



The high cost of empty prisons, NY

By Robert Gangi
New York Times
October 11, 2009

In the early days of October, 2009, changes to New York's notorious Rockefeller drug laws went into effect, allowing judges to shorten the prison terms of some nonviolent offenders. This measure will further reduce New York's prison population, which has already declined, in the past 10 years, from about 71,600 in 1999 to about 59,300 today. (The state's crime rate also dropped substantially during that time.)

Nevertheless, mainly because of opposition from the correction officers' union and politicians from the upstate areas where most of our correctional facilities are, the state has been slow to close prisons. It was not until earlier this year that policymakers in Albany, confronted with fiscal crisis, mustered the will to shut three prison camps and seven prison annexes — a total of about 2,250 prison beds — in a move that is expected to save \$52 million over the next two years.

Continued on page 15

The ugly truth about sexual abuse of juveniles in detention

By Pat Nolan
INSIDEOUT, Prison Fellowship
January 13, 2010

A Call to Government to Put a Stop to it—Now

The U.S. Department of Justice recently released *Sexual Victimization in Juvenile*

The report found that 12 percent of juveniles in custody had been sexually assaulted in the prior year.

Facilities Reported by Youth, 2008-09. About 4.3 percent of youth (1,150) reported having sex or sexual contact with staff as a result of force; another 6.4 percent of youth (1,710) reported sexual contact with staff without any force, threat, or other explicit form of coercion.

cion.

These findings are staggering and appalling.

Time for a Rapid Government Response

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1,000 Children avoid criminal record

The Herald, Exeter, United Kingdom
November 17, 2009

More than 1,000 Westcountry children have escaped being given a criminal record through a programme that sees offenders make amends for their actions.

Devon and Cornwall Police believe that by adopting a more “flexible” approach to “low-level” crime, including graffiti, shoplifting and some public order offences, they can reduce re-offending rates and stop youngsters going to court unnecessarily.

Since the programme’s launch last November, 1,031 first-time young offenders aged between 10 and 17 have written letters to victims, painted over graffiti and paid for stolen goods.

Police say they are not being soft on crime, stressing that victims have to agree to the punishments and that the option is not offered to those who show no remorse for their actions.

Devon and Cornwall Police estimate that just 3 per cent of those dealt with so far through so-called restorative justice have gone on to re-offend.

PC Phil Skedgell, Devon and Cornwall Police’s restorative justice support officer, said: “It is not avoiding people having a criminal record, it is about doing what is right for the victims and the offenders.”

He said victims were “involved in the process” and that they had a “clear voice” because they decided on suitable reparation or punishment.

Devon and Cornwall Police are mirroring a national pilot launched by the Department for Schools, Children and Families. Known as Youth Restorative Disposal, the idea is to avoid jeopardising a young person’s future prospects and free officers to deal with more serious crime.

Supporters talk about how restorative justice is a return to a more traditional form of policing, where the proverbial “thick ear from the local bobby” follows from officers having discretion about how they police their communities.

In August, the Western Morning News reported that one million children had been convicted of a criminal offence since Labour came to power – triggering calls for more to be done to keep youngsters out of trouble. The figures emerged as two teenagers who daubed graffiti on a 750-year-old parish church in North Tawton, near Okehampton, Devon, apologised to the congregation.

PC Skedgell said that, when confronted with hoax calls, cyber-bullying and young people using inappropriate language, it was important to “deal with young people in a proportionate way”.

About 2,000 front-line staff are trained to use the restorative approach.

PC Skedgell said: “Restorative justice applies to the vast majority of young people making a mistake and an error of judgment growing up rather than an intentional criminal act.”

The views and/or opinions expressed in the articles of guest writers do not necessarily reflect the views and/or opinions of the Restorative Justice Ministries Network, the Restorative Justice News or the RJMN Board of Directors.

Ministry Resources from Restorative Justice Ministries Network

1229 Avenue J Huntsville TX 77340

Recommended for ministry people:

- Restorative Justice Ministry for Pastors & Church Leaders - Emmett Solomon** \$12.00 _____
 Guidance for leaders interested in beginning RJM in the local congregation
- Challenging the Impossible: Discovering Beautiful Trophies for Jesus- Joe Fauss** \$12.00 _____
 The inspirational story of Joe and Charlotte Fauss, who have spent the past 31 years reaching out to prisoners.
- The Real World of Restorative Justice Ministry- Pastor Dave Umfreville** \$12.00 _____
 Timeless principles in a restorative justice ministry arena. Dedicated to those who labor in this field.

Recommended for ministry & offenders:

- Serving Time, Serving Others - Tom & Laura Lagana** \$17.00 _____
 Acts of kindness by inmates, prison staff, victims, and volunteers
- Chicken Soup for the Volunteer's Soul - Canfield,Hensen,Oberst,Boal,Lagana** \$17.00 _____
 Stories to celebrate the spirit of courage, caring and community
- Chicken Soup for the Prisoner's Soul - Canfield,Hensen,Lagana** \$17.00 _____
 Stories to celebrate the spirit of courage, caring and community
- Karla Faye Tucker SET FREE-Linda Strom** \$12.00 _____
 Her Death-Row transformation captured the world's attention. Uplifting, good read
- Spanish version also available** \$12.00 _____

Recommended for offender's families and friends:

- Beyond Bars Rejoining Society After Prison - Jeffrey Ian Ross and Stephen C. Richards** \$15.00 _____
 Provides information and guidance that can make a real difference in a successful transition.
- What Is Jail, Mommy? - Jackie A. Stanglin** \$12.00 _____
 It is the author's firm belief that it is incumbent on each of us to provide age-appropriate facts to yuong inquiring minds.
 To do otherwise will be evident in future generations.
- Spanish version also available** \$12.00 _____
- Family Arrested: How to Survive the Incarceration of a Loved One - Ann Edenfiel** \$15.00 _____
 Ann Edenfield is Executive Director of Wings Ministry, a ministry to families of inmates.
- Audio tape book also available** \$22.00 _____
- An Inmate's Daughter - Jan Walker** \$10.00 _____
 Jan Walker taught parenting and family relationships to adult felons for eighteen years.
 She used her background and success with incarcerated dads to create this 'true fiction' novel

Recommended for offenders:

- Behind The Walls A Guide For Families and Friends of Texas Prison Inmates-J. A. Renaud** \$15.00 _____
 A practical guide for inmates' families, and new inmates, to understand the system.
- A Map Through the Maze - Rollo, Adams** \$12.00 _____
 Overview of the correctional experience of offenders and their families
- Man, I Need a Job- Ned Rollo** \$10.00 _____
 Provides offenders the insights and skills they need to find and keep a job following release
- 99 Days and a Get Up - Ned Rollo** \$12.00 _____
 A guide to success following release for inmates and their loved ones.
- Life Without A Crutch - Ingraham, Bell, Rollo** \$10.00 _____
 An introduction to recovery form addiction

Total \$ _____

All prices include shipping and handling. We can mail books to prisoners on your behalf.

SEND BOOK(S) TO:

INSTITUTION: _____ **INMATE #:** _____

NAME _____ **STATE:** _____ **ZIP:** _____

PURCHASER: _____ **PHONE:** _____

MAIL ADDRESS: _____

Regional News by Richard Blake

Note from Richard:

The editors of Restorative Justice News are allowing me to expand the coverage of this column beyond California. For several years I have provided material in a featured column California News. In recent months, my wife and I re-located. We now live within a mile of beautiful Lake Michigan. My concern and interest in Restorative Justice, prison reform, and ministry to inmates has not changed, however, this approach will allow me to address a wider audience of RJN readers.

