

Titus House Newsletter

Titus House Ministries, PO Box 2376, Tijeras, NM 87059

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“It’s an anti-discrimination bill that discriminates,” says NARSOL’s Connecticut advocate

By [Kelan Lyons](#) . . . Ragsbert King was shaking as she held the letter in her hand. Ever since the Board of Pardons and Parole had provisionally approved her application a few months earlier, she’d checked the mail three times each day, desperate to know for sure her criminal record had been wiped away. King was petrified to open the thin envelope, worried the state had found a reason to deny her pardon. She asked her fiancé to do it for her.



“I had tears in my eyes because I couldn’t believe it,” King said, describing the moment last October when she read the paper clearing her of the drug-fueled crimes that drove her to jail a half-dozen times and acted like a scarlet letter when she applied for jobs.

King now works to help others unshackle themselves from criminal convictions that hold them back years after they complete their sentences. During the last legislative session she teamed up with Congregations Organized for a New Connecticut (CONNECT) to promote a “Clean Slate” bill that would have expunged people’s criminal records if they remained crime-free for up to five years after serving their sentences.

The measure failed, but there’s hope for this year, especially since the most politically (**Continue on page 4**)

FIVE CASES COULD SIGNIFICANTLY REFORM PENNSYLVANIA’S SEX OFFENSE REGISTRY. THE STATE’S ATTORNEY GENERAL IS PUSHING BACK. JOSHUA VAUGHN

THE APPEAL

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court is expected to rule on [five cases](#) this year that could change how the state treats people convicted of sex offenses, and could ease the state’s sex offense registry restrictions, commonly referred to as Megan’s Law.

But in a [December opinion piece](#), state Attorney General Josh Shapiro warned that if the court were to “dismantle” the state’s sex offense registry it would “put the public at risk,” and Pennsylvania could become a “safe ha-

ven” for people convicted of a sexual offense.

“A loss [for the state] in even one of [the cases] would be a loss for children’s safety across our state,” he wrote in the Morning Call, an Allentown newspaper.

Shapiro’s assertions that the state and its residents would be in danger if the registry goes away is not born out in fact, said Kelly Socia, a professor of criminology at the University of

Massachusetts at Lowell.

“The research that we have shows that there is very little evidence registries help to reduce sex crimes,” Socia told The Appeal. “It’s not just that they aren’t preventing sex crimes but they are not reducing sex crimes at all.”

“I don’t think the public should be concerned if the registry goes away,” he said.



THOUGHTS FROM ALICE



In asking Don what this letter was to be about he said “some good news and some bad news”. In thinking about what he said I told myself, “Aren’t we a Christian ministry?” Is God still available to us, fallible as we are? That is a very good question since we are publicly labeled as no other crime is labeled. Are we hopeless? Can we recover? Have all “sex offenders” hurt children? No of course not. Some have, others have been convicted of reading porn on line, answering the phone wrongly when a substitute “child” calls them. I have talked with several convicted “sex offenders”

who never had any contact with a child. Then of course, we hear stories of relatively young men doing 10 years in prison because they had a relationship with a 15-year old fiancé they had planned to marry. I know, “you are trying to excuse some men who committed terrible crimes with small children.” Then perhaps the laws should be more fair in just who should be punished. I may have lived too long but I have friends who married at 14 to slightly older men. There was no law at that time prohibiting such behavior. I have also lived in the Philippines where many couples are both in their middle teens. Historically we know that in many cultures of the world people get

married (or become sexual couples) early in the teens. Can we change the present laws? Probably not. Public opinion has been pretty much established by the publication of some horrendous stories. But as Christian people attending church where we meet people on the registry, let us not be too quick to judge just what they must have done until we know. The church I attend was a welcome relief after trying to be accepted in several other churches. To get Biblical, Jesus died to forgive sin, all sin or just selected OK ones? Guess I’ve gone to preaching! Well, those are the thoughts of this old lady.

California prison guards opened cells for inmate attacks. Why some kept their jobs

BY WES VENTEICHER –The Sacramento Bee

A California prison warden was going to fire six correctional officers after an investigation found they had helped a group of inmates assault convicted sex offenders.

The warden managed to get rid of four of the officers, but then California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation attorneys stepped in and prevented firing two of them, according to an Office of the Inspector General report published Friday. The report doesn’t identify the prison.

Police Warn Residents Against Fake Sex Offender Notice

BY New Jersey online

HOWELL – Howell Police are warning residents of a letter that is making the rounds falsely claiming to be a Megan’s Law notification naming a Howell resident/ business owner.



Police shared a community awareness post to their Facebook page emphasizing that the letter is a fake.

conviction of any offense related to Megan’s Law. At first this letter may seem real however upon examination it is poorly written and constructed,” stated police.

The letter is marked with a State of New Jersey address. Residents that receive this letter are encouraged to handle it as little as possible and not to open it, “as it may be of evidentiary value,” said police.

“The person named in this letter is NOT subject to any type of investigation, prosecution or



Leaked Mississippi prison photos of skimpy meals, moldy showers and exposed wiring prompt call for investigation

BY MICHELLE LIU | MAY 29, 2019-
Mississippi Today

A national criminal justice reform group wants a federal investigation into Mississippi State Penitentiary at Parchman.

In a letter to the Department of Justice's Civil Rights Division last week, Families Against Mandatory Minimums cited evidence of what they called unsafe conditions, including violence and the presence of weapons, as well as understaffing at the state's second-largest prison. These claims were based on letters and photographs prisoners sent the organization.

