

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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February 2022

WHAT IS THE MEANING OF THIS?

The number of federal prisons to which women are sent is somewhere between "one of the only" and 29, according to various sources cited in the computer check we made today. The federal women's prison most definitely in the news so far this month is in Dublin CA and named Pleasanton. Women sentenced there have been complaining of staff on prisoner sexual abuse at least since 2020 when 422 such complaints were lodged across the federal system as a whole. Of them 4 have been substantiated and 290 are still being investigated, without information regarding if they are limited to women's prisons or apply to the system as a whole. (Please note what appears to be an acceptable level of information now in our computer age.)

Just to confirm what most of our readers no doubt already know (and note the official language), "All sexual activity between a prison worker and a prisoner is illegal. Correctional employees enjoy (!) substantial power over prisoners, controlling every aspect of their lives from mealtime to lights out, and there is no scenario in which an imprisoned person can give consent."

Some more numbers to describe the context: As of 2018, more than 10,000 women were being held in U.S. federal prisons. In 1980, the number of women held in state and federal prisons was 13,206. In 2019, there were 107,955. Hard to take in the growth rate. The state with the highest rate of imprisonment of women is Idaho, with 138. The lowest rate is Massachusetts, with 10. (No years were given with these numbers.) Again with no date, the total number of federal prisoners is given as 152,000, with women "consistently accounting for approximately 7%. In November 2018, approximately 219,000 women are reported as incarcerated.

In 2019, the imprisonment rate for African American women (83 per 100,000), was over 1.7 times the rate of imprisonment for "white" women (48 per 100,00). In addition, young Black women in their late teens and early adulthood) are

five times more likely to be incarcerated than their "white" counterparts. Black women make up roughly 6% of the U.S. population as a whole and 22% of incarcerated women.

Black women are also said to be 30% of all incarcerated women in the U.S., although only 13% of the total population of women.

So, all of this results in African American women being twice as likely to be incarcerated as "white" women. That is: 96 African American women per 10,000 compared to 49 per 10,000 "white" women. And, in general, from 1977 to 2014, the number of women incarcerated in state and federal prisons rose by 98% – that is 9 times – in the U.S. We are also told that in the last 40 years – since 1980 – the number of incarcerated women in the U.S. has increased 700% – that is, 7 times more.

This does not even begin to discuss the impact the imprisonment of women has on their communities. Who, after all, are the caretakers of children. Who does the burden and pain of their absence fall on? It goes without saying: Children and grandmothers. With lifelong consequences all around.

Who what does doing things this way help? We know, and it's wrong.



EL MES DE HISTORICO DE AFROESTADOUNIDENSES

El 1 de diciembre de 1955, Rosa Parks se hizo famosa por negarse a darle su asiento en el autobús a un pasajero blanco en Montgomery Alabama. En 2005, Rosa Parks falleció a los 92 años de edad. Ella era una rebelde de primera categoría. Cuando negaba a dar su asiento el chofer dile a ella que iba a tener que llamar a la policía. Y le dije Parks a el "‘Llámela.’Habia llegado el momento, después de haber sido maltratada hasta un punto que ella ya no podía tolerar." Durante el boicot, alrededor de 50.000 afroestadounidenses participaron. En 1956 un tribunal federal declaró la inconstitucionalidad de la segregación en los autobuses.

THE LEAST READ PART OF THE NEWSLETTER

To receive the *CPR Newsletter* by postal mail monthly, send us a self-addressed stamped envelope for each month's issue you are requesting, up to 12 at one time. Put the *CPR* return address in the upper left-hand corner of each envelope.

Five pages (= 1 ounce), can be sent for one Forever stamp. Ten pages (= 2 ounces) can be sent for a twenty-cent stamp more.

Please continue to send us address changes, including both your old and new addresses. This helps us keep our mailing list current and accurate.

NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS. Letters sent to us marked "Legal Mail" are NOT going to a lawyer, and could possibly result in our losing our access to the prisons they come from. PLEASE don't do it! No matter how desperately you need legal advice/assistance, we DO NOT have any.

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons project, which posts our *Newsletter* on-line, monthly, for free downloading and distribution. All issues since 2009 are at its great site: realcostofprisons.org

Equal Justice Under What?

"When a former Chicago police officer was convicted in 2018 of the murder of a 17 year old, some Chicagoans saw a promise of justice: the police officer would do time in prison for shooting the Black teenager 16 times, an act that was captured on a dashboard camera and widely viewed by the public.

Three years into a nearly seven-year sentence, the police officer, who is white, was released from prison. The officer's early release came under Illinois rules that give credit to prisoners for 'good behavior'..." Some had criticized the original sentence of 81 months as lenient.

Resources

The American Prison Writing Archive

Is a digital archive of non-fiction essays that offers the public first-hand testimony to the living and working conditions experienced by prisoners, prison employees, and prison volunteers. All prisoners can contribute. Non-fiction essays, based on first-hand experience, should be limited to 5,000 words (15 double-spaced pages). Clearly hand-written pages are also welcome. No fees are charged and all writing submitted is read. Write for the permissions-questionnaire, which MUST accompany all submissions. Serves writers nationally.

MAILING ADDRESS: 198 College Hill Road
Hamilton College, Clinton NY 13323

Reentry Guides: Education Justice Proj.

Mapping your Future: A guide to Successful Reentry in Illinois and **A New Path: A guide to the Challenges and Opportunities After Deportation** provide

reliable information to individuals about what they might expect when reentering the world after finishing their sentences.

PHONE & MAILING ADDRESS: 1001 S. Wright Street, Champaign IL 61820; 217-300-5150

Prison Journalism Project (PJP)

Each incarcerated person who expresses interest in writing for PJP receives a detailed submissions guide that includes writing prompts. As stories are submitted journalism training handouts are sent out, including an instructional newsletter by a former Reuters editor. Once a writer has demonstrated a strong body of work, they are invited to be contributors and are given first consideration for PJP's school correspondence program. PJP has partnered with the Society of Professional Journalists (SPJ) to establish the first national chapter of incarcerated journalists. The goal is to create a nationwide network of prison correspondents

MAILING ADDRESS: Prison Journalism Project, 2625 Alcatraz Ave #328, Berkeley CA 94705

Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA)

Rehabilitation Through the Arts began in Sing Sing prison in Ossining New York in 1996, with the writing and production of a play and has expanded to include workshops and productions involving dance, movement, visual arts, voice, music, literature and creative writing in six New York State

prisons, involving over 230 incarcerated women and men. In addition to Sing Sing the prisons are: Bedford Hills, Woodbourne, Green Haven, Fishkill and Taconic

PHONE & MAILING ADDRESS: 735 Anderson Hill Road, Purchase NY 10577; 914-251-7540