for such crimes.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Camera Bartolotta. Introduced and referred to the SJC on 1/23/19, amended and passed by the Senate on 6/17/19, and referred to the HJC on 6/18/19. The bill was amended to increase the penalty from a third-degree felony to a second-degree felony. Opposed by PPS.

SB 123 would allow the parole board to NOT consider parole for a sexually violent predator if that person has been denied parole within the previous three years.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. John Sabatina (D). Introduced and referred to the SJC on 1/28/19, amended on 3/27/19, passed by the Senate on 6/19/19, and referred to the HJC on 6/19/19. Opposed by PPS.

SB 135 would make it possible for those individuals sentenced to life imprisonment to eventually have an opportunity for parole in Pennsylvania. At this time, all life sentences in Pennsylvania are imposed without the possibility of parole. Not only does this represent an injustice to an individual who is a model inmate despite having no chance at life outside of prison but it also creates an avoidable expense for the corrections system – and the taxpayers who fund it – by incarcerating individuals longer than necessary. The PA Board of Probation and Parole would continue to responsibly reject requests for parole from those who do not deserve it or who present too great a safety risk to the public.

This bill differs from SB 942 and HB 135 from the 2017-18 session, which created parole eligibility for all lifers after they have served a 15-year sentence. Modeled on how juvenile lifers are treated in current statute, this bill sets parole eligibility in the following way: 20 years for those convicted of second-degree murder and 30 years for those convicted of first-degree murder. However, anyone convicted of murdering a law enforcement officer will continue to receive a life without parole sentence. The legislation would be retroactive allowing for lifers to apply for parole as they become eligible.

The bill also creates the State Office of Reentry Programs within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD). The office will work with agencies and non-profit service providers to bring consistency to how prisoner reentry is managed before and after release. It will also coordinate all state grant funding for reentry programs.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Sharif Street. Introduced and referred to SJC on 5/1/19. Supported by PPS. See companion bill HB 135.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

JUSTICE REINVESTMENT INITIATIVE PHASE II. These three bills, formerly known as SB 1070, 1071, and 1072, were introduced in March, passed unanimously by the Senate on 6/5/19, and referred to the HJC on 6/6/19. All three are supported by PPS.

SB 500 would establish the County Adult Probation and Parole Advisory Committee within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The Committee would be responsible for funding and overseeing improvements to the county probation systems. The bill also provides a funding mechanism to support the Justice Reinvestment Fund and county adult probation and parole departments.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Lisa Baker (R).

SB 501 would authorize the Sentencing Commission to make sentencing guidelines adjustments that allow courts to consider the costs of sentences and a person's risk or re-offending. The bill also makes various reforms to probation, parole, and the state drug treatment program so that more people are able to receive drug treatment while incarcerated. Most importantly, it would allow prisoners with a minimum sentence of confinement under two years or a 'recidivism risk reduction incentive minimum' sentence under two years to receive parole immediately upon completion of their minimum sentences, without a parole hearing – but this provision would NOT be retroactive.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Thomas H. Killion (R).

SB 502 would make the following changes to the Crime Victims Act:

- (1) expand the definition of crimes under the Crime Victims Act;
- (2) improve the flow of information from law enforcement to victims;
- (3) expand the statute of limitations for victim compensation;
- (4) lower the amount of minimum loss required before a victim can be awarded compensation; and
- (5) institute other related reforms.

Prime Sponsor: Sen. Camera Bartolotta (R).

SB 637 would amend occupational licensing laws and the Criminal History Record Information Act to require that licensing boards ONLY withhold a license IF the applicant's criminal history is directly related to the practice of the occupation. It would require boards to consider the nature of the offense, the amount of time that has passed since conviction, evidence of the applicant's fitness to practice the occupation, and other relevant factors prior to withholding a license.

Prime Sponsors: Senators John DiSanto and Judith L. Schwank. Introduced and referred to the Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee on 5/13/19. Supported by PPS. See companion bill HB 1477.

SB 637 would amend occupational licensing laws and the Criminal History Record Information Act to require that licensing boards ONLY withhold a license IF the applicant's criminal history is directly related to the practice of the occupation. It would require boards to consider the nature of the offense, the amount of time that has passed since conviction, evidence of the applicant's fitness to practice the occupation, and other relevant factors prior to withholding a license.

Prime Sponsors: Senators John DiSanto and Judith L. Schwank. Introduced and referred to the Consumer Protection and Professional Licensure Committee on 5/13/19. Supported by PPS. See companion bill HB 1477.

