

Wisconsinites: why spend 20 to 60 thousand a year per prisoner to incarcerate those who are rehabilitated and ready for release?

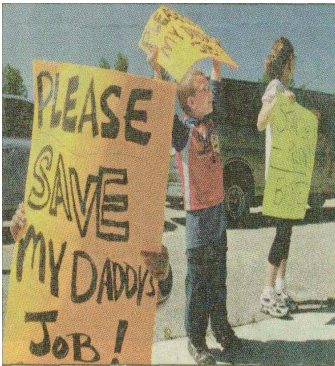


Teachers, programs are being dropped all over the country in grade school, high school and colleges. Each prisoner costs the state 20 to 60,000 dollars a year. Tuition for a year at a UW campus costs around 6,000.

Above, MI students protest cutting scholarship program and the state's spending on prisons

DISCUSSION NEEDED: WHAT ARE OUR PRISONS FOR?

What is an Old Law prisoner?



For many rural Wisconsin communities, Prisons have

replaced farming as the major source of income. Prison closings to save money bring fierce opposition.

This is protest of MI prison closing



PAW (Prison Action Wisconsin) 2008 protest: "return our loved ones"

Included in this Newsletter:

Page 1: **INTRODUCING: Community Forgiveness and Reconciliation Movement, CFARM**

Page 2: Asks with our budgets in crisis, why aren't we discussing prison spending?

Page 3: The case for second chance of juvenile offenders. Story of Andre Bridges

Page 4: "Congratulations Graduate"

Pages 5: Sampling of studies done by Wisconsin and National groups discussing why US has highest incarceration rate in world and what we can do about it

Page 6, 7: A primer on parole in Wisconsin, by the Milwaukee Journal, why our prisons are overflowing.

Page 8: **"When the people come together, the people can win"** By: Juan Q Ward

Page 9, 10: Survey ; Page 11: Petition for parole for "old Law" prisoners



C = Community

F = Forgiveness

A= And

R = Reconciliation

M = Movement

CFARM movement- Mission statement evolving- A discussion invited.

Lutalo has named us- here is his summary: CFARM is a movement based on the concept of moving the community to partake in its social responsibility to its citizens by

- (1) forgiving those who have failed their community, and
- (2) working to ensure that the forgiven are given an equal opportunity to be sewn back into the fabric of society upon completion of their sentence. CFARM endeavors to see that prisoners are not kept in prison longer than justice requires.

Non prisoner retort: When I read the word “forgiveness” the first thing I thought of was that the prisoner also has forgiving to do- Most prisoners come from abused backgrounds, were not well supported by their community or family and had no chance to develop ability to make real choices before being incarcerated : The abused learn to abuse. In order to truly heal and become contributing citizens, he/she has to become more conscious than most in the society he returns to. For me CFARM is as much about society taking responsibility and being accountable as it is about the prisoner’s attitude.

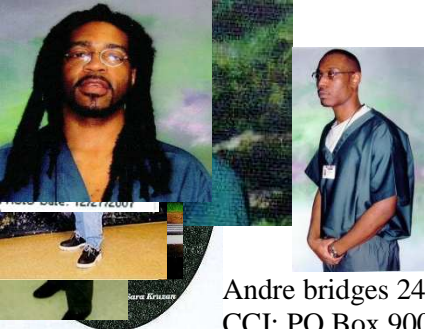
Your input welcome.

Founder’s note: This FFUP newsletter is our first attempt to reach out primarily to the Wisconsinites unfamiliar with the prison world. We try to explain the need to re-examine prison policies as well as conventional attitudes toward those incarcerated. There is a reader survey and petition to encourage legislators to support reasonable prison policies and we have drafted two bills, one for juveniles and one for the elderly, and have been working with a legislator to get them ready for presentation. If you know people who might be interested in receiving this newsletter, please send us their addresses as this is a new venture.

The work progresses. This will be a long term effort. Here we concentrate on a group of prisoners whose incarceration in many cases no longer makes sense: “Old Law” prisoners, juveniles waived into adult court and serving life or near-life sentences, and elderly prisoners who have served 20 or more years and are currently rehabilitated. We need a legitimate pathway for their release and propose several in this newsletter.

For the FFUP mission statement, project information, how to get involved, how to “meet your prisoners,” we invite you to visit our web and use the links to view the many blogs for prisoners: www.prisonforum.org. Thanks to Mansa Lutalo Iyapo, Prince Atum-Ra Uhuru Mutawakkil and David Rhodes for editing and organizing help and also thanks to the many prisoners who have trusted us with their stories. As always, donations of time, money and ideas are welcome and needed . Donations are tax deductible. Email us at swansol@mwt.net or write 29631, Wild Rose Drive, Blue River, WI 53518. Peg Swan

(This newsletter printed on 100% recycle paper)



Andre bridges 248420
CCI; PO Box 900
Portage, Wi 53901

SECOND CHANCE FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS?

