



# Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants

An International Grassroots Effort by People in Prison, their Families, and Other Concerned Citizens to Reduce Crime Through Criminal Justice Reform.

202-789-2126 cure@curenational.org www.curenational.org



## Human Rights and Prison Reform Seventh International CURE Conference

April 25-29, 2017, San Jose, Costa Rica, Courtyard Marriott Airport Alajuela

Theme: Implementing United Nations Mandela Rules in the Americas  
(the treatment of prisoners in the Twenty First century)

*On left is an Argentine prisoner, the dove of peace is actually a pigeon.*

Photo by Alan Pogue

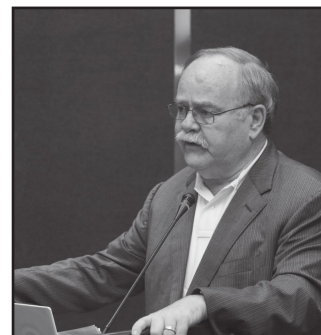
### SPEAKERS SO FAR



**BRAZIL-**  
Heidi  
Cerneka  
was the  
director of  
ministry to  
all women  
in prison in  
Brazil.



**PERU-**  
Bruno Van  
Der Maat is  
a former  
prison  
chaplain  
and author  
of a recent  
book about  
restorative  
justice.



**U.S.-**  
Percy Pitzer  
is a former  
federal  
prison  
warden and  
now directs  
Creative  
Corrections.



**CANADA-**  
Wayne  
Northey,  
has been a  
keen  
practi-  
tioner of  
restorative  
justice for  
over forty  
years.



**COSTA  
RICA -**  
Victor  
Rodriguez  
chaired the  
Subcommittee  
on Prevention  
of Torture  
under the  
United  
Nations's  
OPCAT.



**ARGEN-  
TINA-**  
Martha  
Miravete  
Cicero,  
Grupo de la  
Argentina,  
defends all  
rights of  
women in  
prison.

### CLIP & MAIL OR EMAIL TO CURE AFTER PAYING FEE ➡

**Lodging** CURE has reservations for four nights and will pay or 25 rooms with two participants in each room at the Courtyard Marriott. The hotel is near the San Jose Airport and is the site for the Conference. When the 25 rooms are filled, late registrants will be on a waiting list in case of cancellations.

- ☐ I request one these 25 free reserved rooms which will have another participant.  
☐ I will pay/reserve my own lodging at Courtyard Marriott San Jose Airport Alajuela.

**Meals/Travel** CURE will also pay for most meals but all travel expenses will have to be taken care of by attendees. For help contact travel agent Libby Baker 406-274-4768 libby@pathfindersintl.com. There is a free shuttle bus from the Airport to the Hotel.

**Presentations** Each participant has the opportunity to speak on a panel. I would like to speak about \_\_\_\_\_

### REGISTER NOW!

**Registration Fee-** Send to CURE at PO Box 2310, Washington, DC 20013 or go to [www.nationalcure.org](http://www.nationalcure.org), click on the make a donation button on the front page and then send your payment through Pay-Pal.

\$35 before October 1, 2016  
\$45 after October 1, 2016  
\$55 after January 1, 2017  
\$65 at the Conference

**CURE NEEDS HELP!**  
**The cost of the Conference**  
**is \$25,000**  
**Please contribute!**

First Name \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name \_\_\_\_\_

Email address \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_



# COLSON TASK FORCE RECOMMENDATIONS

## A MODEL FOR THE COUNTRY



Shown left to right are former Congressmen J.C. Watts, (R-OK), Alan Mollohan, (D-WV) & Frank Wolf, (R-VA). They provided the leadership for the Study.

In 2014, Congress created the Charles Colson Task Force to spend a year and a million dollars reviewing the federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) which is the largest prison system in the country.

On Jan. 26, 2016, the Task Force released its six recommendations that were voted unanimously by all nine members who were selected by both Republican and Democratic leaders in Congress.