HOUSE BILLS

HB 44 would require correctional officers to submit written statements to the parole board within 30 days of a person's parole hearing or testify in person at the hearing. The parole board would be required to read and consider those statements or testimonies when granting or denying parole.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Pamela Snyder (D). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 1/28/19. Supported by PPS.

HB 135 would make it possible for those sentenced to life imprisonment to eventually have an opportunity for parole in PA.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Jason Dawkins (D). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 5/6/19. Supported by PPS. See companion bill SB 135.

HB 257 would create a five-year, consecutive sentence for assaults by prisoners if the victim is in a detention or correctional facility employee. *Prime Sponsor: Rep. Carl Metzger (R). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 1/29/19. Opposed by PPS.*

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

HB 261 would eliminate a prisoner's parole eligibility for assault or aggravated harassment of a detention or correctional facility employee. The bill defines aggravated assault as including throwing human feces, urine, blood, or other bodily liquids at others while knowing that those liquids carry a communicable disease such as HIV or hepatitis B.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Carl Metzger (R). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 1/29/19. Opposed by PPS.

HB 440 would provide an opportunity to expunge a person's criminal record if he/she has they have been unconditionally pardoned or fully acquitted of all charges. The Commonwealth would receive notice of a potential expungement and would have an opportunity to object and conduct a hearing.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Tedd C. Nesbit (R). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 2/11/19. Supported by PPS.

HB 497 would prohibit the use of solitary confinement for on pregnant women, LGBTQ individuals, inmates age 21 and younger, and inmates age 70 and older in Pennsylvania. It would also prohibit the use of restraint chairs, chemical agents, and shackles, as well as put an absolute cap on the use of solitary confinement for all inmates at 15 days.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Tina M. Davis (D). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 2/12/19. Supported by PPS.

HB 642 would permit elderly incarcerated individuals to petition the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole for medical parole and early release. Individuals convicted of violent crimes would not be eligible, and all decisions to approve or reject petitions would be up to the discretion of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Stephen Kinsey (D). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 3/1/19. Supported by PPS.

APRIL PRISON REFORM BILLS. PPS supports the following eight bills which were introduced and referred to the HJC on 4/2/19:

HB 1002 would establish a program to allow formerly incarcerated people to mentor individuals still in prison.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Elizabeth Fiedler (D).

HB 1007 would allow incarcerated parents to make two free phone calls and send one free email to their children each month.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Donna Bullock (D).

HB 1008 would require the DOC to provide free feminine hygiene products to incarcerated women.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Izzy Fitzgerald (D).

HB 1009 would permit judges to sentence some pregnant women to alternative punishments.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Summer Lee (D).

HB 1011 would create the Women and Girls Committee to track data on women and girls in the justice system.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Morgan Cephas (D).

HB 1012 would require the DOC to submit an annual report to the General Assembly on health care services provided to prisoners.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Morgan Cephas (D).

HB 1014 would require DOC staff to provide trauma-informed care to prisoners and to receive training about providing trauma-informed care.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Summer Lee (D).

HB 1015 would require the DOC to help prisoners apply for public benefit programs before their release if they qualify for those programs.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Joanna McClinton (D).

HB 1343 would reinstate mandatory minimum sentences for drug trafficking. The bill would require a mandatory 25-year prison sentence for a first offense of drug trafficking and life without parole for a second or subsequent offense.

Prime Sponsor: Dan Moul (R). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 4/29/19, no committee action scheduled yet. Opposed by PPS.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

HB 1456 would create a five-year mandatory minimum prison sentence for second or subsequent convictions for providing false information relating to the purchase of a firearm or while obtaining a concealed carry license.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Joe Hohenstein (D). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 5/14/19, no action scheduled yet. Opposed by PPS.

HB 1477 would amend occupational licensing laws and the Criminal History Record Information Act to require that licensing boards only withhold a license if the applicant's criminal history is directly related to the practice of the occupation.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Sheryl M. DeLozier (R). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 5/22/19. Supported by PPS. See comp. bill SB 637.

HB 1538 would remove the requirement that the parole board consider a parole application for someone who has applied in the last three years and is serving a sentence related to kidnapping, human trafficking, involuntary servitude, rape, statutory sexual assault, involuntary deviate sexual intercourse, sexual assault, aggravated indecent assault, indecent assault, incest, or violation of registration rules for sex offenders.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Martina White (R). Introduced 6/3/19, passed by the Senate on 6/19/19 and referred to the HJC. Opposed by PPS.