I was the second Milwaukee teenager, 16 years old, to receive a life sentence in 1992. When I become eligible to see the parole board, I'll be 61.

I take full responsibility for my childhood transgressions. But please do not overlook the fact that I was only 16, misguided, with a world of issues that ultimately caused me to become angry, heartless, and self-destructive. Hence, hurt people, hurt people! Such ultimately caused me to lose my life in the form of institutional death.

The rough streets of Milwaukee proved safer for me than life at home. There, I was nothing more than a punching bag for my drug-addicted mother and a sounding board for her verbal assaults. Why did my mother hate me so? I showered her with the love I hoped she'd one day show me but that day never came. As far as she was concerned, I was good for nothing.

I had what I thought was a true friend, who unfortunately took to sexually molesting me. As bad as that made me feel, I accepted it because, in that, I proved to be good for something. It should come as no surprise that I became a child who couldn't distinguish between love and hate or life and death. Thus I took to hating myself and thereby chased death. Drugs, alcohol, and gangs to the rescue. Gang banging was the road I chose to act out my anger and self-hatred.

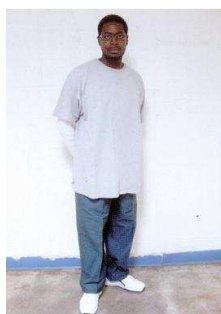
It wasn't until ten years or so into my incarceration that I started to "get it". I took to examining and addressing my turbulent past. In doing so, I developed a real understanding and appreciation for life and everything it has to offer. I love

the man I am today but I also feel inadequate, unable to fully experience the life I've come to understand and appreciate. In addition, I'm unable to give back, to work for positive change the way I know I'm capable of.

I am no longer the angry, heartless, misguided, self-destructive child I was 18 years ago. Yet, I must remain in prison and continue to be punished as if I am. This wounds my manhood far more than the abuse I suffered as a child. That's why, with the help of my friend Roy, I put together a proposal entitled Redemptive Re-Entry Program. The purpose of this proposed program would allow child offenders who, like me, were sentenced to life and have served a substantial amount of time and proven to be rehabilitated, to be given a second chance by having their sentences reduced. So that release is timely and we might get out as young adults as opposed to old men and women, I beg you to support efforts like the Redemptive Re-Entry Program or programs and/or campaigns of a similar nature! To read the entire R.R.P. proposal, more about my story, and the stories of other child offenders, please log on to andraebidges.blogspot.com or go to FFUP website prisonforum.org.

Note: Please fill out the survey on page9. This is one of the ways we can show legislators that forever punishment is not needed and there are ways for prisoners to show themselves ready for release. FFUP is working with a legislative aide to perfect the above mentioned **second chance plan** and we are combining these ideas with another plan submitted by DarRen Morris.

For a sampling of stories, writing of prisoners waived in adult court as kids: www.prisonforum.org: [click on second chance for juveniles page](#) or [go direct to blog at secondchanceforjuvenileoffenders.blogspot.com/](#).



Roy Rogers

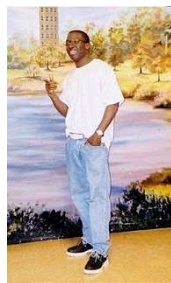
Jose Bonilla

Sarah Kruzen

Hayes Jackson

James Earl Jackson

Darren Morris, deaf and mentally ill on entering prison, has transformed himself and wants to help other youth. He has written Study Guide for Urban Youth, at guidebydarrenmorris.blogspot.com.



From left to right is Lene Cespedes, Lloyd Yarrow, Jacob Baker, DarRen Morris

****Congratulations****Graduation*

By anonymous prisoner , waived into adult court as juvenile

Congratulations, you graduated/ but no one will announce your name. There will be no roll call, no acceptance speech. And no, you did not make the deans list. No mother, no father, no sister, no brother to cheer your name. No one came to honor you. You simply graduated.

To receive such a prestigious award, you survived a household of trauma. But there is no blue ribbon because your father left you at an early age. You don't get a Most Courageous of the Year Award Trophy because you lived through the family secret and your mother's shame. At the hands of someone you trusted, they did awful things to you. There is no B.A., no Master's Degree.

Your degrees are third degrees, burns that run from your face to your torso. From hot grease thrown on you because your mother says that every time she looks at you she sees your father. A mathematician could never have seen that in your future. Besides, you are too damn stupid for that. Do you want to be a mathematician? We'll solve that problem. One mother on crack, minus a father who is not even a part of your life, divided by drugs, alcohol, and dropping out of school. Equals committing a crime, ending up in prison, or dead.