The 132 page report called *Transforming Prisons, Restoring Lives* can be read and printed out by going to [www.UrbanInstitute.org](http://www.UrbanInstitute.org). People in prison should ask their librarians to do this.

### Recommendation 1: Reserve prison for those convicted of the most serious federal crimes.

Congress should repeal all mandatory minimums for drug offenses except for kingpins. Only 16% of people in state prisons have been convicted of a drug crime, but 50% in the BOP.

"Moreover, most people in federal prison for sex crimes were convicted of possessing, trading, selling, or producing child pornography versus sexual assault, which is more common in state corrections system. Significant shares of those convicted of federal sex crimes are subject to lengthy sentences with few opportunities for reductions post-conviction."

In addition, there should be a review of all the other 200 mandatory minimums in the federal code. For example, judges should be allowed to sentence below the mandatory minimum for certain weapon offenses associated with nonviolent crimes.

While drug offenses were by far the biggest cause for the eight times increase in the BOP from 25,000 people in 1980 to almost 200,000 today, weapon possession crimes came in a distant second.

Finally, any prohibition on probation should be eliminated. In fact, supervision violators make up only about 3% of the BOP. Also, almost 50% of people in state prisons are there for violent crimes, but only 7% are in the BOP.

Thus, each of the 94 federal judicial districts should establish front-end diversionary programs e.g. drug and veterans courts. Prosecutors should be encouraged to expand pretrial diversion.

### Recommendation 2: Promote a Culture of Safety and of Rehabilitation in Federal Facilities

The BOP is presently 20% above its rated capacity. One of the immediate ways to help to reduce this 20% is to amend the good time credit so that 54 days, not just 47, are given for each year.

Another safety recommendation is to have appropriate staffing levels as well as not having more individuals sharing cells designed for fewer residents. Also, there must be adequate and beneficial in-prison programming and services based on individual risk.

The BOP's current assessment tool of static risk factors should be expanded to include treatment needs as well as program shortages.

For example, two of the most effective, but have waiting lists, are the Residential Drug Abuse Program and prison industries. Making RDAP and its one-year sentence reduction available to all prisoners as well as using research suggesting a working wage would enhance their effectiveness. Other programs doing better

but still needing funding are mental health, drug abuse, education, and treatment for persons convicted of sex offenses. Finally, the 5% or almost 10,000 of the BOP held in some form of segregated housing should be greatly reduced. Studies show that staff can promote behavioral change with positive relationships with those who are in segregated housing.

And last, but certainly not least, is that the BOP should house individuals as close to home as possible. One strategy is to contract with state facilities when no federal facility is near.

Furthermore, the BOP should establish a central family affairs and visitation office to enhance the bonds between families especially between incarcerated loved ones and their children.



Pictured is Cong. Sheila Jackson Lee holding a press conference to introduce HR 5130 the "Stop Infant Mortality and Recidivism Reduction Act of 2016 or "SIMARRA" Act .

This Bill allows the BOP to have a pilot program where nurseries are provided for 30 months at the prison for babies born to women who are there in prison.

Shown third from right is Charlie Sullivan, President of CURE. He expressed total support for the bill and said it was in keeping with the family emphasis in the Colson Report.

### Recommendation 3: Incentivize Participation in Risk-Reduction Programming

"If the incarcerated exist in a state of perpetual idleness, prison can become a reliable incubator for future crime." Thus, the Task Force recommends that Congress (1) authorize individuals not serving life sentences to earn up to 20% of time served by complying with his or her individualized case plan.

Examples of this plan would include skill-building, ongoing education, vocational training and faith-based programming. For lifers who legally cannot get the 20%, there would be rewards such as additional recreation, increased visiting and phone use and access to specialty commissary items.

(2) Establish a Second Look provision that would permit anyone who has been "in" for 15 years to apply for resentencing. A judge in each 94 fed districts would hear these petitions. If okayed, there would be a full judicial review.

