

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504-1911

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! JUST STOP !

PROSECUTORIAL POWER

Prosecutors are the most powerful officials in court system, and by extension for police and prisons. They are the ones who decide whether criminal charges should be brought and what those charges should be. And they exercise almost boundless discretion in making those crucial decisions. This information comes from A.J. Davis, a law professor at American University in Washington DC.

Prosecutors alone decide whether to offer defendants the option of pleading guilty to reduced charges. Since more than 95% of all criminal cases are resolved with guilty pleas, it is clear that prosecutors exercise a great deal of control in the court system through their charging and plea bargaining powers.

The charging and plea bargaining decisions are made behind closed doors, and prosecutors are not required to justify or explain these decisions to anyone. If a prosecutor treats two similarly situated defendants differently, it is almost impossible to challenge such differential treatment. This lack of transparency can lead to misconduct, like the failure to turn over exculpatory evidence--a common occurrence.

The Supreme Court has consistently deferred to prosecutors in a series of cases. Bar Association lawyers rarely bring charges against prosecutors who have violated ethical rules.

PRISON PHONE KICKBACKS

There are currently only eight states that have banned kickback prison phone system contracts: California, Michigan, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Rhode Island and South Carolina. Prison interstate phone rates are currently not regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC). Since 2003 a petition has been pending at the FCC to cap such interstate phone rates. See the Campaign for Prison Phone Justice for more info.

LOCKING SO MANY PEOPLE UP

There has been a 30 year trend to increase the use of solitary confinement in the U.S. There are now at least 80,000 prisoners in solitary at any one time.

Many are held in solitary for months, some for years, others for decades. This is despite the fact that UN Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment Special Rapporteur Juan Mendez maintains that prisoners should not be held in isolation for more than 15 days at a stretch.

More than 500 prisoners in California's Pelican Bay Prison have been in solitary for ten years or more. Pennsylvania has 2,500 prisoners in solitary confinement. Of them, 800 or almost one-third, are reported to have mental health issues. In addition to jailhouse lawyers, African-Americans and the mentally ill, common characteristics of those targeted for this especially harsh treatment include: political affiliation, religion, and vulnerability to sexual abuse.

In short, as the mother of a man held in solitary for 17 years recently pointed out: "it is meant to break the spirit and shatter the mind, and there is no use or need for it other than that."

Community opponents of this common and barbaric practice, such as the Human Rights Coalition in Philadelphia, are calling for the creation of an outside organization to monitor prison systems in this regard.

IMMIGRATION DETENTION

Federal defendants whose most serious charge was a immigration offense nearly equaled the number of defendants, in 2010, with street drug charges against them. The modest reductions in some states' prison populations in recent years have been more than offset by increases in the numbers of immigration-related detainees, now at 400,000 annually. To the great profit of a handful of for-profit prison companies.

Logo Contest

Founded by a formerly incarcerated mother, the *Yraida Guanipa Institute* is dedicated to reestablishing, protecting and nurturing the parent/ child bond after long years of separation caused by incarceration, addiction and/or any other adverse situation affecting the disadvantaged people.

The *Yraida Guanipa Institute* is conducting a research study to identify what has helped children who have undergone separation from their parents to become successful in their lives.

The *Institute* needs a logo! Something simple, small and colorful (and without chains!) that gives a sense as to its purpose. The winner will receive \$150 and be announced in the *Institute's* Newsletter.

Send your ideas to: The Yraida Guanipa Institute, PO Box 442763, Miami FL 33144. Deadline: October 15, 2012 postmark.

College Guild

College Guild, which has offered free general learning correspondence courses to prisoners, is NO LONGER able to accept students. Its waiting list is closed and they ask you not to write with questions or application requests. College Guild will be able to continue ONLY with its current students.

Copies of the Newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. To receive the Newsletter monthly, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address) - up to 12 at one time.

Please continue to send 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. And remember: NONE OF US ARE LAYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS.

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

We continue to depend on our readers' financial contributions to be able to go on with our work. Checks and money orders made out to us should be sent to our address above. Thank you so much for your ongoing support!

Excerpt from the: Agreement to End Hostilities called for by Prisoners in the Short Corridor of the SHU at Pelican Bay State Prison in CA.

1] Now is the time for us to collectively seize this moment in time, and put an end to more than 20-30 years of hostilities between our racial groups.

2] Beginning on October 10, 2012, all hostilities between our racial groups, in SHU, Ad-Seg, General Population, and County Jails will officially cease....Do not allow personal, individual issues to escalate into racial group issues!!

3] IGI will continue to plant undercover Sensitive Needs Yard (SNY) debriefer "inmates" amongst the solid GP prisoners with orders from IGI to be informers in order to attempt to disrupt and undermine our collective groups' mutual understanding on issues intended for our mutual causes.

ATTICA ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATION

To mark the 41st anniversary of the Attica Rebellion of prisoners rising up against intolerable oppression, we come together to demand the closing of Attica as a symbolic commitment to this larger goal. End Mass Incarceration & Solitary Confinement. Contact: Sept14th2012@gmail

SOLICITING HOLIDAY CARD DESIGN

Imprisoned readers: please send us a black and white drawing for this year's holiday/New Year's card. All designs must be respectful of our diversity: We cannot not use any with racist, sexist, or religious symbolism. The deadline is November 15. Submission of a drawing will serve as your permission to use it, credited with your name and state. Books or other publications as the prize.

¡ADELANTE!

Un espíritu y carácter moldeados en la resistencia a la deshumanización sistemática, que eleva las profundas expresiones de humanidad. Su lección se adentra más que las noticias de hechos particulares o eventos.

Sabemos que no importa lo que hallamos perdido en nuestras vidas, tenemos el propósito de unirnos, ser testigos y tomar postura, poniendo ejemplo para otras. Mientras que tengamos una voz y podamos escuchar la voz de otros, podremos transformar nuestras condiciones. No sólo los que están adentro sufren. No sólo los que están afuera dan inspiración.