HB 1555 would reform how long Pennsylvanians stay on probation, some of the conditions of probation, and the time served in prison for probation violations.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Sheryl M. DeLozier (R). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 5/30/19. Supported by PPS. See comp. bill SB 14.

JUNE PRISON REFORM BILLS: PPS supports the following four bills were introduced and referred to the HJC on 6/7/19.

HB 1591 would require the PA DOC to place incarcerated mothers within 250 miles of their permanent address, after accounting for security and facility capacity. The bill would also allow the DOC to authorize more visits from children, give dependent children under age 18 opportunities to visit their mother at least two days a week, eliminate restrictions on the number of children under age 18 who can receive visitation privileges and authorize contact visits for mothers with low-security or minimum-security classifications.

HB 1592 would establish an overnight visitation program at all DOC facilities. The program would allow children 10 years or younger to stay overnight with their mother, so long as the mother was the primary caretaker parent of the child prior to incarceration, has not been convicted of a sex offense, child abuse or child neglect, and the mother meets any other qualifications that the PA DOC finds necessary for participation in the program.

The bill also requires the DOC to establish a child visitation area where both the mother and child could stay for the duration of the visit. The visitation area should, at minimum, include beds and bedding for both mother and child; games, toys, or coloring books; and any other items the DOC finds necessary to keep both mother and child comfortable during the visit.

HB 1593 would limit, to the greatest extent possible, inspections by male correctional officers when a female is in a state of undress. In addition, the bill would also require invasive body cavity searches of pregnant women to be done by a certified healthcare professional, unless a correctional officer has reason to believe the woman is concealing contraband. In such cases, the correctional officer must file a written report within 72 hours following the search.

HB 1594 would require the DOC and the Department of Human Services to jointly develop a training program for staff who have contact with incarcerated pregnant women. This bill would provide educational programs for staff regarding the general care of pregnant women and education programs for incarcerated pregnant women about parenting.

The Prime Sponsor for all four bills is: Rep. Movita Johnson-Harrell.

HB 1632 would discourage the use of restrictive housing for pregnant and incarcerated post-partum women with the exception that it could be used as a temporary response to behavior that "poses a serious and immediate risk of physical harm to the person, other prisoners, or the fetus." In these cases, the warden and a licensed medical professional must approve the use of restrictive housing and it must be documented. The restrictive housing cannot be longer than seven days unless a medical professional documents an assessment that finds extended stay in restrictive housing necessary. Extending restrictive housing must also be approved by warden.

Prime Sponsor: Rep. Tina M. Davis (D). Introduced and referred to the HJC on 6/14/19. Supported by PPS.

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. If you require a handicap accessible bus from PPS, please be sure to request one at least five days before the bus departs by calling the Prison Society office.

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased over the phone, in person at our office or online at www.prisonsociety.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.

A physical copy of your ticket must be presented to the driver. Screenshots will not be accepted.

For more information, see bus schedule on page 17 or contact PPS with the information above.

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 eligible 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 the bus schedule on page 18 or contact Families Outside with the information above.

PRISON SOCIETY 2019/2020 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

4:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$40

Oct 10, 2019	April 9, 2020
Dec 12, 2019	June 11, 2020
Feb 13, 2020	Aug 13, 2020

FOREST

Monthly, 2nd Monday

2:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$50

Oct 14, 2019	April 13, 2020
Nov 11, 2019	May 11, 2020
Dec 9, 2019	June 8, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	July 13, 2020
Feb 10, 2020	Aug 10, 2020
Mar 9, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

DALLAS/RETREAT

Bimonthly, 4th Monday

6:00 am - 7:30 pm, \$35

Oct 28, 2019	April 27, 2020
Dec 16, 2019	June 22, 2020
Feb 24, 2020	Aug 24, 2020

PINE GROVE

Bimonthly, 3rd Friday

3:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$50

Oct 18, 2019	April 17, 2020
Dec 20, 2019	June 19, 2020
Feb 21, 2020	Aug 21, 2020

GREENE

Monthly, 1st Friday

2:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$50

Oct 4, 2019	April 3, 2020
Nov 1, 2019	May 1, 2020
Dec 6, 2019	June 5, 2020
Jan 10, 2020*	July 10, 2020
Feb 7, 2020	Aug 7, 2020
Mar 6, 2020	Sept 4, 2020