Also, "Judges would not be required to adhere to existing mandatory minimum sentences" but could consider other factors such as change in prison, whether release would pose too great a risk to public safety and how societal norms have changed concerning the underlying offense. (Cont. next page)



(continued from previous page) If turned down, they could try again in five years. In addition, victims could provide written testimony but the sentence cannot be made more severe.

Finally, the judicial panel "may choose to terminate the prison term at review, shorten the prison term to an earlier future release date, add a period of community supervision, or attach certain conditions of supervision."

In 2014, less than 4% of the BOP had served 15 years or more. The abolition of parole removed any mechanism by which these long sentences could be reconsidered. Besides the Second Look, the Task Force recommends that the clemency initiative of President Obama remain in place for future Presidents and that this process continue to be improved.

#### **Recommendation 4: Ensure Successful Reintegration by Using Evidence Based Practices in Supervision and Support**

BOP released 40,000 in 2014. Most spent the final portion in "prerelease custody" which: (1) is provided by US Probation (2) cannot exceed one year and may involve a halfway house called Residential Reentry Centers (RRCs), home confinement, or a combination of both. Home confinement is limited to six months or 10% of the prison term, whichever is less.

The Task Force states that there must be a much better "transition of individuals transferring from BOP to community agencies to ensure a safe and seamless reintegration."

At the same time, supervised release should be strengthened and the use of early termination should be greatly expanded. In fact, for successful individuals, federal judges have the authority to terminate a supervised release term after a year.

#### **Recommendation 5: Enhance System Performance and Accountability through Better Coordination across Agencies and Increased Transparency**

The Task Force recommends the following actions: (1) establish a joint Dept. of Justice/Judiciary working group to oversee the implementation of these reforms. Specifically, make sure that federal probation is anchored in evidence-based practice which

are consistent with best practice and that conditions of supervision—including any potential supervision fees—support rather undermine reentry. (2) expand and disseminate public info about fed corrections. (3) set up an Office of Victim Services in the BOP. (4) expand the perspective of the U.S. Sentencing Commission (USSC) by including formerly incarcerated individuals and victims as well as defense attorneys. (5) establish a permanent BOP Performance, Accountability and Oversight Board to ensure BOP carries out these reforms while maintaining high standards of correctional practice and (6) review fed collateral consequences that have no public safety basis and develop recommendations to Congress starting with allowing Pell Grants in the BOP and eliminating criminal history disclosures for fed employees.

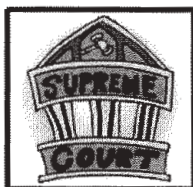
#### **Recommendation 6: Reinvest Savings to Support the Expansion of Necessary Programs, Supervision and Treatment**

Congress should immediately provide funds to the DOJ and the Judiciary for the following: (1) a validated risk and needs assessment tool for the BOP (2) increased staffing, programs and services to US Probation (3) US courts to establish the Second Look (4) the USCC to expand capacity and training and (5) grants for front-end diversion programs.

In addition, the Joint Working Group should develop recommendations for reinvesting savings from the reduced BOP population, including continued funding for the above and support for other Task Force recommendations.

The Task Force estimates that if these six recommendations were implemented as a whole, the BOP population would be reduced by more than 60,000 by FY 2024 with a savings of \$5 billion. "Rather than closing BOP facilities, the BOP will first transfer individuals out of privately operated facilities" which now house 11% of the BOP's population.

Therefore, "Under the justice reinvestment model, the savings resulting from implementing these recommendations will be reinvested in other programs that can improve accountability, reduce recidivism and increase public safety."



For free copies of these decisions and other ones this term, contact the Public Information Office, Supreme Court, #1 First St. NE, Washington, DC 20543 202-479-3211. Limit of five decisions for each request. [www.supremecourt.gov](http://www.supremecourt.gov)

**Habeas:** *Kernan v. Hinojosa* 15-833; *Johnson v. Lee* 15-789.

**Death Penalty:** *White v. Wheeler* 14-1372; *Hurst v. Florida* 14-7505; *Kansas v. Carr* 14-449; *Williams v. Pennsylvania* 15-5040.

