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Education should be a Human
Right for All Indiana Prisoners
No matter what their status
is in Prison! BY AARON ISBY

4/19/2016

"making inmates productive is the first step to keeping them out of prison. making them literate is one of the first steps in making them productive." - A former governor of Wisconsin -

On March 18, 2016, a memorandum was issued by Jerry Snyder, the unit Team manager, to all prisoners housed in the Secure Housing Unit ("SHU" or "SCU") at the Carlisle, Indiana, Wabash Valley Correctional Facility, informing us that a GED/TASC/Literacy class will be offered in the SHU in the near future. Many of us have attempted to take advantage of this grand opportunity, by placing officials here on notice of our interest in enrolling in these GED and Literacy Programs, but, have been told by prison staff that because we have not been six months clear of a disciplinary report, our opportunity for an Education would not

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be possible. Over 85% of those of us housed in the SHU have no reading or writing skills and are functionally illiterate. But, instead of providing us with productive activities, such as, an education, most of us spend 23-24 hours locked in a windowless, single man cell, the size of a parking space, with virtually nothing to do. We are locked in a solitary world of madness, where human contact and social interaction is outlawed! It is idle time, and an idle mind, as they say is the Devil's playground. This environment is overwhelmed with tension, hate and frustration and for us who have no or do not know how to put their pinned up tension or anger into some productive channel, tend to spend their time arguing, engaging in name calling and holding senseless conversations all day. Potential human beings are losing their humanity and sense of worth in this SHU, because they are denied a basic human right, the right to an education. I live with guys who are in their 20s, 30s and 40s, who have

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no high school education nor GED, this is a UNSPEAKABLE Crime Against Humanity? It should be mandatory that Every Indiana Prisoner be given the Human Right to a high School Education and College degree, and be allowed to obtain a marketable skill or vocational Trade, so, when WE are returned to our respective Communities upon release, WE can be Productive members of this Society. The Standard Minimum Rules emphasize the importance of treating prisoners in ways designed to encourage their self-respect and to develop their sense of responsibility. Not Promoting literacy and marketable skills, i.e. Educational, ~~and~~ Vocational and College Programs for all Indiana Prisoners no matter what their status is, undermines the belief that no Human being should leave prison worse than when he came in. This eligibility criteria, that Kevin Gilmore and his administration has created is Counter-productive. Attaching the behavior of the prisoner to whether or not he/she

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gets a Education serves no purpose and does not benefit no one! The lack of productive activities is the root cause of prisoners misbehaving? In order to improve our Society, Prisoners returning to Society must be economically, Culturally and/or educationally proficient, this is the only way WE as returning citizens (not EX-CONS) can properly function in our current society, and not become a recidivist statistic. WE All have a responsibility to ensure that our returned citizens who are being released from these prisons have the literacy and marketable skills to compete and be successful in our current society.

written by: 4/19/2016

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