

STATEVILLE SPEAKS

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE • SUMMER 2021

PAROLE ILLINOIS EARNED REENTRY BILL UPDATE

Dear Stateville Speaks,

We'd like to share an update on the Parole Illinois Earned Reentry bill. But first, we'd like to respond to the Open Letter on HB3214 by Dwayne McCoy (Winter/Holiday 2020). In response to Mr. McCoy, we'd like to clarify the basic features and aims of the Parole Illinois bill.

Mr. McCoy referenced HB3214; however, now the Parole Illinois bill has a new number: HB2399 (amendment 1) in the House and SB2333 in the Senate. The bill also has new chief sponsors: Senator Villanueva and Representative Carol Ammons. Known as the Earned Reentry Bill, the bill provides parole eligibility after 20 years. It is explicitly retroactive. (See page 4 for the bill synopsis.)

Parole Illinois wholeheartedly agrees with Mr. McCoy that every person deserves opportunities to be reviewed for release, regardless of their crime conviction. We also share Mr. McCoy's belief that corruption in the Chicago Police Department has resulted in the imprisonment of many innocent people, and we realize that wrongful conviction is particularly egregious in murder and sexual assault cases. We also believe that every human being is much more than a crime-category, every person can change and grow, and every person should be evaluated in terms of who they are now. Thus, when major exclusions were added to HB3214 in winter 2019, which were added by that bill's sponsor without Parole Illinois' consent, Parole Illinois stopped supporting that bill.

The current Parole Illinois Earned Reentry bill focuses on people with long sentences. It

gives such people the right to review after 20 years because it is now widely recognized that 20 is plenty: 20 years is long enough for people to wait before their first chance to be reviewed. In fact, organizations including the Sentencing Project and Prison Policy Institute say that sentences should be capped at 20 years. The

above.

The Coalition sported Earned Reentry bill still includes all of the same provisions described above; however, it has an additional elderly provision, which stipulates that, for the first 2 years of the bill's enactment, parole review will be restricted to people who have 20 years in and are at least 55 years old. (After the first 2 years, no age restriction will apply.)

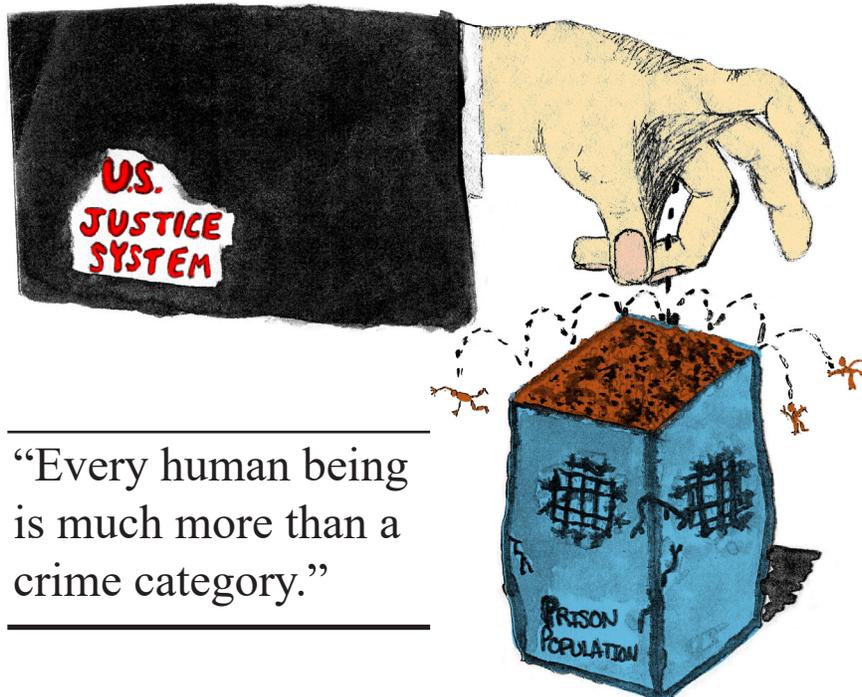
We are working hard to shore up legislative support for the bill, which we plan to push in the Veto Session this October. As we negotiate with legislators to collect the necessary votes, we may need to make some hard choices about concessions. (For instance, some legislators have insisted on excluding from parole eligibility people convicted of sexual assault against minors under 13.) If,

in order to pass the bill, we need to concede to any carve-outs, we will continue working hard to obtain relief for anyone with long sentences whom this bill does not help. With this strategy, we aim to provide relief as soon as possible for 99% of the people with long sentences who have been neglected by other reforms and then to continue the fight for everyone to have fair chances to return home.

We thank Mr. McCoy for advocating for a fair and inclusive parole system, and we hope we can work together toward this goal.

Sincerely,

Joseph Dole
Policy Director of Parole Illinois
Shari Stone-Mediator
Managing Director of Parole Illinois ■



“Every human being is much more than a crime category.”

bill also improves some aspects of the Prisoner Review Board (PRB) process. For instance, currently, PRB members who are absent are counted as “No” votes. To fix this, the bill states that parole is granted when a majority of the panel members who are present and voting vote “Yes.” The bill also specifies criteria for the PRB to consider, including participation in programs (when available), independent efforts at rehabilitation, and plans upon release. The bill also grants incarcerated people access to their master files.