**Life Sentences Without Parole:** *Montgomery v. Louisiana* 14-280; *Lynch v. Arizona* 15-8366.

**Sex Offenders:** *Lockhart v. United States* 14-8358; *Nichols v. United States* 16-5238.

**Juries Without Minorities:** *Foster v. Chatman* 14-8349.

**Police:** *Mullenix v. Luna* 14-1143; *Caetano v. Massachusetts* 14-10078.

**Courts:** *Woods v. Etherton* 15-273; *Welch v. United States* 15-723; *Betterman v. Montana* 14-1457; *Molina-Martinez v. United States* 14-8913; *United States v. Bryant* 15-420; *Puerto Rico v. Sanchez Valle* 15-108; *Maryland v. Kulbicki* 14-848; *Wearry v. Cain* 14-10008.

**Deportation:** *Luna Torres v. Lynch* 14-1096.

**Prisoner Litigation:** *Bruce v. Samuels* 14-844; *Ross v. Blake* 15-339; *Simmons v. Himmelreich* 15-109.



Follow CURE on social media  
Twitter, @CURENational and on Facebook.

CURE in its last newsletter was wrong about prison systems that do not charge a copayment for healthcare. Let us know if your state does not charge a co pay.

For a free 24 page resource directory, contact Prison Activist Resource Center, PO Box 70447, Oakland, CA 94612 510-893-4648 [prisoneractivist@gmail.com](mailto:prisoneractivist@gmail.com)

On the first Saturday of each month CURE has a free conference phone call about civil commitment of sex offenders. It is From 10:30 AM-noon (EST), 9:30-11 (CST), 8:30-10 (MST) and 7:30-9 (PST). Call 1-712-432-0460 then 663535# to participate.

*Hell is A Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement* edited by Jean Casella, James Ridgeway and Sarah Shourd.



**Felonism: Hating In Plain Sight** by Andy and Linda Polk (left) is a collection of true stories that show "prejudice, discrimination or antagonism directed against someone (and his or her family and friends) who who has been suspected or convicted of a felony because of the belief that they are inferior."

see [www.felonism.com](http://www.felonism.com)

# WRITE YOUR MEMBERS OF CONGRESS TO INTRODUCE A CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENT FOR THE REPEAL!!!

**Every person in each of the 50 states has two Senators and one Representative. Ask around to find out who they are. Then, write them. Keep your letter to one page and it doesn't need to be typed. Please be respectful and use your own words to explain why this amendment should be introduced.**

**The addresses of your two Senators are U.S. Senate, Washington, DC 20510 and the address of your one Representative is House of Representatives, Washington, DC 20515. Send CURE a copy of their replies.**

by Charles Sullivan and Barbara Koeppel\*

The U.S. Congress banned slavery in America 150 years ago (after a 250-year run) on December 18, 1865, when the Thirteenth Amendment became the law of the land.

But it didn't, at least not entirely. The amendment added an *exclusion clause*: Slavery would be allowed as punishment for a crime.

To reaffirm the penal servitude, Virginia's Supreme Court declared prisoners "slaves of the state" in 1872.

Thus, prisoners have few legal rights. Theoretically, they can appeal sentences, enjoy limited free speech through the First Amendment, and get limited medical care through the Eighth Amendment. All of these rights are violated daily.

Except for those incarcerated in two states (Maine and Vermont), prisoners cannot vote while incarcerated. In two states (Kentucky and Virginia), they cannot vote even after being released from prison, despite having paid their "debt to society." Nor can they organize, support families, get their children health benefits, or contribute to social security, all job-related benefits.

Most important, they can't refuse to work, choose jobs, or negotiate wages. As the U.S. Department of Justice, Federal Bureau of Prisons 2008 program states, "Sentenced inmates physically and mentally able to work are required to participate in the work program." Nearly all state prisons follow suit.

Such was the rationale for the chain gang "work" programs in many states, especially throughout the South, from 1865 to 1955, and revived in 1995 in Phoenix, Arizona by Sheriff Joe Arpaio. And these programs were not just for men and women. Participation in Arpaio's gangs is unpaid and "voluntary," and juveniles *may* also join.

