

Titus House Newsletter

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

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2021



Let's End Collective Punishment in U.S. Prisons

By Sandy from NARSOL

Also published in the April 2021 edition of Prison Legal News.

By Sandy Rozek . . . As long ago as 1991 when Rodney King was beaten by four police officers in California, public sentiment erupted in a general condemnation of law enforcement. In New York in 2014, the death of Eric Garner, placed in a chokehold and held on the ground for seven minutes by the arresting officers, brought forth the same condemnation, and so did the death of Freddie Gray while in police custody in Maryland in 2015.

And the 2020 killing of George Floyd in Minnesota, eerily similar to that of Garner, galvanized hundreds of thousands of citizens from coast to coast protesting police violence in general and screaming condemnation against all law enforcement, resulting in the mis-used and misunderstood “defund the police” movement.

In every case, spokespersons for law enforcement called for calm and reason and pleaded that the condemnation of peace officers in general stop and that the cries for justice be focused solely on the individual or individuals responsible for the acts of violence.

A very reasonable request.

NARSOL agrees that only those law enforcement officers responsible for misdeeds and criminal conduct should be held accountable for such acts and that targeting identified groups due to the actions of some within the group is wrong. In fact, “Collective punishments are prohibited under [international humanitarian law](#) in all circumstances.”

However, the pleas of law enforcement for individual responsibility as opposed to group punishment are at odds with many of the decisions and edicts of prison administrators across the United States. A recent situation that exemplifies this is the allowance – or lack of it — of Christmas and other holiday cards to those incarcerated in our nation’s prison systems as well as inmate mail in general.

Cards, colored ink, stamps, and some envelopes have been identified as one means by which drugs are sent into prisons to inmates, and many states have varying degrees of bans on these being allowed into their institutions.

A fairly new trend prisons are adopting is the practice of photocopying all allowed mail, including the fronts of the sending envelopes, and then placing each photocopied item into a reusable envelope to be given to the inmates. The policy [as developed in Michigan](#) is similar to that used in [Arkansas and Virginia](#) and in the federal system, the [U.S. Bureau of Prisons](#).

Pennsylvania is using the same system but with a twist. Due to [a contract with Smart Communications](#) that costs the state \$376,000 a month or nearly \$16 million over three years, all acceptable inmate mail is sent to Florida where it is photocopied at a central location, placed in envelopes addressed to the Pennsylvania incarcerated recipients, and then mailed back to them.

Perhaps due to the exorbitant expense, the Pennsylvania Dept. of Corrections made an attempt to determine if they were getting their money’s worth. In August 2018, [they found that 0.7 percent of incoming prisoner mail was drug-tainted](#). After implementing the new, very expensive program, as of July 2019, the rate had dropped to 0.6 percent. The state spends millions to decrease drug flow into the prison by 0.1 percent – that is one-tenth of one percent, and because of that miniscule percentage of inmates who are sent tainted mail, the entire Pennsylvania prison population is denied the actual personal letters, homemade cards, and pictures that keep hope alive while incarcerated.

It is impossible to know if the Pennsylvania percentages are typical of other states, but they are in line with at least one other. Texas is another state that places severe restrictions on what may be received by inmates, and, [according to the Marshall Project](#), “Of the more than 7.5 million pieces of mail Texas prisoners received in 2019, the state says that 3,500 letters per month—just over half of 1 percent—were flagged for a suspicious substance.”

Texas Voices, a NARSOL affiliated advocacy organization, has for years mailed Christmas cards to inmates. They now are required to photocopy the card in black and white onto plain white paper and mail those instead. * (Continue on page 2)





W.A.R.—Women Against the Registry

The vision of this organization is to abolish the multiple Registries across this nation. Women Against Registry also seeks to restore Life, Health and Freedom to all individuals who have been injured by the requirements of registration, especially innocent family members. We foresee a day when the suffocating stigma surrounding registration will be removed in favor of proper sentencing coupled with appropriate treatment; a day when the indefinite detention of civil commitment is replaced with compassionate programs designed to heal and restore. We hope for a day when virtually all who have offended against the laws of the land will be given the opportunity to rebuild a decent, honest life with the prospect of rehabilitation, reintegration, and redemption.