Yeah, say "Congratulations" as you look into the mirror. You have come to hate the guy who stares back at you, because sometimes he believes everything people said about you. You're ugly, will never amount to anything, a mistake. Suck it up. Real men aren't supposed to cry. But the only thing he can remember was when he was this boy. At the age of 33 he is still stuck at 11.

Congratulations on your Graduation.

This time you have made a stand. You are honored for your silent courage. You are praised for your resilience. Not backing down when life smacked you around. Congratulations, you graduated from a school that had no dreams. The teachers all failed but you passed. .

Congratulations you Graduated. You chose not to stay in a box, did not make excuses. You chose not to allow your past to say who you are now. There is no need for a cap and gown, please be proud of who you've become. Hold your head up and stand tall, yeah that's it now smile for the camera. You made it. Not how others think you should have, but you made it....."Congratulations on your Graduation.....

This is for anyone who has gone through anything in your life. I want you to understand that you have graduated from a school of life. If you are still in your right mind, I think you should be proud of yourself. Not for the many bad things that happen to you, but for making it this far. It counts for something .Congratulations.

Above poet's story : "I too was a Juvenile, first time offender who before my crime took place was not in trouble with the law. Never been to juve, did not even have a violent history. Got sentenced to 290 years in prison when I was 17 years old. At the mental age of a 12 year old. My crime was not a reflection of my daily living. But was a result of the many unresolved childhood issues I never had a chance to properly release. In turn I violently raped a women. Which in turn did not feed anything other than the hate, bitterness, anger, pain, and me being raped. Not only of my childhood innocents, but my ability to properly express what was taking place as a child. There will never be a right justification to what I've done. But I can say my actions now reflect that of a different person. From a boy to a man."

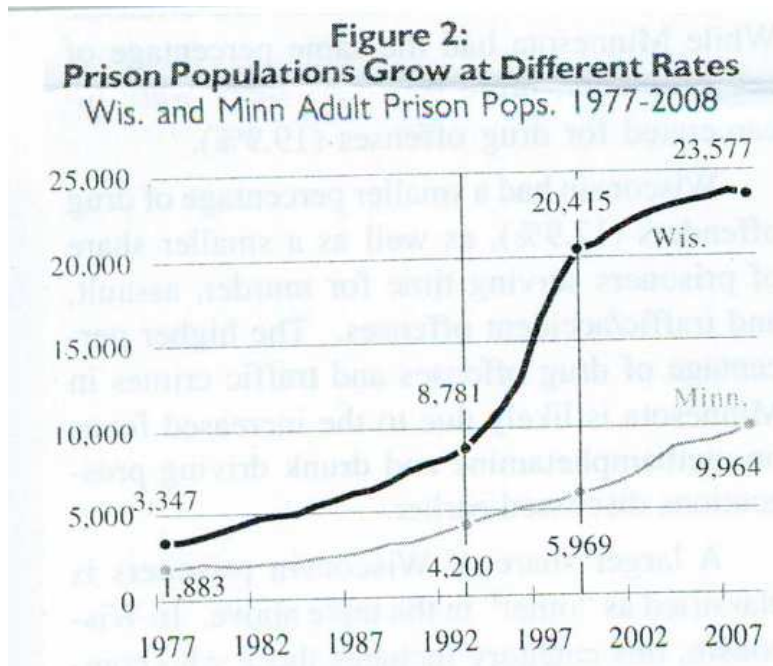
Pam Oliver, UW sociologist and researcher: *I have become convinced that the high incarceration rate of African Americans is one of the great evils of our time. I believe members of the white majority need to educate themselves about what is going on, speak up, and stop supporting politicians who try to win our votes with "tough on crime" rhetoric. At the same time, we must not forget the reality of serious crime, and inform ourselves about what is known about crime prevention as well as the effects of poverty and racial discrimination. With less injustice, we can have more safety and order. We need to let our policies be guided by reason, evidence, compassion and fairness rather than sound-bites,*

Some Gleanings from studies:

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1) According to Department of Corrections (DOC) estimates, between 2009 and 2019, the state will spend \$1.4 billion on new prison construction costs and over \$1 billion on operations (www.pewcenteronthestates.org)

2) New WITax Study says "Study the Minnesota way" (WI is the dark upper line)



Wisconsin spent \$1.08 billion on corrections in 2008, compared to \$460 million in Minnesota. MI has 12,000 fewer prisoners than WI with similar populations. MN puts its funding into community programs and probation, and has the same crime rate as WI. Per capita spending here was 23% above the average for the 11 states with violent crime rates comparable within 10% of Wisconsin's.