My primary focus will continue to be on issues having a commonality of interest to those involved in services to the prison community. We will include a selection of stories that relate to Restorative Justice, and prison reform, as well as proactive programs for reducing recidivism, at-risk youth, job training and re-entry programs for the prisoners themselves, and proactive activities which involve community wide efforts in crime prevention.

Great Lakes Region

The Illinois Department of Corrections

In light of the fact that The Illinois Department of Corrections annually releases 28,000 offenders to communities across this state and admits another 28,000 into the prison system the department is taking steps to ensure that appropriate measures to provide that plans will be implemented to insure a balance of public safety and budget limitations resulting from the recently enacted early release legislation. The agency plans to expand and build on rehabilitative programs and to continue the work of community-based reentry support, adult transitional, and day reporting centers in an integral approach to crime risk, penalty, and the reduction of recidivism.

Benton Harbor, Michigan

Sixteen year old Timothy Jones was recently chosen to serve on a state panel which provides an advisory role on matters relating to the juvenile justice. Jones was put on probation after a run in with the law at age 13. Jones was recommended for the appointment by state police Lt. Bennie Bowers as a result of observing Timothy while he participated in the Michigan Youth Leadership Academy. Bowers was impressed with Tim's sensitivity to responsibility, respect and trust. Jones, himself, relates how he became convinced that he needed to turn his life around after being apprehended by the law. He chose to turn to God who is now leading him in a new direction.

Muskegon, Michigan

The state of Michigan has finalized negotiations with the state of Pennsylvania. Michigan will house 1000 of the Pennsylvania inmates at the Muskegon Correctional Facility. The Michigan Department of Corrections is drafting a new proposal with the state of California to house some of their inmates in Michigan facilities in an effort to optimize the use of the state's prison facilities in an effort to reduce the department's budget deficit. An earlier offer was turned down in August.

Western Region

Sacramento, California

California's governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's proposal to reduce the state's prison population by 40,000 inmates within the next two years has been put on hold while the U. S. Supreme court awaits California's appeal of the final order. The California state budget crisis has caused another look at the disparity created by the strikes legislation

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Regional News by Richard Blake

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put into effect fifteen years ago. Prison population and the cost per inmate have increased substantially over this period at an alarming rate. There is a grass roots movement among voters to amend the limit of the law to apply only to those who commit violent offenses. Democrat and Republican politicians are reticent to take an aggressive stance on this issue that has become so emotionally charged and deep-rooted among California voters. It is one of the most controversial and most widely discussed topics being discussed in light of the state's economical crisis.

San Leandro, California

Two anti-crime plans have recently gained recognition within the city of San Leandro. Officer Kerri Kovach has been instrumental in the implementation of a program aimed at reducing crime within the city's more than 100 apartment communities, representing 32,000 tenants. Crime prevention awareness training for apartment employees, property clean-up and eviction of potential troublemakers are all an integral part of the program. Phase two puts an emphasis on better lighting, removal of graffiti, and abandoned vehicles and household items. Reports indicate that properties certified in the program have seen significant reduction in the percent of calls to the police, a drop in crime reports, and a drop in arrests. Alameda County Sheriff Sgt. Marty Neideffer works Furthering Youth Inspiration, a non-profit group sponsored by the Deputy Sheriffs' Activities League. Their goal is to keep kids out of trouble with the law by organizing free activities that will keep them away from negative behavior.

Castro Valley, California

"Ways to Share Our Faith" was the key challenge at the recent Follow Up Ministries, International Annual Volunteer Mini-Retreat held at Redwood Chapel Community Church in Castro Valley. Rev. Ken Hurricane Winn, Sr., recently appointed retreat coordinator, led God Squad volunteers in a practical how-to approach for presenting the message of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to inmates within juvenile, jail, and prison correctional institutions. FUMI advocates ministering to inmates who have realigned their lives with Christ or become Christians after being incarcerated in a way that will enable them to take the gospel message back to their cell mates and fellow prisoners.

Executive Director Warren Galvin acted as retreat moderator. Other participants included Chaplain Howard Dewsnap and God Squad leaders Ruben Martinez, Mary Rodriguez, Tim Wagoner, and Gus Enderlin. President and FUMI founder Rev. Glenn Morrison presented an inspirational challenge for the New Year 2010. FUMI is a faith based ministry reaching inside jails, prisons, and juvenile facilities throughout the United States, and is now expanding to come alongside like minded ministries in countries around the world.

**R J News publications are dependent upon contributions from readers.
Anyone wishing to make a donation may do so by sending check or money order to:
Restorative Justice Ministries Network, 1229 Avenue J, Huntsville, TX, 77340.**

Calendar of Restorative Justice Events

March 29-31, 2010

OUT4LIFE - Atlanta, GA

<http://www.out4life.com/o4l-events/future-conference-schedule/13350-georgia-conference-march-2010>

April 6-7, 2010

OUT4LIFE - Lansing, MI

<http://www.out4life.com/o4l-events/future-conference-schedule/13455-michigan-conference-april-2010>

April 10, 2010

Texas Regional Conference – Huntsville, TX

Criminal Justice Center, Sam Houston State University

<http://rjmntexas.net/Huntsville2010.pdf>

April 26-28-2010

OUT4LIFE - Phoenix, AZ

<http://www.out4life.com/o4l-events/future-conference-schedule/13463-arizona-conference-april-2010>

May 1, 2010

Texas Regional Conference – Plainview, TX

Wayland Baptist University

<http://rjmntexas.net/plainview2010.pdf>

May 5 – 7, 2010

Coalition of Prison Evangelists COPE - Buffalo, New York

<http://copeconnections.org/html/event.php?id=132>

May 15, 2010

Restorative Justice Conference – Baytown, TX

First Baptist Church Baytown

Sandra.jones@sanjacintobaptist.com

May 17-21, 2010

Straight Ahead Ministries

Juvenile Justice Institutional Ministry Models

This is the fifth course in the Juvenile Justice Ministries concentration program.

<http://www.straightahead.org>

May 17-19, 2010

OUT4LIFE - Minneapolis, MN

<http://www.out4life.com/o4l-events/future-conference-schedule/13464-minnesota-conference-may-2010>

May 24-26, 2010

OUT4LIFE - Columbus, OH

<http://www.out4life.com/o4l-events/future-conference-schedule/14581-ohio-conference-may-24-26-2010>

June 7-11, 2010

Institute for Prison Ministries—Wheaton, IL

Introduction to Correctional Ministries Residential Course

<http://www.bgcprisonministries.com/>

June 22 – 25, 2010

Coalition of Prison Evangelists COPE - Loch Lomond, Scotland

<http://copeconnections.org/html/event.php?id=133>

Would you like to place your restorative justice event on the Events Calendar?

Send information to :

R.J.NEWS@restorativejusticenew.net

Include the following information:

- Date(s) of event
- Location
- Sponsor
- Contact information

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Second Angel Award for Don Smarto

Hollywood
February 21, 2010

For the second consecutive year, producer Don Smarto has won the 2010 ©Angel Award for two media productions, the documentary film *The Youngest Brother* and the audio book, *Mended by God*.