FAYETTE

Monthly, 3rd Friday

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

Oct 18, 2019	April 17, 2020
Nov 15, 2019	May 15, 2020
Dec 20, 2019	June 19, 2020
Jan 17, 2020	July 17, 2020
Feb 21, 2020	Aug 21, 2020
Mar 20, 2020	Sept 18, 2020

LAUREL HIGHLANDS/ SOMERSET

Monthly, 1st Monday

4:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$40

Oct 7, 2019	April 6, 2020
Nov 4, 2019	May 4, 2020
Dec 2, 2019	June 1, 2020
Jan 6, 2020	July 6, 2020
Feb 3, 2020	Aug 3, 2020
Mar 2, 2020	Sept 14, 2020*

CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS/MERCER

Bimonthly, 3rd Monday

1:00 am - 12:30 am, \$50

Oct 21, 2019	April 20, 2020
Dec 16, 2019	June 15, 2020
Feb 17, 2020	Aug 17, 2020

FRACKVILLE/ MAHANAY

Bimonthly, 2nd Monday

6:00 am - 7:30 pm, \$35

Nov 11, 2019	May 11, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	July 13, 2020
Mar 9, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

HUNTINGDON/ SMITHFIELD

Bimonthly, 3rd Monday

5:00 am - 9:00 pm, \$40

Nov 18, 2019	May 18, 2020
Jan 27, 2020*	July 20, 2020
Mar 16, 2020	Sept 21, 2020

MUNCY

Bimonthly, 2nd Monday

5:00 am - 7:30 pm, \$35

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

Nov 11, 2019	May 11, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	July 13, 2020
Mar 9, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

COAL TOWNSHIP

Bimonthly, 2nd Friday

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

Nov 8, 2019	May 8, 2020
Jan 10, 2020	July 10, 2020
Mar 13, 2020	Sept 11, 2020

HOUTZDALE

Bimonthly, 2nd Thursday

4:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$40

Oct 10, 2019	April 9, 2020
Dec 12, 2019	June 11, 2020
Feb 13, 2020	Aug 13, 2020

WAYMART

Bimonthly, 4th, Saturday

6:00 am - 8:00 pm, \$35

Nov 23, 2019	May 23, 2020
Jan 25, 2020	July 25, 2020
Mar 28, 2020	Sept 26, 2020

ALBION

Monthly, 2nd Friday

1:00 am - 12:30 am, \$50

Oct 11, 2019	April 10, 2020
Nov 8, 2019	May 8, 2020
Dec 13, 2019	June 12, 2020
Jan 10, 2020	July 10, 2020
Feb 14, 2020	Aug 14, 2020
Mar 13, 2020	Sept 18, 2020

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

** Ticket prices are per person.

FAMILIES OUTSIDE 2019/2020 BUS SCHEDULE (PITTSBURGH)**This schedule is subject to change.****CAMP HILL****Bimonthly, Wednesday****6:00 am - 7:30 pm**

Sept 25, 2019	May 20, 2020
Nov 20, 2019	July 22, 2020
Jan 22, 2020	Sept 23, 2020
Mar 25, 2020	

BENNER/ROCKVIEW**Monthly, Thursday****6:45 am - 6:00 pm**

Aug 15, 2019	Mar 19, 2020
Sept 19, 2019	April 16, 2020
Oct 17, 2019	May 21, 2020
Nov 21, 2019	June 18, 2020
Dec 19, 2019	July 16, 2020
Jan 16, 2020	Aug 13, 2020
Feb 13, 2020	Sept 17, 2020

**LAUREL HIGHLANDS/
SOMERSET****Monthly, Sunday****8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

Aug 25, 2019	Mar 22, 2020
Sept 29, 2019	April 26, 2020
Oct 27, 2019	May 31, 2020
Nov 17, 2019	June 28, 2020
Dec 22, 2019	July 26, 2020
Jan 26, 2020	Aug 30, 2020
Feb 23, 2020	Sept 27, 2020

FOREST**Monthly, Sunday****7:00 am - 5:45 pm**

Aug 11, 2019	Mar 15, 2020
Sept 15, 2019	April 12, 2020
Oct 13, 2019	May 17, 2020
Nov 10, 2019	June 14, 2020
Dec 15, 2019	July 12, 2020
Jan 12, 2020	Aug 9, 2020
Feb 9, 2020	Sept 13, 2020