Prison 20 times more expensive than Probation The average daily cost of probation or parole supervision in 2008 was \$3.42. The average cost of a prison inmate was \$78.95. That's 20 times more than probation/parole. (See whole report at www.wistax.org; Wisconsin Taxpayers Alliance)

Who's in prison?

3) According to JFA study, **Unlocking America, FEW RELEASED PRISONERS RETURN TO SERIOUS CRIME. RECIDIVISM RATES ARE MOSTLY DUE TO PAROLE RULES VIOLATIONS.** Wisconsin is one of the few states in which an ex prisoner does not have to be charged with a felony or tried in court to be re-incarcerated (www.jfa-associates.com-click on UNLOCKING AMERICA)

4) Increased incarceration rates can be linked, in part, to **tripling of drug arrests since 1980**, spurred by the Reagan administration's "war on drugs" policy in 1982. Mandatory sentencing laws enacted in every state over the same period have also increased the average time spent in prison for drug offenses, from 22 months in 1986 to 62 months in 1999. **Although one might expect the arrests targeted dangerous and life-threatening drug use, more than 40% of drug arrests in 1999 were for marijuana offenses.** From: *THE EFFECT OF CHILD SUPPORT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE ON LOW INCOME FAMILIES*" by The Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, CFFPP ;www.cffpp.org

5) (Also from CFFPP above) In Dane County, Wisconsin, arrest rates for African-Americans have been shown to be 35 times those of white residents. While arrest rates have soared generally, they are staggering for minorities... One-third of African-American males will spend some part of their life in jail compared to one in 20 white American males. When arrests for drug offenses are broken down by race, the disparity becomes yet more evident. In 1999, African-Americans represented 13% of monthly drug users in the United States, but 35% of those arrested for a drug crime, 53% of drug convictions, and 58% of drug-offender prisoners. The study notes remarks given during focus groups:

"You going to go to jail. It's just like a scientific fact. I mean, you're jail-bound when you come across the border to Wisconsin." "You come to Madison on vacation, and leave on probation."

From: *THE EFFECT OF CHILD SUPPORT AND CRIMINAL JUSTICE ON LOW INCOME FAMILIES*" by The Center on Fathers, Families, and Public Policy, CFFPP ;www.cffpp.org

Doyle's parole chief defends tough tack on releases

pg6

This was in the Milwaukee Journal several years ago but still provides good primer for understanding issues of "Old Law Prisoners."

By Jason Shepard

Last summer, Gov. Jim Doyle appointed Alfonso Graham as chairman of the state's Parole Commission. Soon after, the scheduled parole of many Wisconsin prisoners was revoked.

"There is great frustration throughout the prison system about Al Graham's reversals," says Van den Bosch, a prisoners-rights advocate who runs the Prisoner Action Coalition from his home in Montfort, west of Dodgeville. "A lot of these guys are giving up hope that they have any real chance at parole, and families are becoming more and more angry at the system."

Inmate Aaron Greer writes that a commissioner determined last summer that he deserved release, 16 years after he was convicted of first-degree sexual assault and burglary. Greer says he spent years in prison rehabilitation programs, and his family prepared a detailed plan to support his reintegration into society. Yet Graham, he asserts, overruled his release "without any reasons behind his decision whatsoever."

DeMara Cumby, now serving a 28-year sentence for armed robbery, says he was slated to be released last August after a commissioner recommended his parole. But after returning from a work-release program, Cumby says he was locked up, transferred, and told Graham had revoked his parole grant and instead ordered him to serve another two years before being reconsidered.

"I haven't had any infractions," Cumby writes. "On the contrary. I've shown positive adjustment over many years, which is supposed to be the determining factor."

Letters from other inmates, sent to Van den Bosch and Isthmus over the past year, tell similar stories. Stricter laws, sterner judges and statutory changes like "truth in sentencing" have led to longer state prison sentences across all classes of crimes. This has spiked prison populations and driven corrections spending to nearly \$1.1 billion a year. An Isthmus analysis of data from the Department of Corrections confirms what Van den Bosch and state inmates are saying: The tough-on-crime mantra has also thrust itself dramatically into the parole system.

During the first six months of Graham's tenure, the parole-grant rate dropped significantly from what it had been under Graham's predecessor, Lenard Wells. From June 2006 to November 2006, Graham granted parole in 12.5% of possible cases, down from 17.2% from December 2005 through May 2006, when Wells was in charge. In all, of the 4,705 inmates up for parole in 2006, 688 were granted release.

Now more inmates are being denied parole. This increases costs to taxpayers — the current annual average in Wisconsin is \$29,600 per inmate — while reducing the amount of time that newly-released prisoners are under the watch of parole agents.

For most of the 20th century, parole was a corrections tool used to motivate criminals to "earn" release from prison by bettering themselves through good behavior, rehabilitation programs and education. It also allowed the system to correct for inappropriately harsh judges.