Mission

Through peaceful demonstrations, civic forums, media programs, personal accounts and political events, we will attempt to educate society about the severe cost and complete beneficial void of maintaining federal, state, county, and municipal registries across this nation. The monumental costs associated with registries include monitoring, maintenance, and manpower for law

enforcement organizations; the outrageously high cost of incarceration; the loss of millions of dollars in tax revenue, the truly false sense of neighborhood security; and by far, the most devastating cost of all is the loss of freedom, security, health and safety for the families associated in some way to this grand injustice. In addition, families who are trying to support their loved ones under trying circumstances, are being forced to pay outlandish commissary, phone, and travel fees.

Women Against Registry will be the voice of a vastly misunderstood subset of society. We will be the voice through stories that often relate a tragic, sorrowful, and brutally honest tale. We will be the voice of so many who, because of fear and stigma, cannot yet find their own voice. This is a difficult issue but we are resolute in our determination to be heard.

By speaking in calm voices about humanitarian treatment backed by facts; by conversing with friends, family members and strangers; by articulating points of injustice and fairness to legislators; by speaking at conferences and at schools; by expressing opinions on radio and television programs; by writ-

ing and responding to news and magazine articles; by all these methods and more, we will be heard. We are the soft but growing sound of more than 900,000 citizens required to register and perhaps more than 2.5 million family members.

There is simply no value in a registry system. We seek fair treatment and a second chance for those deemed (by an unbiased risk-assessment process), to be of little or no threat to society. There is incontrovertible scientific evidence showing extremely low recidivism rates for those people who have committed a sex offense. As such, there are an exorbitant number of individuals suffering the stigma of registration unnecessarily. It is the mission of Women Against Registry to change that reality.



FIGHTING THE DESTRUCTION OF FAMILIES

Collective Punishment in US Prisons

A few states have disallowed Christmas and all greeting cards altogether. Among them are [New Mexico](#), [Utah](#), and [Montana](#). In an interesting side note, North Carolina, while not having a statewide total ban on cards, maintains an extensive, [nineteen-page list](#) of publications totally banned from entering its penal institutions. Among them are issues of *Criminal Legal News*, *Field and Stream*, *Vogue*, *New York Magazine*, *Scientific American*, and *The Natural*, a classic novel that is often described as the best book ever written about baseball.

Whether receiving photocopies — often of poor quality — of mail; having restrictions put on types and colors of cards and letters; or having cards totally banned, and whether the percentage of drugs coming into penal institutions via postal mail is 0.5 percent, 5 percent, or 25 percent, the result is the same: An entire class / group of people are being punished for the bad or suspicious behavior of members within that class or group.

Members of law enforcement ask that we not blame, censure, or wreak consequences upon them as a group when some of them exhibit unlawful behavior. The more than two million incarcerated individuals in America ask the same consideration from those who make prison policies. Those inmates who seek to receive contraband or drugs can be prosecuted for criminal behavior or have internal sanctions imposed for non-criminal behavior. NARSOL calls on prisons to treat each instance based on the individual circumstances and cease imposing collective punishment on the entire prison population.

* *After [this article](#), Texas prisons modified their policy to again allow actual greeting cards at certain times of the year.*



Resource List

Florida Action Committee

(FAC)
6615 W Boynton Beach Blvd #414
Boynton Beach, FL 33437

B4U-ACT, Inc.

P.O. Box 1754
Westminster, MD 21158

Phone: (410) 871-8156

Advocates for Change
PO Box 103392
Denver CO 80250

Broken Yoke Ministries

PO Box 5824
De Pere, WI 54115-5824

New Person Ministries

PO Box 223
Reading, PA 19607
610-777-2222
NewPersonMinistries@gmail.com

National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws (NARSOL)

Headquarters
Post Office Box 25423
Raleigh, NC 27611

The Alliance for Constitutional Sex Offense Laws (ACSOL) is dedicated to protecting the Constitution by restoring the civil rights of registrants and their families. **Alliance for Constitutional Sex Offense Laws**

1215 K Street, 17th Floor
Sacramento, CA 95814

Texas Voices For Reason & Justice

P.O. Box 23539
San Antonio, Texas
78223

ARKANSAS TIME AFTER TIME

P.O. Box #11491, Conway, AR.
72034
(501) 444-ATAT (2828)
RSOL@arkansastimeaftertime.org

CURE-SORT

P.O. Box 1022
Norman, OK 73070-1022
(405) 639-7262
e-mail: info@cure-sort.org
web: www.cure-sort.org

Liberty and Justice Coalition

<http://libjusco.net>
P.O. Box 36123,
Albuquerque, NM 87176
505-832-4291
libjusco.com@gmail.com

Titus House Ministries

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Tijeras, NM 87059
(505) 3157940 or (505) 286-8807
www.titushouseministries.org

Women Against Registry (W.A.R.)