MERCER**Monthly, Monday****7:30 am - 6:30 pm**

Aug 12, 2019	Mar 9, 2020
Sept 16, 2019	April 13, 2020
Oct 14, 2019	May 11, 2020
Nov 11, 2019	June 8, 2020
Dec 9, 2019	July 13, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	Aug 10, 2020
Feb 10, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

FAYETTE/GREENE**Monthly, Saturday****8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

Aug 10, 2019	Mar 7, 2020
Sept 14, 2019	April 11, 2020
Oct 12, 2019	May 9, 2020
Nov 9, 2019	June 13, 2020
Dec 14, 2019	July 11, 2020
Jan 11, 2020	Aug 8, 2020
Feb 8, 2020	Sept 12, 2020

PHOENIX**Bimonthly, Sunday****3:30 am - 9:30 pm**

Sept 22, 2019	May 17, 2020
Nov 17, 2019	July 19, 2020
Jan 12, 2020	Sept 13, 2020
Mar 15, 2020	

**FRACKVILLE/
MAHANAY****Bimonthly, Sunday****4:00 am - 9:30 pm**

Sept 22, 2019	May 17, 2020
Nov 17, 2019	July 19, 2020
Jan 12, 2020	Sept 13, 2020
Mar 15, 2020	

**ALBION/CAMBRIDGE
SPRINGS****Monthly, Saturday****6:45 am - 5:30 pm****PLEASE NOTE:**¹Albion only accepts visitors
for inmates whose ID number
ends in 6, 7, 8, 9, or 0.²Albion only accepts visitors
for inmates whose ID number
ends in 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

Aug 10, 2019 ¹	Mar 21, 2020 ²
Sept 21, 2019 ²	April 18, 2020 ¹
Oct 12, 2019 ¹	May 16, 2020 ²
Nov 16, 2019 ²	June 13, 2020 ¹
Dec 21, 2019 ¹	July 11, 2020 ²
Jan, 11, 2020 ²	Aug 8, 2020 ¹
Feb 8, 2020 ¹	Sept 19, 2020 ²

COAL/MUNCY**Bimonthly, Saturday****4:00 a. m. - 9:00 pm**

Aug 17, 2019	April 18, 2020
Oct 19, 2019	June 20, 2020
Dec 21, 2019	Aug 15, 2020
Feb 15, 2020	

HOUTZDALE**Monthly, Saturday****7:00 am - 6:30 pm**

Aug 24, 2019	Mar 21, 2020
Sept 28, 2019	April 25, 2020
Oct 26, 2019	May 30, 2020
Nov 16, 2019	June 27, 2020
Dec 21, 2019	July 25, 2020
Jan 25, 2020	Aug 15, 2020
Feb 22, 2020	Sept 26, 2020

**DALLAS/
RETREAT****Bimonthly, Friday****3:30 am - 9:00 pm**

Aug 23, 2019	April 24, 2020
Oct 25, 2019	June 26, 2020
Dec 20, 2019	Aug 21, 2020
Feb 21, 2020	

**HUNTINGDON/
SMITHFIELD****Bimonthly, Sunday****6:45 am - 6:30 pm**

Aug 11, 2019	April 12, 2020
Oct 13, 2019	June 14, 2020
Dec 15, 2019	Aug 9, 2020
Feb 9, 2020	

PA SOLITARY CONFINEMENT SURVEY

ALC and HRC Need Your Help

The Human Rights Coalition and Abolitionist Law Center are working on a campaign to reform the uses of solitary confinement in PA and we need your help gathering accurate info. HRC and ALC are independent non-governmental organizations who work with numerous other groups to defend the rights of incarcerated people and advocate for meaningful changes and reforms inside prisons. We were founded as a collaboration between people inside and outside prisons and we always ground our work in the lived experience of people locked up in PA's prisons.

These surveys are crucial for our current project of reforming solitary confinement since they give accurate information to assess the situation inside PA prisons and develop strategies. Please be accurate and thorough in your responses - and speak about your experience only in the SCIs of Pennsylvania (not county jails or federal prisons). We need as much information and as many responses as possible and encourage you to share the survey with others. We will use the information you provide in responses to advocate in front of the public, the press, and legislators - but we will not share any information with the PA DOC, and we will never share your personal information (name, DOC #, etc) with anyone under any circumstance.