In the 1990s, parole came under attack from politicians who played to fears that criminals were getting released from prison without sufficient punishment, then going on to commit more crimes.

Wisconsin eliminated parole in 2000 as part of one of the nation's harshest overhauls in criminal-justice sentencing. The Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel projected the move would cost taxpayers \$1.8 billion in new spending for inmates admitted through 2025.

At the end of 1999, 94% of Wisconsin's adult prison population had a set parole-eligibility date. Now just 4,812 inmates, or 22% of the total population, remain sentenced under the "old law." This means they are eligible for discretionary parole after serving 25% of their sentence, and must be released after serving two-thirds of the sentence. (Inmates sentenced after Dec. 31, 1999 never see a parole commissioner. Many serve every day of their sentences, although some inmates convicted "of less-serious crimes" are able to petition judges for release after serving three-quarters of their sentence.)

An inmate eligible for parole is granted a hearing before one of five parole commissioners. This person recommends or denies parole and sets the next eligibility date. Crime victims are allowed to offer outside information; inmates' families, lawyers and advocates are not.

Commissioners weigh several factors: whether the inmate has served "sufficient time for punishment"; shown signs of positive improvement based on treatment and education programs; developed a viable plan for success upon release; and presents an "acceptably reduced level of risk" to the public.

Graham has overseen the hiring of two of the five commissioners, Danielle LaCost and David White, both in August 2006. LaCost has worked in corrections since 1995, White since 1978. The three other commissioners, in order of seniority, are Jayne Hackbarth, a 20-year DOC veteran who was appointed in 1999; Steven Landreman, employed by DOC for 14 years and appointed in 2001; and James Hart, a 32-year DOC employee appointed in 2002.

The chairman of the parole board has the sole authority to accept, reject or modify a decision from a commissioner. (Pg 7)
His decision is final.

Like his predecessor, Al Graham is an African American former Milwaukee police official. In addition to his Milwaukee pension from his days as assistant police chief, Graham has collected a paycheck over the past decade from the state Department of Justice, most recently by working in a unit called the Cannabis Eradication and Suppression Effort.

Graham says he calls 'em.as he sees 'em, but concedes that it's a difficult post "I have that hard job of saying, 'No, today we're not going to let this lifer out because of what he's done, based on the facts before me, based on the witnesses that may be out there protesting, based on the victims, based on the district attorneys and judges."

This year alone, Graham guesses he's had about 20 cases of recommended releases for inmates convicted of homicide. He estimates he's overturned about 25% of them. "Before I put my signature releasing a person who's been sentenced to life, I'm going to take a hard look at that."

Sometimes, Graham gets intimately involved in the board's decisions. When it came time to release a Marinette County man convicted of attempted homicide 22 years earlier, Graham received a letter from the victim, a man in his 60s who is still disabled from the attack. The man was fearful for his life, and said he'd move rather than live in the same town as his released attack-

"Here's a guy who expressed a legitimate concern," Graham says. "He said he's a tax-paying citizen whose safety is being put at risk because of my decision."

And so Graham called the local district attorney, police chief and the man's parole officer to talk about the release, which he granted.

"Do I worry about that one case? Only because it was the first I had where I could not justify in my mind keeping this person any longer. I fight the urge to call the victim and say, 'How are you doing'." But Graham admits to calling the police chief after the release to make sure there hadn't been any problems.

"There are no easy cases," Graham says. "In every case, there are families out there on all sides. There are prosecutors and judges and police officers. There are community organizations. And there's the public, whose safety to me is always the most important factor."

He continues: "Are there some who I could have released who may have gone on to do well? There's a chance. It's a question of the law of averages, reducing the risk, and hoping that community and family support is out there and the inmate is released saying I'm going to do the best I can. If I erred, it was on the side of public safety. If I had to go right back to day one, I would do everything the exact same way"

At an April public hearing, dozens of people testified against Graham's nomination based on his rejections of parole grants. The complaints received scant media attention, with the notable exception of Wisconsin Public Radio's Gil Halstead.

Following the hearing, lawmakers sought assurances from Graham that he and his staff would work harder to communicate with prisoners, their families and advocacy groups. Taylor's committee also requested a study of risk-assessment tools used in other states that could reduce the needier discretionary decision-making. (The report was slated for release in July, but Graham says it's not yet ready)

Another concern is the lack of available programs that inmates must complete to be eligible for parole. Some of the programs aren't offered where the prisoners are housed, forcing them to seek transfers to other facilities if they have any chance of winning release. Graham admits this is a burden and says it's "a fair concern" that inmates are being denied parole because they haven't completed programming that's not offered at their facility

Van den Bosch worries that postponing parole can undercut an inmate's chances for success upon release. It's yet another example, he says, of politicians being more tough than smart on crime. A smart approach would recognize the importance of rehabilitating criminals, giving them incentives, training and the opportunity to lead productive lives. "No matter how long you extend someone's time in prison, you're not automatically going to have a better citizen when he comes out if you don't provide the skills and programs needed," Van den Bosch says. "The costs to society are much greater when you have people who get out and are unable to function."