In 2009, Smarto won the © Angel Award for his book *Mended by God*. The judges believed “this audio book maintains the quality of the book with a high standard of editing and professionalism. The story of Tony Pack is enhanced by this production and deserves this recognition.”

The documentary *The Youngest Brother* “tells a dramatic story of crime without the gratuitous violence seen in media today. The message will inspire people.”

The © Angel Award is given by the Excellence in Media organization “honoring works of outstanding moral, ethical, and social impact.” Nominated media are judged by members of The Los Angeles Press Club, National Association of Broadcasters, National Association for Community and Family Education, and the Hollywood Press Club. Individual judges are people with “expertise and are outstanding in the media field.”

Previous © Angel Award winners have been Tom Hanks, Bill Cosby, Steve Martin, Art Linkletter, Randy Travis, George Burns, and Roy Rogers. Past documentary films awarded the © Angel Award have included *March of the Penguins* and *An Inconvenient Truth*. Previous films awarded the © Angel Award have included *Chronicles of Narnia*, *Harry Potter And The Goblets of Fire*, *The Lion King*, *Forest Gump*, and *Wall-E*. The film *Blind Side* received the 2010 film award.



Calendar of Restorative Justice Events

Continued from page 6

June 28-30, 2010

OUT4LIFE – San Antonio, TX

<http://www.out4life.com/o4l-events/future-conference-schedule/13713-texas-conference>

July 25-28, 2010

OUT4LIFE - Richmond, VA

<http://www.out4life.com/o4l-events/future-conference-schedule/14287-virginia-conference-july-25-28-2010>

August 18 – 20, 2010

Coalition of Prison Evangelists COPE - Keizer, OR

<http://copeconnections.org/html/event.php?id=143>

October 6 – 8, 2010

Coalition of Prison Evangelists COPE - Warrenton, MI

<http://copeconnections.org/html/event.php?id=134>

October 7-10, 2010

Christian Association for Prison Aftercare (CAPA) - Milwaukee, WI

<http://www.capaassociation.org/>

Use this Ministry ID Key to locate Ministry Emphasis:

*1=Prison *2=Non-residential Aftercare *3=Victim *4=Professionals *5=Juvenile Offenders *6=Family
*7=Resources for other RJMs *8=Residential Aftercare *9=Jails *10=By Mail

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Use this Ministry ID Key to locate Ministry Emphasis:

*1=Prison *2=Non-residential Aftercare *3=Victim *4=Professionals *5=Juvenile Offenders *6=Family
*7=Resources for other RJMs *8=Residential Aftercare *9=Jails *10=By Mail

TEXAS					
6	Eunice Chambless Hospitality House Billy Wilson 13378 Fm 3522 Abilene 79601-8770 325-548-2180 325-675-5414 Fax echhdir@netscape.com	1,3,5,8,9	Wheless Lane Christian Brothers Restorative Ministry Robert Mitchell/Robert Sephus 2702 Wheless Ln Austin 78723 512-926-2988 c-mitchell@webtv.net www.whelesscoc.org	6	Shepherd's Inn Gaspard Center Mary Green PO Box 20618 Beaumont 77703-4921 409-898-8797 409-892-9534 Fax mary@gtba.org www.gtba.org
1,2	TAX - Abilene Corrine Hansen 2657 Rountree Dr Abilene 79601-2034 325-676-5741 jtaxloop@taylorlortel.net	6	Christian Life Crisis Intervention Dion Ainsworth PO Box 7728 Beaumont 77726-7728 409-736-3980 409-736-3983 Fax dion@gtba.org www.gtba.org	3,4,5,6,7,9,10	J.A.I.L. Ministry Inc Steve Cannon PO Box 634 Belton 76513-0634 254-933-8506 254-933-7569 Fax jailmin@vvm.com
1	Good Hope Prison Ministries The God of Hope Ministries Robert Dorrough 4220 Monterey Oaks Blvd Austin 78749 512-891-1649 rdorrough@TheGodofHope.org Linda Dueker—Women's Director ldueker@TheGodofHope.org	2,3	Compassion Christian Counseling Vande Derrick 1297B Calder Beaumont 77701 409-832-5772 409832-7224 Fax	2	Manasseh Ministries Muriel C. Roger 6705 FM 279 Ben Wheeler 75754-5205 903-852-4402 manassehministries7@juno.com
1,6,7,9,10	Light for New Life Min Inc Rev Don Domeracki PO Box 170501 Arlington 76003-0501 817-516-0406 skyking273@sbcglobal.net www.lightfornewlifeministries.org	1,2,3,6,7,9,10	Diocese of Beaumont Criminal Justice Ministry Deacon Harry Davis PO Box 3948 Beaumont 77704-3948 409-838-0451 409-838-4511 Fax hdavis@dioceseofbeaumont.org www.dioceseofbmt.org	1	Holy Ground Prison Ministry Johnny T Horan PO Box 2526 Brenham 77833 979-836-6328 daphne@gcfchurch.us
2, 8	Network for Life of Austin Inc Cheryl R Selby 2101 E Ben White Blvd #104 Austin 78741 512-707-7161 512-707-7116 FAX office@networkforlife.org www.networkforlife.org	1 2 3 5 7	God's Friends Ministries Inc Jack McClelland PO Box 5421 Beaumont 77726 409-988-3865 GodsFriend@gt.rr.com	1,2,7,9	Operation Rebound/ Young Adults Healed John W Harrington 801 Delaware Dr Bridge City 77511-2423 409-738-3800 jharrington003@gt.rr.com
1,2,4,6,8,10	Restorative Christian Outreach Min. Mack Bailey 7506 Ed Bluestein Blvd Austin 78723 512-926-2431 midway3060@yahoo.com	1 6	Golden Triangle Baptist Assoc. Dion Ainsworth PO Box 7728 Beaumont 77726 409-898-8797 dion@gtba.org www.gtba.org	2,3,6,7,9	Young Adults Healed John W. Harrington 801 Delaware Dr Bridge City 77611-2423 jharrington003@gt.rr.com
1	St Theresa Catholic Church Prison Ministry Rev. Justin Udomah 4311 Small Dr Austin 78731 512-451-5121 frjustin@sttaustin.org	1 3,4	International Institute of Faith Based Counseling Debbie Marcantel PO Box 20723 Beaumont 77720 409-832-9060 409-832-7224 FAX info@iifbc.com www.iifbc.com	1,2,8 (F),9	New Beginnings / TAX Bryan & College Station Pat Howard PO Box 3785 Bryan 77805 979-219-0671 979-361-4291 Fax phoward@co.brazos.tx.us
3	Victim Services Division-TDCJ Angie McCown, Director PO Box 13401 Austin 78711-3401 800-848-4284 512-406-5417 Fax			1	St John Baptist Church Rev R Michael Stromille 1508 S Broadway Dr Carrollton 75006 972-242-9194 SJBC@saintjohncarrollton.com www.saintjohncarrollton.com