Please send completed surveys to: Human Rights Coalition
PO Box 34580
Philadelphia PA 19101

Instructions: This survey is condensed down to 2 pages to fit in this newsletter, so we have to ask that you complete answers on separate sheets of paper. Just write the letter and number of the question next to your answer. Take as much space as you need. Some questions ask for short answers, but others might be very long. Here's an example:

A1. Current sentence is 15-30 (3rd degree)

A2. Been in for 11 years and 3 months now

...

B3. I received hearings, sometimes a few days and sometimes a few months. They didn't really work like a hearing though, just repeating what the C.O.s and DOC said. 8 years ago, for example, they...

A. Background info:

1. How long is your current sentence?
2. How long have you been in prison on your current sentence?
3. Are you currently in segregated housing?
4. If yes, how long have you been in segregation this time?
5. If no, how long has it been since you were last in segregation?
6. How many times have you been in segregation previously?
7. What is the total amount of time you have spent in segregation during your current sentence?

B. Causes and Reasons for Placement in Solitary

1. What type of segregation are you in now? If not currently in, what types of segregation have you have been in before.
2. Please provide details about the reasons why you were placed in segregation.
3. Did you receive hearings about your solitary placement? If so, how long after you were placed in segregation? Please share your experiences with these hearings and the quality of them.

C. Restrictions and Conditions

1. What type of restrictions have you received while in segregation? For example: showers, recreation, commissary, water, cell cleaning, chemical agent/pepper spray, stunned/tasered, revoking visitation, removing mattress. Please list all.
2. Were restraints ever used on you? If so, please explain.
3. Describe the noise level in your cell; can you hear other people?

D. Mental Health and Treatment

1. Which of the following symptoms have you experienced as a result of being in segregation? (Please circle all that apply, and list any others). For example, anxiety or panic attacks, depression, hallucinations, sensitivity to sights and sounds, feelings of paranoia, difficulty sleeping, difficulty interacting with people, muscle atrophy, disorientation, oral or physical outbursts, suicidal ideation, self-harm. *(Please expand on your experience of these)*.
2. Were you diagnosed with some kind of mental health condition before entering segregation? What condition? (depression, bipolar, schizophrenia, PTSD, mental retardation, etc)
3. How many times did you see a mental health professional? What kind of treatment did you receive while there? Please evaluate the overall quality of care and explain your rating.
4. Did your mental health stay the same, improve, or worsen during time in segregation? Please explain.

E. Drug Addiction

1. Did your consumption of drugs play a role in your being placed in segregation?
2. Did you have a history of drug or substance abuse before being placed in segregation? If so, please elaborate.
3. If you answered yes to either of the above two questions, were you given or offered any type of treatment for drugs while in segregation? Whether your answer is yes or no, please explain what happened.

F. Correctional Officer Treatment: Below is a list of potential abuses inflicted on residents by staff. How commonly do these abuses occur in segregation units which you have been in? List those that apply, and please explain situations you've experienced: physical assault, sexual abuse, verbal harassment, racial harassment, threats and intimidation, abusive frisks, turning off lights/water, denying services, retaliation for grievances, false tickets, destruction/theft of property, failure to protect resident from attack by other residents.

G. Access to Programs, Books, Resources etc and Outside Contact

1. Did you have access to books or other reading material (including any from programs or educational courses) while in segregation? Please explain.
2. Did you have problems with access to the legal library?
3. Were you satisfied with your access to incoming and outgoing mail while in segregation?
4. Did you have access to visitation or phone calls while in segregation? Please describe your level of interaction with family, friends, or supporters outside of prison.

H. Medical Care

1. Do you suffer from any serious and/or chronic health problems? If so, how often did you have treatment while in segregation, and what sort of treatment did you receive?

I. Food and Sanitation

1. Are you satisfied with the food in segregation? Please describe any problems you've had with food in segregation (be specific).
2. How satisfied are you with the sanitation in the unit? Please describe any problems you've had with sanitation.

J. Religion

1. Did/do you practice a religion while in segregation? If yes, do you have access to communal worship? Do you have access to what you need for in-cell religious activities?
2. Please describe any problems you have had practicing your religion in segregation.

K. Treatment by fellow prisoners

1. Have you ever been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused by another prisoner in segregation? If yes, please describe.
2. Did you report the incident? If yes, please describe what happened with the report.

L. Release from segregation

1. Do you think you will be released directly from segregation into the street?
2. Do you know of any other people who have been released directly from segregation into the street?
3. Will you be released directly back into general population without any counseling?
4. Please describe your feelings about being released, both back into general population and out into larger society, after spending time in solitary.

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August 2019

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