Between 1987 and 2007, Wisconsin actually cut its support for higher education by 6%. Only 6 states reduced investment in higher education by more. During the same period, Wisconsin increased corrections spending by 251%, 8th national highest, despite an overall declining crime rate. (see chart of all states: from NASBO , National Ass. of State Budget Officers)
(<http://www.epi.org/page/-old/webfeatures/snapshots/archive/2008/0312/20080312snaptable.pdf>)



Juan Ward is

one of Wisconsin's 4000 plus "old law" prisoners (see his blog: juanqward.blogspot.com).

He was convicted when he was young, before the Truth-in-Sentencing Law, and has been eligible for parole for many years. FFUP believes keeping this man in prison is an injustice and grievous waste of taxpayer money.

In this article Juan speaks of the disintegration of community and family in Milwaukee's inner city. Wisconsin has been called "the worst place to be Black," with the most Blacks incarcerated per capita.

With one in three Black men from Milwaukee between the ages of 20 and 30 somewhere in the prison system, there are few father figures for Black children. Paroling rehabilitated prisoners is one way to help.

For a sampling of other prisoners ready for parole, see our website :

www.prisonforum.org:click on parole page for links to prisoners blogs, articles about the system and our petition



Ron Schilling Standing Bear

When the people come together, the people can win. (pg8)

By: Juan W

When people come together, people can win. But when we allow politicians to spin rhetoric and propaganda, and our mainstream media outlets to cripple us with fear, we cannot bridge differences and are assured of losing.

Bringing peace and reducing crime in Milwaukee County and surrounding areas

is perhaps the most profound challenge facing Milwaukee County today. Wisconsin is currently in the midst of a budget crisis, and Milwaukee has already been forced to drastically cut funds for education and even close some Milwaukee schools. Funneling more money into the already-broken and ever-growing prison system will soon bankrupt the state.

Change can only come when the people organize to make it so. As the great abolitionist, freedom fighter and rabble-rouser Fredrick Douglas taught, "Power concedes nothing without a demand. Our power lies first in our love, in our unity, and in our strength to rely upon one another in times of need and adversity."

Social movements in the streets brought an end to Plessy, not a political body. People organized, shook the status quo, did not wait until someone else decided we will do this. So why do our communities, ministers, preachers, teachers, and so-called political leaders continue to stand idly by as violence and crime is thrust upon the city by those who believe this is their only way to survive?

Solutions will come only when Milwaukeeans stop depending on political institutions [police and politicians] to lead us out of the poverty and heartbreak of criminal activities. We can discontinue the state of fear perpetuated by the insatiable appetite for drugs and/or alcohol, and realize that together we are one, together we are many, together we are every woman, man, child and we all want to see the sun rise without cowering in our homes from fear of violence, for fear our children will be killed while playing in the front yard. We can make other choices besides locking up our men and women in politically organized institutions designed to profit from human chattel or flesh.

I am a prisoner who wants to see Milwaukee and other economically hard-struck cities rise from the ashes of fear and realize that living is not about cowering or hiding behind closed doors, afraid the boogey man is waiting around the corner, or allowing their city and or neighborhood to be ran over by undesirable behavior. No change can come until brown, red, black, yellow and white skin people come together in one voice, with willingness to set aside racial intolerance. Only then will the plague of violence diminish.

Too often citizens wait idly for politicians and police to rid us of crime. But crime pays. That is why political bodies allow crime to fester and grow out of control, to incubate and fester before the police and other agencies move in. I seriously urge all concerned citizens who are tired of the ever-present menacing conditions within our neighborhoods and communities to fill out the survey and petition in this Newsletter and contact FFUP to find out about organizing efforts.

See whole article on Juan's blog: juanqward.blogspot.com/



Rufus West



Terrance Shaw



Julius Bonds



Martez Harris

SURVEY

As part of our campaign to promote forgiveness and reconciliation, we need your views and ideas. We ask you to help us find a good balance between safety, punishment and justice as we craft 2 bills for our legislature. Some questions ask for checks or Xs', some circling, some word answers. At the end of each answer we have provided space for you to write a longer answer. Feel free to use another sheet also. Thank you for helping.

1) How would you rate the current financial spending in corrections?

Good bad poor unnecessary not enough

other _____

2) How important is the danger factor in your decision making about releasing prisoners?