1,9,10	Redeemed Ministries Betty G Oates PO Box 891 Chico 76431-0891 940-644-5237 940-644-2982 Fax RedeemedMinistry@hotmail.com	1,7	Inmate Discipler Fellowship/TX Baptist Men Mark Hollis 5351 Catron Drive Dallas 75227-9927 214-828-5347 Mark.hollis@charter.net Mark.hollis@texasbaptist.org www.inmatedisciplerfellowship.org	7	COPE Fauhn Schierer 1001 W Euleess Blvd Ste 212 Euleess 76040-5032 817-684-7870 817-684-7876 Fax office@copeministries.org www.copeministries.org
5	Youth Transformation Center Jeannette Holtham PO Box 38074 Colorado Springs 80937 719-440-1983 www.youthtransformationcenter.org	5	Juvenile Justice Ministries Network of TX Weldon Fox PO Box 765156 Dallas 75376-5156 214-696-7834 info@jjmnt.org www.jjmnt.org	2,6,7,9	Mercy Heart Roger Hollar 4805 NE Loop 820 Fort Worth 76137 817-838-7534 817-281-7413 Fax roger@mercyheart.org http://prisonministry.net/mh
1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10	Newlife Behavior Ministries Buck Griffith 3833 S Staples Ste S-101 Corpus Christi 78472-2188 361-855-3372 361-855-7469 Fax nlbcasa@yahoo.com www.nlbm.org	1,2,3,9	R O D Ministires Dale Truitt PO Box 710385 Dallas 75371-0385 214-827-8555 214-824-5355 Fax ddtruitt@hotmail.com www.rodministries.org	1,6,7	Parents and Children Together (PACT) Rev Suzanne Boeglin 2836 Hemphill St Fort Worth 76110-3214 817-924-7776 pact1924@sbcglobal.net
1,9	Prayer-Life Seminars Inc Hugh White 630 Meadowbrook Dr Corpus Christi 78412-3019 361-993-7651 361-985-8615 Fax hughwhite@aol.com www.prayer-lifeseminars.org	1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,10	St Francis Anglican Church Fr William Conner PO Box 140182 Dallas, 75201 972-900-7298 frwilliam@catholic.org www.angelfire.com/tx5/holycross	7	World Bible Translation Center Glenn Peden 4028 Daley Ave Fort Worth 76180-8600 817-595-1664 817-589-7013 Fax glenn@wbtc.com www.wbtc.org
1,7,9	Care Center Ministries Mel Gipson PO Box 171059 Dallas 75217 214-824-9852 214-824-3499 pastormelvin@yahoo.com	1,3,6,7,9,10	Texas Baptist Men Don Gibson 5351 Catron Dr Dallas 75227-9927 214-828-5353 214-381-7600 dgibson@bgct.org www.baptistmen.org	10	Write-way Prison Ministries Inc Ralph Nichols PO Box 461582 Garland 75046-1582 972-840-9798 972-864-9692 Fax writewaypm@juno.com
1	Christian Fellowship Enrichment Jim Lang PO Box 700023 Dallas TX 75370 972-283-7871 jimlang41@aol.com	1,7,8,9,10	The Salvation Army James Guerra 6500 Harry Hines Blvd Dallas 75235 214-956-6276 214-956-6059 Fax james_guerra@uss.salvationarmy.org www.salvationarmytexas.org	1,2,4,6,7,8(F),9,10	Cross Prison Ministries Inc Carole Ross PO Box 412 Gatesville 76528-0412 254-865-5163 crossprisonministry@earthlink.net www.liferow.org
1,2,4,5,7,9,10	First Baptist Dallas Prison Min. Jerry Bedison 1707 San Jacinto St Dallas 75201 214-969-7746 214-969-7720 Fax jbedison@firstdallas.org www.firstdallas.org	1,2,3,5,9,10	Walking Through the Light Prison Ministry, Inc. Eleuterio Z Adame PO Box 4761 Dallas 75208-0761 972-365-5103	1,2,3,4,5,6,9,10	Morning Star Jail/Prison Ministry Rev Robert L Buchanan 2251 El Paso Grand Prairie 75051 972-647-1445 setatliberty1@aol.com www.morningstar-baptist.org
1,7,9,10	Freedom Outreach Ministries Mel Gipson PO Box 180941 Dallas 75218 214-325-9583 214-824-3499 Fax pastormelvin@yahoo.com	5,6,	Air Chapel Terry Dyer 320 King Ave Denison 75020 903-786-5899 tdyer@mail.airchapel.org www.airchapel.org	10	Encouraging Word Ministries Margaret Hackler PO Box 5148 Gun Barrel City 75147

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1,2,3,5,6,7,9,10	C O O L Ministries Inc Boyd Harrell 5005 West 34th Street, St 130C Houston 77092 866-992-2665 713-956-0355 Fax we.cool@cfaith.com www.coolministries.net	1,2,3,5,7,9,10	Restored to Christ Harold Travis 14147 Ivy Bluff Ct Houston 77062 281-488-5110 281-488-8218 Fax harold@clearlakemethodist.org	1,2,3	Episcopal Diocese of TX RJM Edwin Davis 2003 Avenue P Huntsville 77340-5029 936-291-3153 edsalpc@yahoo.com
1,9	Crossover USA Gary R Nichols 911 Westmont Houston 77015 713-545-7991 713-455-7060 Fax gnichols@crossoverusa.com	1,3,4,6,9,10	Servants of Christ Prison Ministry Sibble Knight PO Box 111275 Houston 77293-0275 281-449-2703	1,2,3,	First Baptist Church First Contact Family Ministry 1229 Avenue J Huntsville 77340-4698 936-291-3441 www.fbchuntsville.org
1,3,4,5,8,9,10	Epiphany Ministries of Texas Chuck Talbot PO Box 590578 Houston 77259 chucktal@msn.com www.texasepiphany.com	1	Skills for Life Inc James Lynn Arnold PO Box 38553 Suite 113 Houston 77238 281-733-1223 281-447-1784 Fax arnojl@msn.com	1,2,4	First Baptist Church Welcome Back Ministry 1229 Avenue J Huntsville 77340-4698 936-291-3441 www.fbchuntsville.org
5,7,10	Initiatives for America's Youth Boone Vastine 15153 Kimberley Ct Houston 77079-5130 281-493-4556 layjjm@aol.com	2	Spirit Key Inc Allen Rice 13617 Kaltenbrun RD Houston 77086 281-813-0093 arice3@ev1.net www.spiritkey.org	6	Hospitality House 912 10th St Huntsville 77320-3937 936-291-6196 www.thehospitalityhouse.org
9	Jail Chaplaincy Ministry Freddie Wier PO Box 30262 Houston 77249-0262 713-569-2929	2	UMC TX Conference Restorative Justice Ministries Allen Rice 13617 Kaltenbrun RD Houston 77086 281-813-0093 www.spiritkey.org	7	Restorative Justice Ministries Network Emmett Solomon, Exec Director 1229 Avenue J Huntsville 77340 936-291-2156 esolomon@sbcglobal.net esolomon@rjmnTexas.net www.rjmn.net www.restorativejusticenews.net Anita Parrish, Ministry Assistant arparrish@sbcglobal.net
1,2,3,4,5,6,9,10	Morning Star Baptist Church 5110 Crane ST Houston 77026-3908 713-674-7170	1,2,6	Covenant Fellowship Rev David Valentine PO Box 10769 Huntsville 77340 936-435-0993 dbhvalentine@suddenlink.net www.cfhuntsville.org	2,6,7	Bill Kleiber 800-998-3004 kleiber@sbcglobal.net www.thewelcomeback.org
6	Newgate Connection Wesley Stevens PO Box 96333 Houston 77213-9633 281-452-2352 wfstevens@pdq.net	1	Director of Chaplaincy Support Richard Lopez 1060 St Hwy 190 E Huntsville 77340 936-437-4973 936-437-4988 Richard.lopez@tdcj.state.tx.us www.tdcj.state.tx.us	1	TDCJ Chaplaincy Operations Bill Pierce, Director 1060 State Hwy 190 E Huntsville 77340 936-437-4975 936-437-4988 Fax billy.pierce@tdcj.state.tx.us www.tdcj.state.tx.us
1,2,5,7,8	Newgate UMC/Onesimus Journey Rev. Marvin Hood 3827 Broadway @I-45S Houston 77017 832-567-0758 marvelous272003@yahoo.com	1	Elkins Lake Baptist Church Rev Ken Huggins 206 State Highway 19 Huntsville 77340-7152 936-295-7694 936-295-3388 Fax www.elbc.org	3	TDCJ Victim Services Jim Brazzil PO Box 949 Huntsville 77432 936-437-4941 jim.brazzil@tdcj.state.tx.us