Kelvin Sanders, a former inmate at Parchman Prison in Sunflower County, said this photo shows men sleeping on the floor of the prison to avoid water dripping down on their beds.

"We've heard about Parchman over the years," FAMM President Kevin Ring said in an interview. "But it's only been in the last few weeks that we started to get more clips, videos and messages from people inside."

"To see inside a cell, the water damage, the black mold, the flooding — it just seems like there's something going on

here," Ring said.

Ring compared the conditions of the Sunflower County facility, which houses over 3,000 prisoners from across the state, to those of Alabama prisons deemed unconstitutional in a DOJ report last month.

FAMM also decried the effect of frequent lockdowns, in which many routine prison functions such as commissary and in-person visits are cancelled, on prisoners' family members.

The Mississippi Department of Corrections did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

The call for action follows a sudden influx of photographs and videos purportedly leaked from Parchman and South Mississippi Correctional Institution in Leakesville that circulated across social media in the last week.

Prisoners' rights advocates say pictures recently leaked that purport to show conditions at Mississippi State Penitentiary and South Mississippi Correctional Institution only confirm accounts they have heard from prisoners.

Those images depict showers with peeling walls and stained floors; sparse food trays; emaciated men slumped over their bunks and lying on mattresses on the floor.



Letter From Guy M.

Dear Don and Alice,

Hello you two! It has been awhile since we wrote. I hope all is well with you and with Titus House. Thinking back can you believe it's been nearly five years since I met you guys at La Pasada. I have grown spiritually thanks to the work of many people including yourselves. When I got to La Pasada I was scared and lost and I met Josh S. who took me to the Titus House service and study. Along with reminders of God's loving grace from my mother and grandmother I also had a girlfriend that was trying very hard to get me to read the Bible. Yet I still couldn't find the faith to seek God. Of course I believed in God but I felt shameful reading the Bible or

trying to reconnect fellowship with God. I was lucky to have some amazing people in my life at my time of darkness. As I slowly gained the courage to have that fellowship with Christ, again many changes happened in a short period of time. The girl I was in love with I realized it was causing pain in my situation. Soon she would be gone but her persistent love for Christ got me back on track. Then Josh S. invited me to the Titus House "Tent Revival." Wow, talk about an eye opening event. I had always had faith but had failed to accept Jesus as my Lord and Savior. I have come to realize many people pass through our lives to guide and act as an instrument of God's grace to

bring his children back to him. Just as Jesus is our shepherd when we stray He herds us back when we are lost and He seeks us. I have many people to thank for getting me on track, my family, people who helped me in passing. But I owe a debt of gratitude to the both of you who answered God's call to minister to those society deems to be troublesome and forever lost. As Psalms 119:67 puts it: "I was afflicted, I went astray but now I obey your word." When I think of Titus House or of Don and Alice taking so much time to spread God's Word to people like me, one passage comes to mind, Phil. 2:13 "God does His works in you to fulfill His purpose." As I am nearing the end of my sentence I want you both to know how instrumental you both have been in my spiritual growth.



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Hebrew 13:3 - Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

Remember if you change your address you need to let us know if you want to continue to receive this newsletter

GOD'S LOVE DISPLAYED

A Joyful Toon by Mike Waters



But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. — ROMANS 5:8 NIV

“It’s an anti-discrimination bill that discriminates,”

(continue from page 1)

powerful person in the state will be on their side — Gov. Ned Lamont.

Lamont’s administration is working on a legislative proposal for the upcoming session that would create a process to clear certain criminal records automatically. . . .

The bill supported by CONECT last year would have automated much of the current system managed by the Board of Pardons and Parole. Lawmakers tweaked the proposal after a public hearing at which people expressed concerns about how certain violent crimes would be handled. McDermott said the revised bill barred those convicted of sexual and domestic violence crimes from the automatic pardon process.

“There might be some technical tweaks



We all at Titus House Ministries wish you a Happy Valentines Day. We want to let you know that we love you.

Circle of Concern

Circle of Concern is aimed at breaking down isolation and fear by providing a safe place for registrants and their loved ones to get together, build community, and learn ways to step out and take charge of their lives and overcome the stigma they face. The Circle of Concern is a group of con-

cerned registered citizens, family and friends that meet together on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We are meeting this month on February 16, 2020 at 4 pm—6 pm. We will be having a potluck. We meet at Foot-hills Fellowship Church, corner of Tramway and Candelaria on the far east

side of Albuquerque. We encourage and try to help each other. It is a safe place to share our strengths and struggles. We hope you will join us. If you are planning to attend call Don at (505) 315-7940.

on how that carve-out gets done,” McDermott said of the 2020 bill, but “our proposal this year would not relitigate those. It would still carve those crimes out.”

People convicted of sex crimes generally do not reoffend. The Office of Policy and Management released two studies, one in 2012 and the other in 2017, that analyzed crimes committed by sex offenders released five years earlier. Those studies found that 3.6% of people convicted of a sex crime were arrested for another by 2011, and 4.1% were rearrested by 2016. Those numbers are similar to studies conducted in other states, like New York, California and Alaska.

“I see Clean Slate being an anti-discrimination bill that discriminates,” said Cindy Prizio, the executive director of One Standard of Justice, an organization that works to ensure people convicted or accused of sex offenses are treated fairly by the state before, during and after their sentences. “Rather than looking at people as individuals, we’re lumping all these people into the same pot.”

