

# Titus House Newsletter

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

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## News from South Carolina

By Larry H.



On May 16, 2023, the governor of South Carolina, signed into law a revision to the Sexual Violent Predator Act. Many of us have heard rumors about it and hopefully this will give you a synopsis of the main parts affecting the majority of us.

The new legislation has added two new statutes and defined wording in several others.

One of the definitions of interest to us is from § 44-48-30 (9), which now states, "Likely to engage in acts of sexual violence means that a person is predisposed to engage in acts of sexual violence and more probably than not will engage in acts of sexual violence to such a degree as to pose a menace to the health and safety of others". Previously the statute stated, "Likely to engage in acts of sexual violence" means the person's propensity to commit acts of sexual violence is of such a degree as to pose a menace to the health and safety of others". One of the ways evaluators measure "more probably than not" is with the risk assessment tools, such as the Static 99R -BOO-R,Mn:S-0ST-R-;-RR:SA-eR., VSOR:; "all estimating sexual recidivism. What is also used are the documented insights shown during group presentations, and what is said during the personal interview themselves. This rewording of the statute will be beneficial to a number of us here, and for others something to work toward.

The other significant thing from the revised legislation is that now under § 44-48-115, we can now challenge our commitment or subsequent periodic reviews based on ineffective assistance of counsel. There was no procedure to do this previously, and though it will be carried out a lot like a PCR, it will go through the South Carolina Supreme Court, not the circuit that committed us. The procedure is outlined in the statute, but unlike the PCR, there is no form that I am aware of, so initially we will have to petition the Supreme Court developing our own forms. Court filings must be done within 180 days after the court order is filed, regarding the commitment or subsequent periodic reviews, which is different than the twelve months allowed in a PCR.

Lastly, § 44-48-180, states that any and all hearing dealing with the SVP Act are to be given priority status for the purpose of scheduling hearings or trials.

So those are the positives, but on the negative, there could be a delay in when the time period starts for the periodic annual review. This is because § 44-48-1-LO, states that an annual review is to be conducted within one year after a pending review is resolved by a filed court order indicating:

- a. A finding of no probable cause;
- b. A waiver by the resident; or
- c. An order of continued commitment after a periodic review trial.

As such annual may not mean yearly, generating a longer period between evaluations. This in essence codifies what has been occurring for a number of years. I encourage everyone to read the total revision of the statute, once it is available in the law library, because there may be situations that apply to you that do not apply to the majority of our population.



## JOIN US

Just wanted to invite you all to the morning conference call we do each day for the past 7 years! Our devotional we use is “*Our Daily Bread*”. The dial-in number is (605)476-4092 The access code is 278954# We’ll see you at 7am MST.

### From “The New Yorker

Every day, in prisons and jails across the United States, some eighty thousand people are held in [solitary confinement](#), isolated and deprived of human contact. A growing body of scientific evidence shows that such conditions cause the brain to wither and can lead to permanent neurological damage. Per the United Nations’ “Nelson Mandela Rules,” which, in 2015, were adopted as [minimum standards](#) for the treatment of prisoners

around the world, prolonged use of the practice amounts to torture and should be abolished.

All of this research and regulation reinforces what is already intuitive: taking away individuals’ ability to interact with the world around them strips them of what it is to be human. This notion is easy to understand; what is far more difficult to comprehend, for those who have never endured solitary confinement, is how it feels to be locked by the

state in a cell no bigger than a parking space. “The Box,” a short documentary directed by James Burns and Shal Ngo, vividly bridges that gap. The film blends first-person narration, live-action reënactment sequences, and stop-motion animation to explore the psychological trauma that solitary confinement inflicts on survivors.

### Letter from Shawn

I wanted to write and let you know how much I appreciate the monthly newsletter.

It was strange for me to even ask to receive it. I am not a Christian. I never thought that I would look forward to a Christian newsletter arriving

every month. But existing in this place with only the prospect of seeing loved ones someday, hope is often in short supply.

But your newsletter brings a little hope each time that there are others out there like me,

and there is no need to suffer alone, that there are others working for change for those forced to Register.

Thanks for all you are doing.

Shawn

### American sex offender denied entry into Philippines

[Rudy Santos](#) - The Philippine

Star  
October 11, 2023 | 12:00am  
MANILA, Philippines — Immigration officers prevented a 66-year-old American convicted of sex crimes from entering the country on Oct. 8, the Bureau of Immigration (BI) reported yesterday.

Charles Harry Cooper, 66, a native of Colorado, arrived from Taiwan on a China Air

flight. He claimed he was visiting as a tourist and would be staying in Pasay City.

Information received by the BI show that Cooper was convicted in the United States in 2009 for statutory rape, statutory sodomy of a person under 14 and molestation.

Immigration officers required Cooper to board the next

available flight back to his country of origin.

“These predators are not welcome in the Philippines,” BI Commissioner Norman Tansingco said.

“Any sex offender who attempts to enter the country will be turned back and black-listed,” he added.