1,7	The Old Time Religion Hour Inc Rev George Lupo PO Box 1225 Huntsville 73342 936-293-8000	10	Exodus Prison Ministry Joyce Hargis PO Box 6363 Lubbock 79410 806-791-3673 806-780-0023 Fax joyce@exodusprisonministry.org www.exodusprisonministry.org	1,2,3,4, 8(B),9	Mike Hooker Ministries Mike / Charlotte R Hooker PO Box 143 Queen City 75572-0143 903-796-5297 214-796-6592 Fax
1,5	University Heights Baptist Church Bro Richard Rogers 2400 Sycamore Ave Huntsville 77340-6120 936-295-2996 office@uhbc.net www.uhbc.net	1,2,7, 10	Freedom in Jesus Ministries Don Castleberry PO Box 6525 Lubbock 79493-6525 806-778-3923 806-791-5853 Fax fijm@clearwire.net	1,5,7,9,1	From Pain to Joy Prison Ministries Henry M Sorelle 14 Canyon Creek Vlg #44 Richardson 75080-1602 972-231-9606 972-392-0446
2,5	Winner's Circle Juvenile Program Kent Lucas 550 Elkins Lake Huntsville 77340 936-436-9467 winnerscircletexas@sbcglobal.net	2,6	Encompassing Reentry Ministries Outreach John Cook PO Box 851587 Mesquite 75185-1587 jcook@encompassingreentry.org http://prisonministry.net/ermo	1,2,3, 6,7,10	Operation Oasis Michael Lee 302 Centennial Blvd Richardson 75081-5057 972-437-3801 972-437-3139 Fax mlee@operation-oasis.org www.operation-oasis.org
1,6,7	Prison Fellowship Ministries Kelly Purselley PO Box 54987 Hurst 76054 Kelly_purselley@pfm.org www.prisonfellowship.org	3	Hope For Healing Ministries Inc Susan Edwards PO Box 9331 Midland 79708 214-477-2610 sedwards@hopeforhealingministries.org www.hopeforhealingministries.org	1,2,4,7	Worldwide Voice in the Wilderness Johnny Moffitt 1221 Abrams Rd Ste 250 Richardson 75081-5580 972-234-6009 972-234-6050 Fax johnnymoffitt@sbcglobal.net
1,6,10	Texas HOPE Literacy Inc Lucy Smith PO Box 905 Hurst 76053-0905 817-729-6567 817-207-9483 Fax lucysmith@hopelit.com www.hopelit.com	5,7	LifeChange Mentoring Shirley Orr Smith PO Box 9535 Midland 79709-9535 sos@lifechangementoring.org www.lifechangementoring.org	2	One Man's Treasure Mary Carter 519 E I-30 #211 Rockwall 75087 888-433-9826 onemanstr@yahoo.com
1	The Brotherhood of St Andrew Oliver Osborn PO Box 537 Lake Jackson 77566-0537 979-297-6217 eosborn@brazosport.cc.tx.us	10	OpenArms Ministry Diana B Moore PO Box 1808 Mission 78573-0031 956-445-2333 956-585-3113 FAX mrst24dbt@aol.com	1,2,7	Christian Restorative Justice Mentors Assoc Murray Batt PO Box 131412 Spring 77393-1412 281-292-0442 murray@crjma.org www.crjma.org
1,2,3,7, 8(B),9,10	Calvary Commission Joe Fauss PO Box 100 Lindale 75771-0100 903-882-5501 903-882-7282 Fax joefauss@calvarycommission.org www.calvarycommission.org	1	P.T.C. Prison Ministry Bobby Griffin PO box 633741 Nacogdoches 75963 936-559-0070 ptcm_griffith@hotmail.com	1,10	Joy Prison Ministry Ura White PO Box 7324 Spring 77387-7324 281-253-8342
10	Exodus Prison Ministry Joyce Hargis PO Box 6363 Lubbock 79493 806-791-3673 joycehargis@yahoo.com	1,2,5,8(M) 9,10	Freedom House Discipleship Jami Butts 3542 Mercury Ave Odessa 79764 432-381-5453 freedomhouse@clearwire.net www.odessadreamcenter.com	1,2	Trinity RJM Galynn Ferris 3919 Snag Ln Spring 77388 281-352-3913 galynn@trinityrjm.com www.trinityrjmn.com
1,2,3,7, 8(B),9,10	Calvary Commission Joe Fauss PO Box 100 Lindale 75771-0100 903-882-5501 903-882-7282 joefauss@calvarycommission.org www.calvarycommission.org	1,2,4, 6,9,10	Loops (Loved Ones of Prisoners) Leland & Linda Maples PO Box 14953 Odessa 79768-4953 432-580-5667 432-580-8299 Fax leland@loopsministries.com www.loopsministries.com	1	Accepting Grace Ministries Inc Joe / Betty Waggoner PO Box 983 Stamford 79553-0983 325-773-2248 bettj@camalott.com

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<p>1,4,6 Houston Trinity Prison Ministry Romeo Pena PO Box 1411 Sugar Land 77487-1411 713-906-3407 r.pena@ssss.com</p>	<p>8 House Where Jesus Shines Pastor Nilsa Latimer 18320 Gholson Rd Waco 76705-5823 254-829-2100 254-829-0252 Fax thwjs@msn.com www.opendoorwaco.org</p>	<p>VIRGINIA 1,5,9,10 Good News Jail & Prison Ministry Dr Tom Beckner PO Box 9760 Richmond 23228-0760 804-553-4090 804-553-4144 Fax info@goodnewsjail.org www.goodnewsjail.org</p>
<p>1,9 Fruitful Harvest Prison Ministry Charles Sickles P.O. Box 1130 Sulphur Springs 75483-1130 903-885-1424 903-348-6415 fruitfulharvest@verizon.net</p>	<p>8(Deaf Men) Healing Hands Ranch Johnny McCollum PO Box 1455 Willis 77378 936-890-8562 www.deafprison.org www.healinghandsranch.org</p>	<p>WASHINGTON 1,4 His Sufficient Grace Ministries Larry Groom 2424 130th Pl SE Everett 98208-6708 425-357-8596 ldgroom@comcast.net</p>
<p>3,10 The Faith Based Counselor Training Institute Dr. Michael Haynes PO Box 5253 Temple 76502-5253 254-231-4334 254-231-4336 Fax FBCTI@aol.com www.FaithBasedCounseling.com</p>	<p>1,7,9,10 Woodville Church of Christ Prison Ministry PO Box 276 Woodville 75979-0276 409-283-5977 woodvillecoc@sbcglobal.net</p>	<p>1 Prisoners for Christ Outreach Ministry Greg Von Tobel PO Box 1530 Woodinville WA 98072-1503 425-483-4151 425-467-1680 Fax gvt@pfc.com www.pfc.com</p>
<p>2,3,6,7,10 Bridging The Gap Ministries Deb Chachere PO Box 131747 Tyler 75713-1747 903-539-6797 bridgingthegap@flash.net www.bridgingthegap.freesevers.com</p>	<p>1,7,9,10 Cornerstone Prison Ministry Chaplain Al Gibbons PO Box 1672 Wylie 75098-1672 972-896-7081 cspmin@clearsail.net</p>	