If we eliminate this factor, how does your opinion change?

_____punishment is still very important. If you take a life, you should stay in prison.

_____Safety is the primary reason for prisons. A person who has rehabilitated him/herself and served a minimum mandated time, should be given a 2nd chance.

Other/more here: _____

3) According to the non-profit WISTAX, Minnesota, which relies on probation and parole instead of prison; in 2008 spent 480 million on corrections compared to Wisconsin's 1.1 billion and has 12,000 fewer prisoners. Should the Wisconsin Legislature study the details of how Minnesota does Corrections and perhaps follow suit?

yes _____ no _____

What another state does has nothing to do with us _____

other _____

3) The average daily cost of probation or parole supervision in 2008 was \$3.42. The average cost of a prison inmate was \$78.95 or 20 times more than probation/parole. In Minnesota, counties get the corrections money and they chose treatment, prevention and prison alternatives. If your county was given the money directly that is now given to the state, how would you spend it?

5) Help us craft our JUVENILE Bill : Given the recent supreme court decisions barring the death penalty for juveniles and studies revealing insufficient brain development in kids under 18, should we continue the practice of waiving juveniles into adult correctional systems?

Yes No

comments _____

6) The law FFUP is drafting would provide a release path for juveniles who have spent at least 15 years in prison and are rehabilitated. Could you support such a bill?

Yes _____ no _____

If yes, how would the juvenile, now adult, prove he is ready for release?

Your ideas _____

7) One of our Juvenile bills sets up a board of 12 community members to decide if the prisoner is ready for parole. The panel question and engage the person seeking release and the prisoner will be able to present testimony by family, DOC staff and others. They can show programs taken and writing projects done. Victims will be allowed to testify. Could you support such a bill yes _____ no _____

If not, What do you think is a required check list of programs these prisoners should complete before being released : Note: Vocational, anger management, and responsible thinking are 3 programs are already required. Suggestions_____

8) Could you support a WI bill that provides a realistic pathway for the release of elderly prisoners? Yes____ no_____ What do you think is a required check list of programs these prisoners should complete before being released : Note: Vocational, anger management, and responsible thinking are 3 programs already required. Suggestions:_____

- 9) There are three factors that drive the legislative push to release the elderly
- a) The cost for the elderly prisoner is three times the younger, about 22 thousand for younger prisoners, 68 thousand for elderly
 - b) According to US justice statistics, only 1.4 percent of parolees 55 years and older get into trouble with the law.
 - c) A prisoner is considered elderly at 55 as he/she will have same health symptoms as people in "free" population who are 8 to 10 years older, due to the stress of prison life and other actors.

Does reading these statistics/facts change your opinion about holding someone for life?

No._____ money or dangerousness should not be a factor in whether someone is released. "You do the crime, do the time."

Yes_____ prison's main function is public safety. We are wasting money and lives.

other_____

11) Georgetown University's POPS program (The Project for Older Prisoners) gives law students credit for working with older prisoners and helping them get a parole plan together and locate housing and support.

Should Wi legislature study the pops program and possibly do the same? yes_____

no_____ other_____

12) Do you believe a person can change? Yes____ no_____

Do you believe that a person who committed a violent crime in his 20's and has served 15 plus years should be given a second chance? yes _____ no _____ sometimes _____ never_____

other_____

Is it enough that a prisoner is legally eligible for parole, has taken all the programs possible, can show himself rehabilitated, and has an adequate support system for himself after release? Should this person be released?

Yes, we have too many people locked up and rehabilitated prisoners have much to offer and are needed out here. _____

No, the prison should do what it is doing- keep the prisoner locked up as long as possible, regardless of eligibility_____

other_____

Do you join FFUP and prisoners' families and friends in telling legislature and parole commission to follow the law that was current when old law prisoners were sentenced and release those that are eligible under that law?

yes_____ no ____ other _____

Do you have suggestions for future surveys?_____

A courageous mother has gathered 1000 signature on the petition below. We want to help her gather more. The filled-out petitions will be presented to legislators, the governor, the parole commission (ERRC), and others to demonstrate a growing support for justice and reform. Now is the time for leaders to show courage. Later we will be including juvenile and elderly prisoners, but for now this petition hits the spot- **RELEASE OLD LAW PRISONERS!!**

As of July 2010, we have 1000 signatures! Please help!!