Even if prisoners could refuse to work, they do not, for several reasons. First,

punishment is certain. They are put in solitary confinement or *lockdown* (23 hours a day in a cell). Or they are moved to a cell with eight inmates instead of two. Or their access is blocked to family visits, TV, phone calls, the prison commissary, outside yard time, and education programs. Or they lose *good time*, which reduces an inmate's sentence. If they file grievances, the grievances go to the same people making the prisoner's life miserable.

Many current and formerly incarcerated men and women say that nearly everyone wants to work. It's hard to sit in a cell doing nothing.

Most important, prisoners need money, and most prisoner families are too poor to send any. Prisoners might get \$20 a year from a relative, but that does not go far. And everything in prison is for sale.

Inmates must buy all their necessities at prison commissaries. The cheapest soap is a four-pack of Ivory for \$3.50, Aspirin is \$1.50, a small container of peanut butter is \$2.90, and toothpaste is \$2.90. Emergency medical care is free, and 12 states provide other medical services at no cost. But the others slap on a \$2.00 to \$5.00 co-payment.

Even uniforms and shoes have price tags. If inmates want items that fit, they must tip the prisoner who dispenses them.

Most inmates' cash comes from prison wages (called *gratuities*) set by Level 1–5 pay scales. Two states (Georgia and Texas) pay nothing. Others pay next to nothing.

Unskilled Level 5 prisoners mop floors, wash windows, shovel snow, or scrub pots for eight to 13 cents an hour, or \$5.00 to \$12.00 a month, based on how many hours worked. Level 1 skilled inmates (say, plumbers or mechanics) get \$1.50 to \$8.00 a day, perhaps \$300 a month. But Level 1 jobs are scarce.

State and federal prisons also have on-site factories that sew prison uniforms or military goods (jackets and body bags) or build office furniture for government agencies. They pay inmates hourly or piece rates (for example, 12 cents for sewing three dozen T-shirts), totaling \$2.00 to \$8.50 a day, for

seven-hour days, with no overtime pay. UNICOR, the quasi for-profit federal prison industry, hasn't raised rates since 1987.

With such low wages—just a fraction of the federal minimum, which is being raised in several states and cities to what is considered a living wage—inmates cannot support families or save for when they are released.

Inmates do better in the Prison Industry Enhancement (PIE) program, through which private firms build in-prison factories, train inmates, and pay minimum wage and social security. Inmates can designate a percentage for child support. For example, in Nevada, inmates restore cars. In Washington, they pack Starbucks coffee beans.

Although PIE began 40 years ago, authorities do not welcome it, because they see it as just one more task to do. Thus, PIE affects only 5,000 of the 2.3 million inmates in the United States.

The exclusion clause, which sanctions these low wages, hurts the economy. Before inmates were in prison, 50% were employed. If they were paid more in prison, they would still be in the economy and could send money to families, who would spend more, thus helping the economy grow.

Slavery is the parent of this clause. It springs from the same culture. After the Civil War, Jim Crow laws were passed to justify imprisoning former slaves (e.g., they could be arrested just for looking at a white woman) and get them to work for free. Thus, to save on labor costs, industries contracted with the state for inmates that they then sent back to the fields; some were also sent to mines. Others were sent to railroad companies, such as the C&O, to dig a tunnel to West Virginia, through the mountains. Many died.

Inmates are humiliated, brutalized, and denied human rights. But that is not the job of prisons. Persons convicted of crimes are sent to prison *as* punishment, not *for* punishment. They are imprisoned to take away their freedom, not to enslave them.

After 150 years of constitutionally enshrined slavery, it's time for the U.S. Congress to end it. ■

\*Charles Sullivan is President of the International Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE). Barbara Koeppel is a Washington, D.C.-based freelance journalist. Sullivan can be reached at (202) 789-2126 or cure@curenational.org.