P.O. Box 463
Arnold, MO 63010
800-311-3764
contact@womenagainstregistry.com

New Name Ministries, Inc.

PO Box 11694
Ft. Worth, TX 76110
Phone: (817) 920-5886
Fax: (888) 415-1439
Email:
staff.nnm@gmail.com
Web:
www.newnameministries.org

Just Future Project,
brings shadow prisons
(civil Commitment facilities)
into the light.

202-350-0531
Contact@ajustfuture.org
www.ajustfuture.org

Derek Logue from "Once Fallen", has published a book called "Your Life on the List". You can order it from Amazon, for \$12.95 or you can download a free copy from his website "Once Fallen" <http://oncefallen.com/>



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Alice's Cell (505) 259-0867

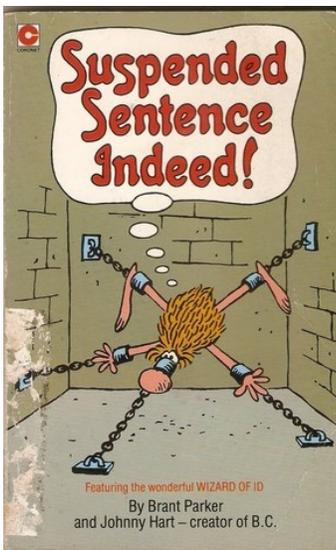
Don's Cell: (505) 315-7940

Email: donmagicjohnston@gmail.com

We're on the Web
titushouseministries.org

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



Reflections on Schuster —by Jon

In August of 1990, I met the person who would have the highest influence for the rest of my life. Her name was SS1 Schuster. She would be my Momma, my Poppa, my Brother, and my Sister for 8 weeks. Her way of nurturing this 18-year-old took a different approach from my own mom and dad. I was my Mom's little angel. I was Schuster's Knucklehead. I was Dad's Young Man. I was Schuster's Big Dummy. Mom and Dad gave me Time Out. Schuster preferred a more physical approach.

The first day with SS1 Schuster involved nearly a thousand push-ups and a 5 mile run. Some got to see chow in front of them twice. Schuster taught us how to make our beds, wear our clothes, clean our squad bay, how to stand up straight, and that when addressing her, the first and last words out of our sewers would be "Ma'am!"

As you can guess, SS1 Schuster was my drill instructor! She and her colleagues were some of the most special, tough, and yes, nurturing teachers I have ever met. In 1990, I joined the US Coast Guard and I spent 8 weeks in their basic training program at Cape May, New Jersey. It was the toughest, most rewarding time of my life.

Rewards don't come without their own unique kinds of misery. In my 18 year old experience with life, I had never learned this, but in 8 long, tedious, painful, often frustrating weeks, I learned this all too clearly. The Bible has a neat little verse in Romans 8:18. This verse got me through 8 weeks at Cape May. It got me through 5 years of sea duty. It got me through 25 years of trucking, 6 months in jail, 2 years of probation, 5 years on the Sex Offender Regis-

try, and I guarantee it will get me through ten more years. The verse simply states "I think that these present sufferings shall not compare to the Glory that is to come."

This verse tested true. After 8 weeks of torment, I headed to my first ship in Seattle. It was my first choice of billets. It was a 399 foot ice breaker. On board, I suffered, too, but my reward was to accomplish what do few have. I actually went to Antarctica! I suffer weekly today as a truck driver, but at the end of the week, I can pay bills and go fishing. I suffered in jail, but when I came home, God allowed me to rebuild my life...and I came back better!

Wherever we are now, we always have the Word of God with us. His hand will guide us and protect us. At the end of everything this world can throw at us, we are assured of a Glory to be revealed to us. Thank you, SS1 Schuster, for your influence in my life. Thank You, Jesus for putting someone like her in my life to show me that You have made a way for me!



Circle of Concern has gone ZOOM

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 concerned registered citizens, family and friends that meet together on the 3rd Sunday of each month. We are meeting this month on **May 16, 2021** at 3 pm—5 p.m. MST. We will meet on Zoom. 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.. He will send you the link to join by computer or phone. You can contact him at the number above or email him at

donmagicjohnston@gmail.com