## Prison staff allege dangerous conditions at Los Lunas prison

Colleen Heild / Journal Investigative Reporter

Oct 12, 2023 Updated Oct 13, 2023

Four longtime state correctional officers are sounding the alarm, alleging that dangerous conditions at the prison in Los Lunas are putting their lives, and those of other staff and inmates, at “grave” risk.

Severe understaffing, combined with failing security equipment at the 43-year-old prison, have left staff “afraid,” states a lawsuit filed by the employees last month in state district court. Moreover, they allege that their attempts to correct the conditions have been met with “reprisal” by corrections officials.

“It’s absolutely reckless,” said attorney Parrish Collins, who filed the lawsuit on behalf of correctional officers Andres Martinez, Sonja Boucher, Leona Chavez and corrections Sgt. Dominic Baca. All but Boucher have worked at the Corrections Department for at least a decade, with Martinez spending the most time, 18 years, at the agency.

A Corrections spokeswoman Brittany Roembach said the agency doesn’t comment on pending litigation, but said in an email on Thursday, “NMCD is committed to ensuring that all of our facilities are safely staffed.”

The lawsuit alleges that at the Central New Mexico Correctional Facility:

Correctional officers are “recklessly forced” to attempt to cover multiple units and pods (inside the prison) by themselves. That has exposed the plaintiffs to “unsupervised, dangerous inmates beyond their capacity to supervise.”

Officers are compelled to regularly work double shifts and sometimes triple shifts due to the shortage.

Nurses are left alone with no security personnel, some forced to do inmate laundry because of a lack of biohazard staff.

Inmates are not receiving their medications, including psychiatric medication, in a timely manner and frequently not at all, creating “enormous risks for all users of the building.”

Maggots have infested the trucks used to transport the food served to inmates.

Mentally ill patients and other inmates are tasked with watching over mentally ill and suicidal inmates.

Inmate-on-inmate assaults and assaults on correctional officers are on the rise.

Moreover, the lawsuit contends the Corrections Department has provided false and or misleading information to auditors about staffing, mental health services, functioning of equipment and facilities, food quality and other information.

The plaintiffs say they have reported these problems repeatedly up the chain to supervisors, deputy wardens, wardens, the secretary of Corrections and to the governor.

But security at the prison is steadily worsening, and correctional officers, staff and medical personnel “are leaving in droves.”

“Not only has NMCD failed to replace those employees, but it is now attempting to eliminate (full-time) positions in a seeming effort to improve their staff vacancy numbers,” the lawsuit alleges.

The plaintiffs and other employees “fear going to work each day due to persistently malfunctioning equipment, gross understaffing, gross incompetence of (Corrections) management and threats of retaliation.”

Those who filed the lawsuit “all want to remain at (NMCD). They love their profession as correctional officers. They want to serve the public, the prisoners they oversee, and their correctional officers and staff...”

Asked about staffing, spokeswoman Roembach told the Journal that the Los Lunas prison has 51 vacancies for correctional officers, with a total of 181 full-time positions authorized.

Roembach said corrections officers are members of the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees union and the union has “not formally challenged the Corrections Department or any of our facilities on behalf of its members.”

The lawsuit is asking for damages, and court orders requiring Corrections officials to immediately comply with applicable standards. It also asks a judge for independent auditors to inspect the Los Lunas facility and review its compliance with American Correctional Association standards and to provide a full audit of what it alleges are Corrections Department’s “falsifications” on the two most recent ACA audits.

While the state prison population has been declining for the fourth consecutive year, there was a 32% vacancy rate in correctional officer positions at state prisons as of June 30, according to the most recent data from the state Legislative Finance Committee.



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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



## A Message from Alice and Don

Dear Friends, You need to realize that when you are older, you make a bunch of mistakes when writing to friends and you may put the wrong date on your letter as we did last month! Please be patient with us. Call me in the early evening NM time and we can find lots to talk about. Just ask Wanda and those on our morning call and you will discover we can chat until our phones almost give up! By the way our morning call is at 7:00 am Mountain Standard Time. It is amazing that 10 or 15 people, still dressed in sleeping clothes, hair on end, can get excited about friends just being released from prison, and other exciting news. At our place the morning sun is trying to warm us up as we add a little more wood to our kitchen BIG BOY STOVE. At 7 am Don greets early

callers. We use "Our Daily Bread" handbooks. The books are dated with new ones available monthly. There 10 to 15 quickly become friends, even some live far away as Kansas, Arizona and New York! Check your time zone to join us. You can get free copies from *Our Daily Bread Ministries*, PO Box 2222, Grand Rapids, MI 49501-2222. They appreciate donations. God has really blessed us with this morning devotional conference call. We are sure it will be a blessing to you too. See what God can do for your life. Join us (605) 476-4092 access code 278954#



**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 **November 19, 2023** at 3 pm—4 p.m. MST (Mountain Standard Time). 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](mailto:donmagicjohnston@gmail.com)