

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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July 2013

## POSTAL MAIL LOGGED TOO

As we focus on the high-tech spying of the National Security Agency, we should also be aware of the lower tech but prevalent snooping of the U.S. Postal Service (USPS)--the mail on which all of us reading this depend so much. USPS has had a surveillance system called "mail covers" for more than a century. It is a forerunner of a vastly more expansive effort, the Mail Isolation Control and Tracking program, in which Postal Service computers photograph the outside of every piece of paper mail that is processed in the United States. This was about 160 billion pieces last year. How long the government saves the images is unknown.

The two programs show that postal mail is subject to the same kind of scrutiny that the National Security Agency has given to telephone calls and e-mail. In the mail covers program, at the request of law enforcement officials and without judicial review, postal workers record information from the

outside of letters and parcels before they are delivered

Mail cover surveillance requests are granted for about 30 days, and can be extended for up to 120 days. Criminal activity requests average 15,200 to 20,000 per year. The number of requests for antiterrorism mail covers has not been made public.

The Mail Isolation Control and Tracking program was created after the anthrax attacks in late 2001. It enables the Postal Service to retrace the path of mail at the request of law enforcement by automatically taking computer images of all mail items. Officials in both the Bush and Obama administrations have used the mail cover court rulings to justify the N.S.A.'s surveillance programs, saying that the electronic monitoring amounts to the same thing as a mail cover.

Judges have generally ruled that there is no reasonable expectation of privacy for information on the outside of letter

### Stand Together in Peaceful Protest

Five Core Demands

Eliminate group punishment & abuse.

Abolish debriefing policy and modify active/inactive gang status criteria.

Comply with recommendations of the 2006 U.S. Commission on Safety and Abuse in U.S. prisons re long term solitary.

Provide adequate and nutritious food.

Provide constructive programs and privileges for SHU prisoners.

See also: [www.prisonerhungerstrike.solidarity.wordpress.com](http://www.prisonerhungerstrike.solidarity.wordpress.com)

California prisoners--reportedly 30,000 of them--began their hunger strike July 8. Strikers are reported at: Corcoran, San Quentin, Susanville, High Desert, Salinas Valley, New Folsom, Wasco, and Pelican Bay prisons.

### Violence is Not the Way

Those on the outside need to apply pressure on prison officials and the federal receiver regarding policies and responsibilities that CDR is required to follow. CDR must be held accountable for meeting medical requirements.

Solidarity Pledge from PHSS: To take one action a week (such as an e-mail, a phone call, a letter, a vigil, network activating), in response to a specific emergency facing the hunger strikers, and in resistance to their conditions and retaliation against them.

In 2011, thousands of California state prisoners engaged in a hunger strike to end long term solitary confinement and to demand changes in the way that prisoners are assigned to SHUs. Too little has changed for California prisoners.

All people of good will:  
Support the prisoners' demands.

# HEAT KILLS

Indigent prisoners in the Texas' non-air conditioned prisons which often reach 130 degrees Fahrenheit and who cannot afford a fan, simply suffer in the unrelenting, killing heat. There are more than 100,000 prisoners in Texas. In 2002, TX-CURE began an indigent Fan Program for Texas prisoners. (See the CPR Newsletter, June 2013: "How to get a Free Fan.")

TX-CURE is a non-profit, all volunteer organization which must solicit funds to continue this program. It accepts donations year-round, but July-August-September are the months for buying and distributing fans.

Help us save a life. Donate online at <http://www.gofundme.com/TEXAS-PRISONERS-NEED-FANS>, or send a check or money order to: TX-CURE, PO Box 38381, Dallas TX 75238.

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To receive the Newsletter each month, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address)--up to 12 at one time.

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests, in order to receive the yearly holiday card/ new calendar.

Also, please note that the only address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. We have discovered that there have been resource lists which, unfortunately, give out an incorrect address.

Remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS for any envelopes marked "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our monthly Newsletter available on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org/coalition.html> --This is a GREAT site!!!

We always appreciate and depend on readers' donations! Thank you--Mil gracias \*\*\*\*\*

# Columna Legal:

## Propuesta 36 en California

En este artículo la letra "x" es utilizada para reflejar diversidad en la identidad de género; por ejemplo: "lxs niñxs" es equivalente a escribir "las niñas y los niños."

La Propuesta 36 de California, provee una oportunidad para la re-condenación de mucha gente que actualmente se encuentra en cadena perpetua como resultado de una tercera falta por causa de un acto no-violento y de poca gravedad.

No todas las personas que se encuentran dentro por una tercera falta a causa de un acto no violento, califican para la re-condena bajo la Propuesta 36 (en inglés, Prop. 36). Algunas convicciones en su historial criminal podrían hacerlx no elegible para la recondena, incluyendo ciertas ofensas relacionadas con grave delitos sexuales y de drogas de la calle, o por arma de fuego.

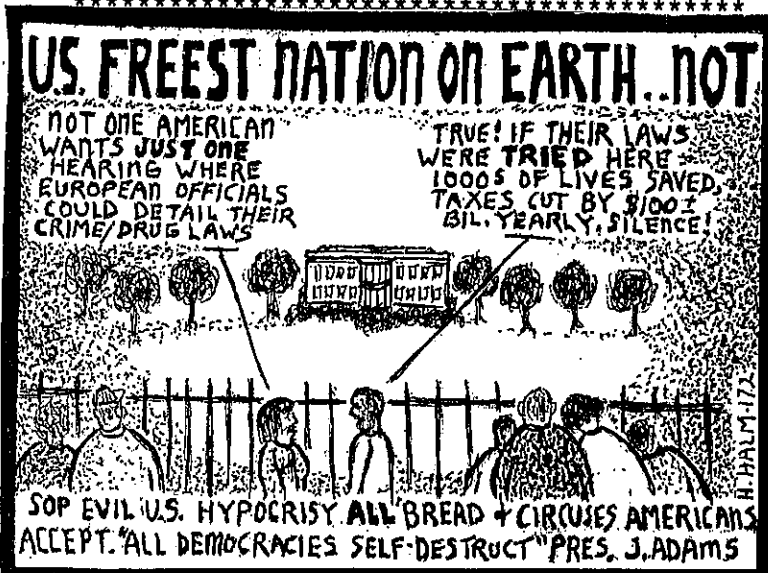
Para poder ser re-condenadx por un periodo más corto, usted tiene que llenar una petición--o tener un adogadx que pueda llenarla a su nombre--en el condado donde se le condenó a la actual condena. Esta petición tien que ser remitida dentro un periodo de dos años a partir de la fecha en que entre en efecto la Prop. 36, o por el contrario presentar una buena razón. {Por el mismo lenguaje de la Prop. 36, se hizo efectiva "el primer día después de ser decretada por lxs votantes." el cual es el día 7 de noviembre del 2012.)

Si cree que es elegible para la re-condena bajo la Prop. 36. le recomendamos enfáticamente que se comunique con su abodadx defensor y/o del Defensor Público (en inglés: Public Defender) en el condado donde fue sentenciadx a su condena actual. Si necesita apoyo para contactar a su abodadx defensor/o a la oficina del Defensor Público, puede contactar a Justice Now, que sige.

Para más información, contacte a: Justice Now (Justicia Ahora), 1322 Webster St, Suite 210, Oakland CA 94612.

## Murder & Street Drug Sentences Compared

<b>Ecuador:</b>
"drug trafficking": maximum 16 years
murder: maximum 12 years
<b>Bolivia:</b>
"drug trafficking": maximum 25 years
murder: maximum 20 years
<b>Mexico:</b>
"drug trafficking": maximum 25 years
murder: maximum 24 years
<b>United States:</b>
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-Henry Halm, NY