

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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March 8: International Women's Day

TRENDS IN WOMEN'S IMPRISONMENT

This article is based in large part on a new report on women in prison comparing the years 1977 and 2004. (THE PUNITIVENESS REPORT *Hard Hit: The Growth in the Imprisonment of Women, 1977-2004* (Women's Prison Association, 110 Second Avenue, New York NY 10003, wpaonline.org 212-674-1163).

Between 1977 and 2001 there was a 592% increase in the number of women imprisoned from 11,212 to 85,031. This increase corresponds directly to the mandatory minimum sentencing laws which began to go into effect in the early 1970s. In 1999 there were 82,402 sentenced women prisoners in the U.S.; by 2004 there were 96,125. Since 1977, the imprisonment of women has skyrocketed by 757%.

By the end of 2004, only two states--Rhode Island and Vermont--had under 100 women in prison. Colorado, which caged only 72 women prisoners in 1977, had 1,900 in 2004. Mississippi had 57 in 1977 which had increased to 1,602 in 2004. In 1977 there was an average of 7 women prisoners from every 100,000 women in the population. By 2004, it was 55 women imprisoned for every 100,000 women in the population. Five states--Oklahoma, Mississippi, Louisiana, Montana and Texas had imprisonment rates for women of over 100 per 100,000. Only four states--Maine, New Hampshire, Massachusetts and Rhode Island--had imprisonment rates of women under 20 per 100,000.

The largest increases in the numbers of women prisoners from 1999 to 2004 occurred in federal prisons, Florida, Texas, Arizona, Georgia, Virginia, Colorado, Indiana, Missouri, and Tennessee. The smallest increases in the numbers of women prisoners from 1999 to 2005 occurred in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, Vermont, Alaska, Kansas, Alabama, California, Maine, North Dakota and Wyoming. The states with decreases in the numbers of women imprisoned during those years were New York, New Jersey, Wisconsin, Illinois, Massachusetts, Hawaii, Connecticut, Oklahoma and Delaware.

All of these numbers are dramatic evidence of government policy and practice in punishing low income people of color--increasingly including women--for being who they are. We are taught not to think of the possibility of acting differently.

Yet, in 2001, the findings of a federal study provided clear evidence that other ways are not only possible, but preferable. The Center for Substance Abuse Treatment evaluated 50 residential treatment programs designed specifically for street drug using women who were pregnant or the mothers of infants or young children. It showed an 84% reduction in the risk of low birth-weight babies and a 67% reduction for infant mortality. In addition, 60% of participants reported being alcohol- and drug-free during the six months following their discharge and only 7% were arrested on alcohol- or drug-related charges.

Not surprisingly, the longer a woman stayed in treatment, the better her chances of recovery. Of those who stayed in treatment longer than three months, 68% remained clean and sober--compared to just 48% who left within the first three months. Only nine % of those with longer stays were arrested, compared to 20% of those who left earlier.

Of of this without even changing the punitive street drug laws we have now. And cheaper too: a California study found it costs seven times more to imprison and take children away from a street drug using mother than does long term residential treatment.

ALCOHOL, STREET DRUGS & STREET CRIME

A February 2010 report by The National Center on Addiction and Substance Abuse at New York's Columbia University states that alcohol and other drugs are significant factors in all crime. Their figures for 2006 show such involvement in 78% of violent crimes, 83% of property crimes and 77% of public order, immigration or weapon offenses and probation/parole violations. Yet only 11% of prisoners receive any treatment during incarceration.

CRIME OF THE MONTH aka Crimetoppers

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the part of the United Nations that is supposed to carefully evaluate epidemics. Should a new, widespread, dangerous epidemic occur, the WHO may declare it a "pandemic." If a pandemic is declared, drug companies are allowed to use untested vaccines. This is what happened. The WHO declared a pandemic for the recent H1N1 epidemic, and the drug companies sold huge amounts of untested vaccine and other worthless pharmaceuticals. They made out like fat rats.

Governments pour tens of billions of dollars into vaccines. The US alone has spent \$2 billion on these drugs and has allocated \$7.5 billion in supplemental spending for H1N1 preparedness. But the huge epidemic didn't happen. There were a small number of people sickened by a fairly weak flu virus. Millions of people were given a new, potentially dangerous and expensive vaccine for no apparent health benefit.

It is now clear that the WHO decision was made primarily to boost vaccine sales. The public's health just wasn't that important to the WHO. Although the new epidemic appeared to be neither dangerous nor particularly large, the WHO went ahead and declared the pandemic, and the drug companies did very well indeed.

The World Health Organization and the drug companies are some of those committing Crimes of the Month, associated with this epidemic, among them: fraud, child endangerment and elder abuse.

This 2 page paper version of the CPR monthly newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. Others who would like to receive it must send us a stamped, self-addressed envelop (up to 12 at one time) for every issue they would like to receive.

Please continue to send us address change updates and renewal requests--in order to stay on our mailing list and to receive the end of the year holiday card/new calendar.

Many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making the newsletter available on-line at: <http://www.realcostofprisons.org/coalition.html>. Download it and mail it to loved ones inside!

Our debt is down to just over \$10,000. Donations continue to be most welcome. Thank you for your continuing support!

Sistema criminal de justicia y cumplimiento migratorio

La Red para la Justicia de los Inmigrantes es una colaboración formada en el 2006 con el Centro de Recursos Legales para los Inmigrantes, el Proyecto Nacional de Inmigración del Gremio Nacional de Abogados (National Immigration Project of the National Lawyers' Guild), y la Asociación de Defensores de Washington Proyecto creado para abogar en representación de las personas no ciudadanas enfrentando injustas penalidades en inmigración como resultado de ser enredados con el sistema criminal de justicia. National Immigration Project of the National Lawyer's Guild, 14 Beacon Street, Suite 602, Boston MA 02108. El siguiente es de esta red.

Como están conectados el Sistema Criminal de Justicia y el Cumplimiento de las Leyes Migratorias?

13 programas diferentes incluyendo la 287 (g) acuerdos, El programa de "El Extranjero Criminal" (CAP, por sus siglas en ingles), y las Comunidades de Seguridad, son usadas para conectar el sistema de justicia local tales como cárceles, policía y cortes para cazar "extranjeros criminales" para detención y deportación, costanda arriba de 1 billón de dólares solamente en el 2009 en el sistema criminal de justicia tales como la policía, las cortes y las cárceles colectan información sobre el estado de los ciudadanos de todos los arrestos realizados. Cuando una persona esta encontrada como no ciudadana estadounidense y de tenida por las autoridades locales, esta información es devuelta a la ICE, la cual puede interrogar y ultimadamente detener y deportar la persona.

Quienes son el objetivo impactado?

Tantas personas indocumentadas así como personas con un status legal tales como tener una tarjeta verde, quienes pueden tener parejas y familias en los Estados Unidos.

Muchos no ciudadanos estadounidenses que son devueltos al ICE por las autoridades locales del sistema criminal de justicia son personas que han cometido delitos menores tales como robo en alguna tienda o por tráfico.

The postal address for **Solitary Watch**, the first centralized source of information on solitary confinement in the United States, featured in our February issue, is: c/o James Ridgeway, PO Box 11374, Washington DC 20008.