## CURE'S POLICY INITIATIVES FOR 2016 (small print but big insights from many of you)

In the last newsletter, you voted by writing "1" next to your first priority, "2" for your second priority, etc.. 337 of you voted and the issues listed below with fewer votes indicate the criminal justice areas you felt needed the most reform. Quotes from your letters are in italics.

#1  
924

**PRISON-** release is not based on time served but on when certain rehabilitation is achieved. Thus, a person is sent to prison as punishment and not for punishment. This means that people in prison should be able to vote, have private family visits and enjoy adequate, healthy meals. There should be access by the media and just like funds were given by Congress to build prisons, funds should be given now to reduce the number of people in prison. There should be transfers to a prison or jail nearest to one's family and good time available for all inmates regardless of crime. Finally, Mandela Rules recently passed by the United Nations should be implemented. It limits, as a maximum, 15 days in solitary; incarcerated veteran facilities should be set up with access to treatment for PTSD and TBI; screening at intake for all and treatment for Hepatitis "C" virus; an independent ombudsman to address and process inmate grievances; access to a comprehensive, up-to-date law library; and training of all staff with due process-based rules and enforced compliance; priority on employable skills (good jobs and good wages), education e.g. Pell Grants, cultural activities e.g. plays and communications e.g. computers which cannot be abused, prisoner-run newspapers, radio/tv.

*The most important person in my life, my mom, is handicapped. She can't travel 8 hours to see me and that devastating to her and me... No longer having to sue to get hormone therapy for trans prisoners... Why did the prison take the money when they don't even have the items we order?... A first time offender should never have to spend more than 7-10 years for any crime other than capital... 50% of the jobs in prison should go to those under 30... Prisons or at least pod-dorms where men 48 and older should be housed... There should be a prisoner right to see and keep communication with their children...improved sanitation and nutritional programs... Give a person a chance to help kids by repairing old bikes or the blind by training dogs, it opens up a bigger picture... Upon release inmates (if needed) should receive a FREE bus ticket and "Gate Money" to provide a minimum of 48 hours of food, clothing, and other necessities... Inmate canteens should never be for-profit... allow ALL inmates to take correspondence courses no matter their age, current criminal conviction... Media should have access without hassle or denial... what about a tax break for those sending money to loved ones in prison.*

#2  
1228

**SENTENCING-** such as both substantially reducing plea bargaining and increasing diversions to the community; abolish death and life sentences; and the war on sex offenders; reduce 1 to 18 ratio to one-to-one for crack/cocaine.

*I was civilly committed without ANY victim contact. My sex offense from years ago was an internet sting where I was encouraged and prodded to meet after repeated refusals by me... Raising present age of 18 for juveniles would give me and so many others--Hope.*

#3  
1255

**PROSECUTION-** such as seeking justice rather than conviction and this means the following: restorative justice where offender meets with the victim and agrees on the sentence; a ban on progressive prosecution where priors increase time e.g. three strikes the present age of 18 for juveniles is raised to age 21; and removing immunity for prosecutors who knowingly prosecute illegally such as withholding or twisting information.

*Abolish the felony murder rule that a person who is not directly responsible for someone's death can be prosecuted for first-degree Murder... 97% conviction rate is not justice but an act of bully tactics... I was offered 8 yrs. at prelim and wouldn't take it. I was charged as a prior offender (three strikes) and given 25 yrs. w/out parole... I don't feel like garbage, but I feel like I've been thrown away.*

#4  
1732

**DEFENSE-** such as public defenders having much lower caseloads; and funding for defense (public defender or hired attorney) in a given case must be at least equal to an independently estimated funding for prosecution of the case.

*I signed a plea agreement due to misinformation by my attorney... The law library should give same materials lawyers use including WESTLAW or LEXIS... Repeal freedom of info laws that keeps prisoners from having same public documents others can get.*

#5  
1750

**PAROLE-** much lower caseloads with satisfactory ratio of parole officers to parolees, presumptive parole first time up (you make it unless they can prove you are not ready); ban on lie detector tests especially for sex offenders.