Prisoners of parole

By Jeffrey Rossen
The New York Times
January 8, 2010

In 2004, Steve Alm, a state trial judge in Hawaii, was frustrated with the cases on his docket. Nearly half of the people appearing before him were convicted offenders with drug problems who had been sentenced to probation rather than prison and then repeatedly violated the terms of that probation by missing appointments or testing positive for drugs. Whether out of neglect or leniency, probation officers would tend to overlook a probationer's first 5 or 10 violations, giving the offender the impression that he could ignore the rules. But eventually, the officers would get fed up and recommend that Alm revoke probation and send the offender to jail to serve out his sentence. That struck Alm as too harsh, but the alternative — winking at probation violations — struck him as too soft. "I thought, This is crazy, this is a crazy way to change people's behavior," he told me recently.

So Alm decided to try something different. He reasoned that if the offenders knew that a probation violation would lead immediately to some certain punishment, they might shape up. "I thought, What did I do when my son was young?" he recalled. "If he misbehaved, I talked to him and warned him, and if he disregarded the warning, I gave him some kind of consequence right away." Working with U.S. marshals and local police, Alm arranged for a new procedure: if offenders tested positive for drugs or missed an appointment, they would be arrested within hours and most would have a

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The high cost of empty prisons, New York

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But the state could go further. The prison system still has more than 5,000 empty beds in 69 prisons. What's more, there are other ways to lower the prison population. For starters, state lawmakers could repeal the Rockefeller mandatory sentencing provisions that remain on the books. They could also increase the number of participants on work release. In 1994, more than 27,000 people were in this time-tested program that helps them manage the transition back to their communities. Today, about 2,500 are enrolled.

In addition, the state could reduce the number of people — last year, more than 9,000 — who are returned to prison for technical parole violations like missing a meeting with an officer or breaking curfew. Most experts agree that for about half of these people it would be safer and smarter to enroll them in re-entry programs or provide more supervision. Also, more prisoners with good institutional records could be given parole. And eligibility for so-called merit time, which reduces prison terms for inmates who complete educational and other programs, could be expanded to people convicted of violent offenses many years ago.

Taken together, these actions could cut the state's prison rolls by 5,000 to 10,000 more, enabling the governor and the legislature to close at least four prisons the size of Attica, which holds 2,100 inmates, or a greater number of smaller facilities.

After New York passed the Rockefeller drug laws in 1973, a mandatory sentencing movement swept the country, raising the nationwide prison population to nearly 2.4 million, from 300,000. This experiment in mass incarceration was a failure. There is no conclusive evidence that it enhanced public safety, and some research suggests that time in prison makes people more prone to violence. It wasted billions of dollars a year. And it has devastated the low-income minority communities where most of our prisoners come from.

New York can now help point criminal justice in a more sensible and constructive direction — and show other states how to save money — by downsizing its prison system.

Robert Gangi is the executive director of the Correctional Association of New York, a nonprofit organization that monitors prison conditions.

Dallas megachurch pastor promotes rehabilitation of inmates

By Linda Stewart Ball
Associated Press

Dallas —Megachurch pastor T.D. Jakes says it's cheaper to rehabilitate criminals than to incarcerate them, and he wants to see a shift in where state and national resources are allocated.

"I'd like to see us stop the propensity that we have today to make a big business out of incarceration," Jakes said Sunday, "I'm trying to show the benefits of rehabilitation."

He spoke moments after 150 former inmates graduated from a program designed to increase their odds of succeeding after prison. They commenced to thunderous applause at Jakes' packed 9,000-seat Dallas church, the Potter's House.

Nearly 1,000 people have completed the 12-month Texas Offenders Re-entry Initiative, or TORI program, since its founding in 2005. Participants get help with everything from job searches, life skills and housing to financial literacy, education and substance-abuse counseling.

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The ugly truth about sexual abuse of juveniles in detention

Continued from page 1

While many of us who have been fighting rape thought that the abuse inside lock-ups was terrible, we had no idea how pervasive it is. This stunning news shows a desperate need for states to adopt and enforce the recommendations for reform made by the National Prison Rape Elimination Commission (NPREC). Completed in June 2009, the Commission's report and recommendations culminated six years of work by the commission and its staff and leaves no doubt that prison rape is a significant problem in our prisons.

These standards and recommendations were formed with the input of corrections experts, advocates, and prison rape survivors. They address core corrections management issues such as staff training, inmate education, housing, investigations, and medical and mental health care for the victims of assault.

Now the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) is delaying its approval of these reforms. For each day that the standards languish in the DOJ, more youngsters will be assaulted. The standards are intended to assist corrections professionals in preventing sexual assaults and hold them accountable if they don't take the reasonable steps called for in the standards. This foot-dragging at the Justice Department is disgraceful.

There are many reasons that Prison Fellowship and other religious and civil-rights groups have taken such a strong stand in support of speedily implementing the standards called for in the Prison Rape Elimination Act. Sexual abuse often leaves lifelong psychological scars that compound the difficulty offenders experience when reintegrating into society. And the abuse meted out by staff and inmate perpetrators alike undermines the order necessary in a correctional facility.

The work is done; now is the time to implement these standards and begin the work of ending sexual abuse in our prisons.

Abuse Behind Bars Is Preventable

The government has a moral obligation to protect people who are in its custody, particularly vulnerable, impressionable youth. No matter the crime, a just punishment never includes rape.

California and Oregon have committed to implementing the standards. Others, however, are dragging their feet. Some facilities have virtually stopped prison rape, while others have experienced an escalation. Well-run facilities have strong leadership that establishes zero tolerance for rape, whether by staff or by other inmates. The lack of such leadership in other facilities puts the youngsters in danger.

For instance, last year an investigation by the Texas Rangers found widespread abuse of inmates in the Texas Youth Commission. According to the *Dallas Morning News*, over a period of years several top officials in the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) repeatedly abused juveniles in their facilities. They concealed their crimes by punishing children who tried to complain and by rewarding those who remained silent about their sexual molestation. One of the administrators even held the key to the complaint box so that he knew which of the children had tried to complain about him or the others.

The TYC leadership and prosecutors at each level of government ignored repeated complaints filed by several brave staff members who protested the inappropriate behavior they observed. TYC also did nothing about an inspector general's report that chronicled the repeated abuse by multiple high-level administrators at juvenile facilities. The district attorney, the attorney general's office, and federal authorities all ignored the investigation by the Texas Rangers and declined to prosecute.

A retired TYC investigator put it very poignantly: "Staff are being paid your tax money to rape your children." Fortunately, the Texas legislature and Governor Rick Perry moved to protect the children and revamped

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Should ex-felons vote?

By Emma Dumain

With different laws in each state, some urge a federal answer to the question.

If you're a U.S. citizen over the age of 18, you have the right to vote.

