The Nation in Lockdown

In the United States today, at least 80,000 people are held in some form of isolated confinement, including some 25,000 in supermax prisons. This extreme form of confinement goes by many names, such as administrative segregation, disciplinary confinement, security housing, and restricted housing. It commonly consists of 22 to 24 hours locked down in a small cell, without programming or usually privileges. Terms in solitary confinement extend to months, years and decades.

Solitary confinement causes serious psychological damage, increases recidivism, and fails to reduce other forms of prison violence. It also costs a lot, approximately three times that of general population imprisonment ($75,000 per year as opposed to $25,000).

The Federal Bureau of Prisons hold more than 11,000 people in some form of segregation, including about 400 in its supermax prison in Florence CO.[Write Solitary Watch, PO Box 11374 Washington DC 20008 for information or original sources.]

VICTORY AGAINST TORTURE

Also in January, the Chicago city council unanimously passed a resolution against torture. Although a symbolic act, by doing so, Chicago, with its shameful history of promoting and condoning torture, became the first city in the nation to officially condemn it. We shouldn't have had to ask our elected officials to pass legislation proscribing torture. It will be a long road to raise the consciousness of the general public that torture is a reality, that it is happening and will continue until we demand that it stop.

The resolution was a step supported by the National Religious Campaign Against Torture and the Illinois Coalition Against Torture, among others, which collected 3,500 signatures to present to the city council. Yet not one major Chicago newspaper or TV station covered the passage of this resolution.

LONG SENTENCES MEAN

Long sentences mean that many current prisoners will not leave prison until they become extremely old according to a January 2012 report by Human Rights Watch ("Old Behind Bars: The Aging Prison Population in the United States," 104 pages. HRW is located at 350 Fifth Ave, 34th floor, New York NY 10118).

Of state prisoners age 51 or older, 40.6% have sentences ranging from between more than 20 years to life. One in ten state prisoners is doing a life sentence. Of state prisoners age 61 or older, 15% have been in prison more than 20 years. In New York State, 28% of those 60 or over have been in prison continuously for 20 years or more. Of federal prisoners age 51 or older, 11% are doing sentences ranging from 30 years to life. And they carry the extra burden of knowing there is not now any federal parole.

Older prisoners, both women and men, are the most rapidly growing age group in U.S. prisons. Because of their higher rates of illness and impairment, they incur medical costs that are three to nine times higher than those of younger prisoners. Medical problems for younger prisoners most frequently occur between the ages of 42 and 55. They include paraplegics, quadriplegics, stroke victims, and those with end-stage cancer, renal failure, and late-stage AIDS.

The number of state and federal prisoners age 65 or older grew at 94 times the rate of the overall prison population between 2007 and 2010. The number of prisoners age 65 or older increased by 63%. At the same time that the total prison population increased by 0.7% there are now 26,200 prisoners age 65 or older. There are now 124,000 prisoners age 55 or older, 8% of the prison population.

Additional Resource
Project for Older Prisoners
George Washington University Law School,

Works to get parole or improved health care for older prisoners in LA, MD, MI, NC, VA & DC. Not all cases accepted.
MEMORIAM

Of these people, over 34% (15) were African-Americans, and just over 30% (13) were murdered by the state of Texas.

06/16/11 Eddie Powell III AL
06/21/11 Milton Mathis TX
06/23/11 Roy Blankenship GA
06/30/11 Richard Bible AZ
07/07/11 Humberto Leal TX
07/19/11 Thomas West AZ
07/20/11 Mark Stroman TX
07/21/11 Andrew Grant DeYoung GA
07/29/11 Robert Jackson III DE
08/10/11 Martin Robles TX
08/18/11 Jerry Jackson VA
09/13/11 Steven Woods TX
09/21/11 Lawrence Brewer TX
09/21/11 Troy Anthony Davis GA
09/22/11 Derrick Mason AL
09/28/11 Manuel Valle FL
10/20/11 Christopher Johnson AL
10/27/11 Frank García TX
11/15/11 Reginald Brooks OH
11/15/11 Oba Chandler FL
11/16/11 Guadalupe Esparza TX
11/18/11 Paul Rhoades ID

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Licencias para indocumentados en limbo
lunes, el 6 de febrero de 2012

Un comité judiciario de la Cámara de Representantes del estado de Nuevo México aprobó 9-6 una medida que intenta eliminar la ley actual que otorga licencias de conducir para inmigrantes indocumentados.

Esta propuesta se enviará a la Cámara de Representantes para debate. El año pasado la Cámara aprobó una propuesta similar, pero no pasó en el Senado.

La Gob. Susana (“La Gusana”) Martinez dice que hay corrupción extensiva en el sistema actual de licencias, lo cual merita cancelar la ley.

Je, je, je....

NO SOMOS MERCANCIA EN MANOS DE BANQUEROS Y POLITICOS

PRISON HEALTH NEWS asks you to

Please send them your your art and articles for consideration for publication in upcoming issues of Prison Health News. Include clear permission to publish, how you would like your name to appear (or not) and do not exceed 700 words.

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