Petition

It's time for a second chance

To:

Governor Scott Walker
Secretary of DOC
Parole Chairman Alfonso Graham

All Wisconsin Legislators

We the undersigned, believe that the implicit elimination of parole for prisoners sentenced prior to January 1, 2000 is unlawful. These are "old Law " Prisoners , sentenced before truth-in- sentencing became the law. Many have met all their requirements and more and are still denied parole year after year . Prisoners sentenced prior to January 1, 2000 , who are eligible for parole, have maintained good conduct, and have a good post-release plan should be granted parole because it is consistent with the sentencing court' intentions. Such prisoners should not be denied parole for vague reasons like "hasn't served sufficient time",etc. It is now time for these inmates to be mainstreamed back into society where they can be productive citizens. Their families, friends, love ones, and in some cases jobs are waiting for them. Where is the second chance?

Name , signature, and address please



"People who tout themselves as being very fiscally conservative in all other areas ... throw that philosophy out the window when it comes to corrections."

— STATE REP. JOE PARISI, D-MADISON

Lonely voice of representative Parisi Asks us to think before we spend .

Written shortly before elections, even more relevant today. (Edited for space.)

Prisons: Spending up, results down, but no repercussions

By editor of Cap Times, Paul Fanlund < pfanlund@madison.com

With elections looming, it seems there's no political upside to thoughtful conversation about Wisconsin's corrections policies. Consider an op - ed column last week by Democratic gubernatorial candidate Tom Barrett. "There is no reason prisoners should have better health care than working and middle-class families ... My plan will save nearly \$10 million per year by cutting Cadillac health care for state prison inmates." (Two years ago, Cap Times reporter Steven Elbow wrote an investigative story on medical treatment in a state prison. The Mayo Clinic it wasn't.)

In fairness, Barrett is following a well-worn trend in contemporary Wisconsin politics. His major Republican foes strive to sound even more uncompromising. Anyone convicted of a crime appears to be the most dependable political target this election year, outstripping even public employees.

The "tough-on-crime" trend gained full force 10 years ago when Wisconsin's so-called "truth in sentencing" law eliminated parole for good behavior. In the years since, Wisconsin's inmate population has risen and its annual corrections budget has exploded from \$700 million to \$1.2 billion, equaling state support for the UW System. (For comparison, on July 1st, Minnesota had 9,423 inmates compared to Wisconsin's 22,084, even though overall state populations are similar.) Higher incarceration rates apparently had little effect on Wisconsin's violent crime rates, however, which increased by 28-percent between 2000 and 2007.

Last year, the state tried a modest early release program for some nonviolent offenders. State Rep. Scott Suder, R-Abbotsford, quickly proclaimed, "Thousands of dangerous criminals... may soon be coming to a neighborhood near you."

You get the picture.

Enter Joe Parisi, a thoughtful Democratic state representative from Madison's east side. Parisi has embarked on a lonely campaign to bring common sense to corrections policies and would like candidates to back up pronouncements about inmates and prisons with facts. "I see this as an important junction," says Parisi, chair of the Assembly Corrections Committee, in an interview at his Capitol office. "There is a growing movement" of experts drawing attention to the fact that some expensive get-tough policies are ineffective, he says. Yet, "there is an equally strong, if not stronger, force on the other side that has its heels dug in."

Parisi's effort to inject critical thinking into the corrections debate has in part grown out of his 10 year involvement with Operation Fresh Start, which provides job training for young male offenders. As a former board member and OFS volunteer, he recalls many success stories.

Parisi observes: "People who tout themselves as fiscally conservative in all other areas... throw that philosophy out the window when it comes to corrections ... They are stuck in this mind-set that the more you spend on corrections, the safer we are. But that is simply not borne out by evidence."

Retribution, he says, seems a key motivator for many legislators, and it is not strictly a partisan issue. Some Democrats are as stridently "tough on crime" as Republicans. Upbringing and life experience have more to do with determining attitudes than party affiliation, he says. Which brings him to the most sensitive topic: race.

"I think one of the facts that make it easy for politicians to demagogue against felons... is that over 50 percent of the populations in our prisons are African-American," quickly adding that he is not calling anyone a racist. Yet race "is the 800-pound gorilla sitting in the room."

He wishes more legislators listened to the real-life experiences of African-American legislators from Milwaukee. He says they "get it" but currently lack a major voice on the issue in the Capitol.

"The facts speak for themselves," he says. "If you are a 16 year-old African-American male in Milwaukee caught smoking pot, you are much more likely to get busted than a 16-year-old white kid living in Middleton. It's just the facts".

Parisi would like candidates to be challenged: "What are your #1 goals for criminal justice?"

I think public safety would come first, he says. But "If people say we have to quit letting criminals out early, what are they basing that on? Is it supported by empirical data?"

So where do you go from there?

"I am just looking for some way to break this logjam and bring some sanity back," he says. "Why do we keep doing this stuff that doesn't work?"

Name any other state budget area where spending could increase by a half -billion dollars over a few years with no measurable impact and produce no political backlash.

No place else I can think of. You? July 14-20,2010

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