*Require U.S. Parole Commission to set parole dates for all "old law" prisoners and end its funding ... How can they say I am not suitable for parole when there are no criteria for what "suitable" means... No inmate ever sees a parole board member... Parole boards should only be used or involved in release of offenders who have committed major infractions while incarcerated.*

#6  
1759

**JUDGES-** such as appointed rather than elected with no conflict of interest; end mandatory minimums; creation of oversight committee on accountability; no judicial immunity from lawsuits and prosecution for illegal conduct.

*I am against absolute judicial and prosecutorial immunity. The very least they should be able to claim is qualified immunity like other officials... If a plea bargain is offered, the judge should not be able to sentence you for more time than the plea deal.*

#7  
2104

**CLEMENCY-** return to use of commutation, and pardons including those with convictions for violence. Clemency is part of the job for the President or Governor. But, the President or Governor should not make decisions in regard to the parole cases.

*Commutation should be utilized more often for those who have been in prison for 10 yrs. or longer with a good institutional record.*

#8  
2237

**JAIL-** such as a personal recognizance bond, and not a money bond; pre-trial/misdemeanors voting; no commission kickbacks given to a jail on any purchase made by a person in jail; video visiting as addition not replacement to contact and non-contact visiting; accreditation by the American Correctional Association; Optional Protocol to Convention Against Torture which provides inspections and oversight; the use of work release as much as possible.

*There should be no difference between "first appearance" and "arraignment" hearings. This leaves people in jail longer.*

#9  
2338

**POLICE-** such as body-cameras; more training and community policing; higher pay; civilian review boards; as with juveniles, names of those only arrested are released to the public after conviction rather than after the arrest.

*When police officers shoots their gun, he or she should be subject to a urinalysis test... An officer should have to get 2 more cops to agree on what should happen before it can be done... More money should not be spent on policing. One city has five police agencies..*

#10  
2418

**PROBATION-** lower caseloads; more due process; ban fees; and allow association with other probationers.

*My son has been in prison for years.. Why? he has anxiety issues and should be in a regimented halfway house where he would be taught a trade and coping skills...I struggled with drug addiction for years. But, I see prisons built and re-hab centers shut down.*

**Thank you for your participation in this survey and for your excellent responses.**

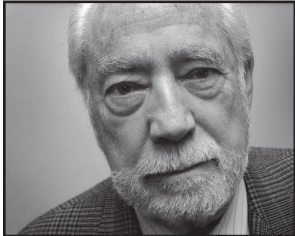


# **"A man who is not courageous enough to take risks will never accomplish anything in life."**

**Muhammad Ali**

Recently, we have lost some of our most inspiring prison reformers. They include such revolutionary figures as Dr. Jerry Miller who in the seventies shut down reformatories for young people and Dr. Nils Christie who constantly showed that the rate of imprisonment is largely unconnected to the rate of crime.

Another reformer ahead of his time was Alvin Bronstein who like Dr. Miller was an official adviser to CURE and like Dr. Christie spoke at CURE conferences. "Al was always available



to hear me out on CURE's latest project and tell me whether it was a good idea," stated Charlie Sullivan, CURE's President. His insights were awesome since Al Bronstein had one of the most impressive resumes in prison reform in the world. He was one of the founders of the

American Civil Liberties Union's National Prison Project and was its director for 25 years.

In retirement as a board member of Penal Reform International, he spoke internationally and nationally and Al told Charlie that he always encouraged people in his talks to start CURE chapters.

In his memory, the New York Law School has established The Alvin J. Bronstein '51 Civil Rights and Social Justice Award. It will go to a student in the evening program who works full-time during the day as Al did. If you would like to donate to the award, contact Elliot Berger at [Elliot.Berger@nysls.edu](mailto:Elliot.Berger@nysls.edu).



On the right is Jon with Dr. Ross Van Ness, his academic mentor and long time friend.