If you're convicted of a felony, you could have that right taken away — but it all depends on where you live.

In Kentucky, you'll lose the right to vote forever. In Wisconsin, you'll only get it back after you've finished probation and parole. In Vermont, you can mail your ballot from prison.

Civil-rights groups are pushing back against some of the tighter restrictions with lawsuits, most recently with a successful case in Washington state.

Meanwhile, the mishmash of state laws has led some to call for new federal standards which would allow felons to vote once they've left prison. Companion bills in the House and Senate (HR 3335 and S 1516), for instance, would require all states to give ex-felons the right to vote in federal elections.

But advocates admit that they face an uphill battle: few politicians want to go on record defending the rights of felons, and polls show many Americans support restrictions.

"I'd be surprised if it were able to pass this year," said Marc Mauer, the executive director of the Sentencing Project in Washington, D.C., of the proposed legislation. "It's one of those issues that could take several years to build up broad bipartisan support."

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The ugly truth about sexual abuse of juveniles in detention

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their entire juvenile justice system. But untold damage has been done to these young people.

Some Turn a Blind Eye

Prior to the passage of the Prison Rape Elimination Act and release of the NPREC standards, some prison officials maintained that prison rape didn't occur. Now, faced with overwhelming evidence, they say it is too expensive to do anything about.

But in reality it is more expensive to pretend it doesn't happen. Michigan recently paid \$100 million to settle the claims of women who had been raped in their prisons. The state spent 10 years at untold cost in attorneys' fees to fight the claims. Think how much better off the state would be if officials had spent that money implementing the policies to end prison rape rather than pretending that it didn't happen.

What You Can Do to Help

You can help in this battle to end prison rape. Please write to Attorney General Holder at 950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20530-0001 and ask him to adopt the NPREC standards without any significant changes and without further delay. We have prepared sample wording for you to use in a letter at <http://www.justicefellowship.org/get-involved-with-justice-fellowship/12920-get-involved-stop-prison-rape>. I also hope you will visit our prison rape resource page at <http://www.justicefellowship.org/key-issues/issues-in-criminal-justice-reform/issue-1> to find out more about this troubling and important issue. These youngsters have no voice in the process. If we don't speak up for them, who will?

Prisoners of parole

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hearing within 72 hours. Those who were found to have violated probation would be quickly sentenced to a short jail term proportionate to the severity of the violation — typically a few days.

Alm mentioned his plan to the public defender, who suggested that it was only fair to warn probationers that the rules were going to be strictly enforced for the first time. Alm agreed, and on Oct. 1, 2004, he held a hearing for 18 sex offenders, followed by another one for 16 drug offenders. Brandishing a laminated “Wanted” poster, he told them: “I can guarantee that everyone in this courtroom wants you to succeed on probation, but you have not been cutting it. From now on, you’re going to follow all the rules of probation, and if you don’t, you’re going to be arrested on the spot and spend some time in jail right away.” He called the program HOPE, for Hawaii’s Opportunity Probation With Enforcement, and prepared himself for a flood of violation hearings.

But they never materialized. There were only three hearings in the first week, two in the second week and none in the third. The HOPE program was so successful that it inspired scholars to evaluate its methods. Within a six-month period, the rate of positive drug tests fell by 93 percent for HOPE probationers, compared with a fall of 14 percent for probationers in a comparison group.

Alm had stumbled onto an effective strategy for keeping people out of prison, one that puts a fresh twist on some venerable ideas about deterrence. Classical deterrence theory has long held that the threat of a mild punishment imposed reliably and immediately has a much greater deterrent effect than the threat of a severe punishment that is delayed and uncertain. Recent work in behavioral economics has helped to explain this phenomenon: people are more sensitive to the immediate than the slightly deferred future and focus more on how likely an outcome is than how bad it is. In the course of implementing HOPE, Alm discovered another reason why the strategy works: people are most likely to obey the law when they’re subject to punishments they perceive as legitimate, fair and consistent, rather than arbitrary and capricious. “When the system isn’t consistent and predictable, when people are punished randomly, they think, My probation officer doesn’t like me, or, Someone’s prejudiced against me,” Alm told me, “rather than seeing that everyone who breaks a rule is treated equally, in precisely the same way.”

Within a six-month period, the rate of positive drug tests fell by 93 percent for HOPE probationers, compared with a fall of 14 percent for probationers in a comparison group.

The United States represents 5 percent of the world’s population and nearly 25 percent of the world’s prison population.

Judge Alm’s story is an example of a new approach to keep people out of prison that is being championed by some of the most innovative scholars studying deterrence today. At its core, the approach focuses on establishing the legitimacy of the criminal-justice system in the eyes of those who have run afoul of it or are likely to. Promising less crime and less punishment, this approach includes elements that should appeal to liberals (it doesn’t rely on draconian prison sentences) and to conservatives (it stresses individual choice and moral accountability). But at a time when the size of the U.S. prison population is increasingly seen as unsustainable for both budgetary and moral reasons — the United States represents 5 percent of the world’s population and nearly 25 percent of the world’s prison

population — the fact that this approach seems to work may be its biggest draw.

What role should crime victims play in plea bargain?

From Grits for Breakfast Blog
Thursday, February 25, 2010

Prosecutors represent the state, not crime victims, and they're charged with seeking justice, not convictions. But the Houston Press published a feature (<http://www.houstonpress.com/2010-02-25/news/victims-wrongs/1>) questioning whether prosecutors should be required to notify crime victims or get their sign-off before entering into a plea deal. The Harris County DA's Office says "There is no obligation to give advance notice to all victims of plea bargains," a policy which has the Mayor's crime victim advocate Andy Kahan hopping mad.

There's a problematic conflation throughout the article of "victim's rights," which is a largely ephemeral, political idea, with legal rights of defendants accused by the state, which are enshrined in the US Constitution. The Press article is rife with examples of crime victims who say "their rights have been walked on," but those aren't legal rights, only theoretical ones the speakers think they should have. After all, as the Press notes, "The law does not provide victims any way to enforce their rights after they've been violated." And if you can't enforce a "right" when it's violated, then it isn't one - not in a legal sense, anyway.

The main example in the story probably isn't the best one for victim's rights advocates since it atypically involves a high-profile, politically connected defendant: Former US Congressman Craig Washington. His light plea deal (2 years probation) probably isn't what the average black man firing a gun at white youth could expect in Houston, regardless of the victim's wishes.

But I was interested to notice the main reason the victims say they're unhappy at Washington's plea deal: Not at the outcome but because they didn't get the chance to say their piece. The two boys who Craig Washington shot at "wanted to tell their side of the story to a jury, and made it clear to Harris County prosecutor Lynne Parsons that they didn't want to settle for a plea deal. If a jury let Washington off, so be it."

I find fascinating this overarching desire by the victims to tell their story to 12 people they do not know. Indeed, getting to tell their story, by their own account, was *more important* than any punishment Washington might receive. This powerful psychological need to formally, publicly speak about what happened reminds me of an analysis by restorative justice advocate Howard Zehr, which I described on Grits for Breakfast Blog thusly (<http://gritsforbreakfast.blogspot.com/2007/06/restorative-justice-and-transcending.html>) after hearing him speak in 2007. According to Zehr:

Victims typically have many questions: Why me or why my family member? They often want to know the details of crimes, what else happened that they didn't know about, and most frequently, why the offender did what they did?