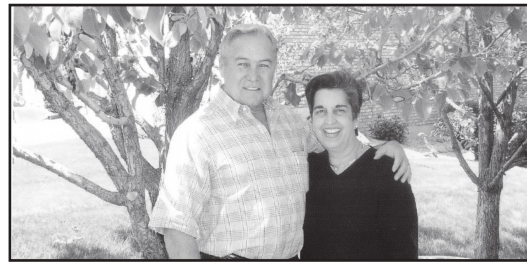
Jon Marc Taylor, 54, died of a heart attack in Charleston, MO, on Dec. 27 2015. Jon was convicted of two serious crimes while a teenager and spent his last thirty five years in prison. But, a judge said that Jon became "one of the most remarkable examples of rehabilitation" that he had ever seen.

This was mainly through higher education and Jon earned a doctorate, one of a few prisoners who has ever earned a Ph.D. His thesis was on the importance of Pell Grants for prisoners.

In 1992, he was given the Robert F. Kennedy Journalism Award for newspaper articles about this issue. CURE with Jon's mother represented him in Washington, DC, at the award presentation.

Finally, many people in prison are familiar with his Prisoners' Guerrilla Handbook to Correspondence Programs in the U.S. and Canada. For info on how to purchase it, contact Prison Legal News, PO 1151, Lake Worth, FL 33460 561-360-2523

In his will, Jon left CURE \$2,000, and we will use this money to help bring back Pell Grants to people in prison. If you would like to contribute to this effort send your donation to the CURE address which is CURE PO Box 2310 Washington, DC 20013.



Dianne and Habe Tramutola-Lawson

Curtis Haybert "Habe" Lawson, 78, died March 17. He began stealing at age 9 and continued committing crimes until imprisoned for a life sentence in Colorado in 1973. Habe was denied parole nine times before making it in 2004.

The primary reason for his parole was the strong advocacy by his wife, Dianne Tramutola-Lawson. She is Chair of Colorado-CURE, and International-CURE.

They were married by proxy in 1982 and this resulted in an unsuccessful effort to have Dianne fired as a teacher by the Denver Public Schools. Ten years later, she was honored as "Teacher of the Year" by this same public school system.

Habe had spent 50 years "in" and he knew that people like him needed help. Thus, he became one of the founders and mentors of the L-TOP (Long-Term Offender Program).

This program sends paroled long-termers to a halfway house for six months where they learn about the internet, housing, transportation and healthcare. Later, when on their own, they attend a weekly get-together as a support group.

L-TOP was modeled from a similar lifer program (LifeLine) in Canada that CURE leaders visited. Dianne asked Tim Hand, Director of Colorado's Department of Corrections Division of Parole and Community Corrections, to join us.

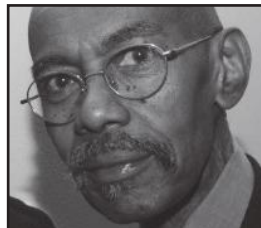
Like us, Tim was overwhelmed by how many there were "making it" and not returning to prison. This success was because people who were rehabilitated lifers were hired to work with a caseload of those serving life sentences and their families. They also facilitate by helping with parole plans.

But, most importantly, they speak to organizations like the Chamber of Commerce and Kiwanis Club about the cost savings and success of the program. These mentors are walking examples of a minus becoming a plus!

L-TOP depends on volunteers to serve as mentors and they must have served a long sentence. Habe was a dedicated mentor since 2006. In fact, two days before his death, Habe had taken a man who served 35 years in prison to get his ID.

**Eddie Ellis**

Many of the reforms advocated by these pioneers were not realized in their lives. But, society eventually catches up. For example, the Office of Justice Programs of the U.S. Department of Justice recently announced that it will no longer refer to people as "felons" or "convicts" but by "person or individual" who is or was incarcerated.



Eddie Ellis was President of the Center for Nuleadership on Urban Solutions and he advocated these "person first" language reforms. He said "if language was framed in negative and dehumanizing terms, then our thoughts and actions will

be this frame of reference." Eddie died in 2014 at 72 and though innocent, had served 25 years in New York prisons.