In general, said Zehr, victimization authors three crises: A crisis of identity, a crisis of relationships (who can I trust?), and crisis of meaning. Transcending these crises requires a "re-creation of meaning" of oneself and the world. They must reconfigure their lives, "re-story" their life - they must somehow create a new narrative of self.

Part of this process is encapsulating experiences of victimhood and making them part of your own story, drawing boundaries around them, trying to articulate new metaphors for self. People seldom have adequate words for this process, he said, so they use metaphors. A central part of truly restoring victims to wholeness is enabling them to find new metaphors to transform their narrative of humiliation into stories of honor and vindication.

When someone wrongs us we need to be vindicated, Zehr said. Victims want to know what their own responsibility was for what happened, if any, but most importantly for offenders to take responsibility for what they did. We search for ways to replace humiliation with honor.

A particularly important insight was Zehr's observation that the failure to make victims whole contributes to future crimes, because frequently victims later victimize others. Victims become offenders when they have no other outlets, he said.

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Should ex-felons vote?

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Laws that prevent felons from casting ballots are centuries old. The practice came to America by way of the British colonies, which in turn were following a precedent set by the ancient Greeks and Romans. They bestowed upon criminals "civil death," a banishment from the political community.

Virginia was the first state to pass a law prohibiting ex-felons from voting and, by 1869, 28 states had followed suit. Today, 48 states have some kind of barrier in place.

Maine and Vermont are the only states where even incarcerated felons can vote. In Virginia, as in Kentucky, felons are permanently disenfranchised.

Thirteen states plus the District of Columbia let felons vote after they completed their prison sentences, while 30 other states allow them to go the polls only after they've finished the three P's: prison, probation and parole.

And in each of these states, there are rules within rules. In Alabama, ex-felons must apply for "certificates of eligibility" once they complete their sentences. In Florida, re-registering to vote depends on the nature of the crime.

"The laws have grown organically across the country throughout history," said Erika Wood, Director of the Right to Vote Project at the Brennan Center for Justice at New York University. "It has become a patchwork, with no federal standards, with no consistency."

The issue has long divided Americans on philosophical grounds. Some argue that voting is a privilege from which law-breakers should not benefit. Others argue that it's a fundamental right and criticize what they say are overly broad restrictions.

But advocates of extending voting rights to all ex-felons say they are starting to see the tides shift in their favor. In the past 12 years, over a dozen states have passed laws that ease the path towards regaining enfranchisement.

Mauer said it is becoming harder for people to ignore the staggering number of African-Americans who are being disenfranchised. It's due, in part, to the stiffer drug laws and other tough-on-crime measures over the last 30 years that have resulted in more felony records for many black men.

The Sentencing Project reports that of the 5.3 million Americans currently ineligible to vote due to felony convictions, black men account for 1.4 million of them.

Mauer argued that the laws have racist effects and, in many cases, racist roots.

"Especially in Southern states, during the late 19th century, there were conscious attempts by legislators to use disenfranchisement laws to exclude black voters," Mauer said.

Dozens of states that currently bar felons from voting put those laws in place in the years following the abolition of slavery. Those years, lawmakers were turning to other ways of suppressing black votes: literacy tests, for instance, were designed to disqualify newly freed slaves who had never been taught to read or write.

Proponents of voting rights restrictions for criminals say that despite possibly racist intentions in the late 19th century, the staying power of these policies, and the broad support they enjoy today, is telling.

"Every state in the country except for two disenfranchises felons in one way or another, North and South," said Roger Clegg, President and General Counsel for the conservative think tank Center for Equal Opportunity. "It's just not plausible to say this is all rooted in racism."

The 9th Circuit Court of Appeals recently ruled that Washington State's disenfranchisement of incarcerated felons was, in fact, racially discriminatory, though the case is being appealed and might be settled by the

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What role should crime victims play in pleas bargains?

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To keep that from happening, victims need safety, answers, truth-telling from everyone involved (authorities as well as the offender), empowerment (which the system generally denies them) and, most importantly, vindication and a chance to "re-story" what happened to them in a way that lets them regain honor.

In many ways, said Zehr, the current criminal justice system denies victims almost everything they need. He quoted Judy Herman saying that if you set out to design a system to create post traumatic stress for a victim, you couldn't do better than a court of law. This theme was repeated in other conference events so far - that the court process places un fair demands on victims that exacerbate their emotional response to crime instead of help them.

Restorative justice models focus more on giving victims that opportunity to confront both their victimizer and their own personal demons - to publicly have their say and "re-story" what happened to them in a way that lets them regain honor." However those approaches have proven difficult to graft onto the traditional adversarial system, where there is no real avenue for victims to "reconcile differences" with offenders.

98% of felony cases end in plea bargains

Especially without a trial (and 98% of felony cases end in plea bargains), the adversarial system seldom provides victims that much-desired opportunity to tell their story. Yet any practitioner will tell you that, without plea bargains, the entire system would collapse under its own weight. Ditto for making victims a straight-up party to plea bargains; indeed, most crime victims likely wouldn't want that responsibility.

A lot more work needs to be done to identify the best way for the legal system to satisfy these emotional needs of crime victims, and restorative justice theories may provide a good starting point for re-imagining the system. But the adversarial process as we know it probably can't accommodate those needs without taking every case to trial, which like it or not is a practical impossibility.

Dallas megachurch pastor promotes rehabilitation of inmates

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"It was a blessing from A to Z," said Don Evans, 44, who had spent three years in prison for firearms possession. Dressed in his green graduation robe, he cradled his 5-month-old daughter, saying he was encouraged that some people understand that he simply made a mistake.

"When an inmate comes back from being incarcerated and can't get a job or a place to stay, they're almost destined to recycle back into the criminal justice system," said Jakes, explaining that more business owners need to be willing to hire former inmates, and apartment owners must be willing to lease to them.

Nearly one-third of the state's former inmates return to prison within three years, according to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

"I think we have written off ex-offenders to a degree that we have one of the highest recidivism rates in the nation," Jakes said, "We've had to spend all our money building walls around our homes (to feel safe). Pretty soon you have to ask yourself, who is really being incarcerated? So our indifference is costing us in a lot of ways."

Jakes, who wants convicted felons to be given the right to vote, estimates that about 40 percent of those who start the TORI program successfully complete it.

About 5,000 former inmates have been served by the TORI program, which operates in Dallas, Fort Worth, San Antonio, Austin and Houston.

Should ex-felons vote?

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the U.S. Supreme Court.

Public opinion on the issue will also be tested if voting rights bills first introduced in mid-2009 come to committee this year.

If a 2003 survey is any indication, lawmakers who support the legislation could have trouble gaining approval from their constituents on the issue, who largely remain on the fence. From a sampling of 1,000 adults, sociologists Jeff Manza, Clem Brooks, and Christopher Uggen found that 82 percent of respondents were against permanently stripping ex-felons of their right to vote. At the same time, about 90 percent said they supported rescinding these rights for at least some portion of their sentences.

Clegg argued that the issue should stay at the state level.

"State lawmakers are closer to the people and can make policies that reflect what those people want," he said.

Either way, he said that lawmakers are unlikely to spend the political capital on what will likely be a controversial decision.

"There will be obvious costs for politicians to say, 'we have to let criminals vote,'" he said. "The reaction from a lot of people is going to be, 'why should people who have committed serious crimes against fellow citizens be given the right to make laws that they, themselves, are unwilling to follow?'"

Emma Dumain writes for Congressional Quarterly.

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