Now for some updates. This past winter, Parole Illinois formed a Parole Coalition with Citizens for Parole (a.k.a. Elderly Parole). As a coalition, we have combined our efforts as well as our legislative supporters behind the Parole Illinois' Earned Reentry bill mentioned

Illustration by Briana Alexander.

Hope...Redemption...Change

ELDERLY RELEASE BILLS QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

By Elizabeth Ames

There are currently two bills in the Illinois legislature (see page 3) that would make people eligible for release after being incarcerated for a certain length of time. The first bill is HB2399, which was introduced into the Illinois House of Representatives by Rep. Anne Stava-Murray. The second bill is SB2120, which was introduced into the Senate by Senator Robert Peters. Neither of these bills were passed in the 2021 legislative session, so the House and Senate would need to reconsider these bills in the 2022 session to make them into law.

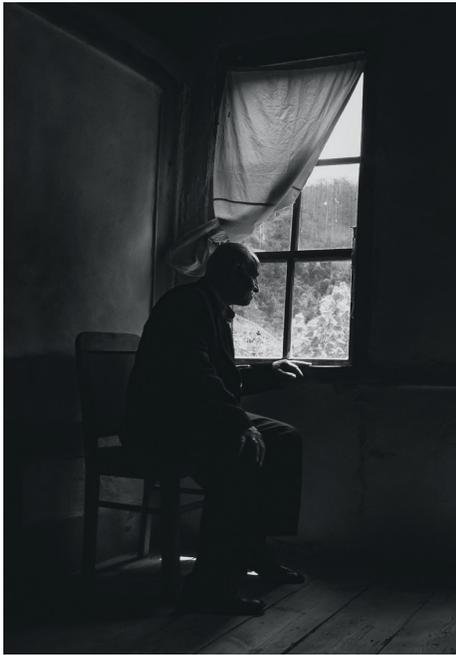


Photo by Harun Tan.

Why are there two bills?

There are two bills because there are two chambers in the Illinois legislature: the House of Representatives (commonly called “the House”) and the Senate. Both the House and the Senate must pass a bill before it goes to the Governor to be signed into law. Together, the House and the Senate make up the Illinois General Assembly. Currently, we are in the 102nd General Assembly, which runs from 2021-2022.

Currently, HB2399 and SB2120 have some differences, but the House and the Senate would have to agree on identical language before the Governor can sign the bill into law. These bills are not yet the law and have a long way to go until they become law in the state of Illinois.

What do HB2399 and SB2120 say?

This describes the two bills as they are now, but the legislature could make a lot of changes to the bills before enacting them, and they may not become law at all. If enacted, HB2399 would require that anybody in IDOC who has been incarcerated for more than 20 years will be eligible for earned discretionary reentry. This includes people who are serving a life sentence. If the bill is enacted as it is currently written, they will consider only people who are at least 50 years old for the first

three years. After those first three years, they will consider everyone who has been incarcerated for more than 20 years. SB2120, on the

other hand, says that people are eligible for earned discretionary reentry if they meet one of two conditions: 1) they are at least 60 years old and have been incarcerated for more than 20 years; or 2) they have been incarcerated for more than 25 years.

Both bills state that the Prisoner Review Board would review all eligible people for release. They would consider the candidate’s statement, evidence of rehabilitation, likelihood of recidivism, letters of support from others, partici-

participation in programming, disciplinary record, employment history, criminal history, and parole plan. If some programs aren’t available in the candidate’s prison, lack of participation in those programs will not be held against the candidate. Furthermore, any incarcerated person cannot be barred from participating in programs just because their outdate is far away.

The bills also provide rules for the earned discretionary release hearing. Under HB2399, at least 3 members of the Prisoner Review Board must be present, while under SB2120, at least 8 members of the Prisoner Review Board must be present. HB2399 adds the following additional requirements for the hearing: Candidates for release are allowed to have an attorney or advocate at the hearing, and candidates can testify on their own behalf either in person or over video conference. Candidates would have access to their master file at least 60 days prior to their hearing, and IDOC would be required to create a process for candidates to challenge incorrect or misleading information in the master file.

If the candidate is granted earned discretionary release, their sentence would be complete once mandatory supervised release is over. If the candidate is denied release, the Prisoner Review Board would review that person’s case again within two years under HB2399, or within three years under SB2120.

Again, both of these bills are not yet the law, and are only in the very early stages of the process to become a law. To become law, the House of Representatives and the Senate would need to agree upon one version of the bill, then both chambers need to pass the agreed-upon version of the bill, and then the Governor must sign the bill. This process takes a long time. Furthermore, the bills could be changed substantially before they become law, and they may not become law at all.

What does it mean that the two bills are “stalled”?

The bills are “stalled” because both the House and the Senate are currently not in session. Both chambers are in their regular session from January until about May. In the 2021 session, both bills did not make it through committee review, which means they are “dead” or “stalled” for this year. While both chambers will be back in session in October, the October session is usually reserved for addressing bills that were passed by both chambers but vetoed by the Governor for some reason. Since HB2399 and SB2120 have not been passed, they will probably not be considered in the October session. Therefore, the bills will be stalled until the 2022 session, where the House and Senate may consider these two bills again. However, because it is a new year, they will have to start the process of considering the bills all over again. Further, there may be changes made to the bills between now and then.

Is there anything people can do to support or enhance these bills?

You are encouraged to write to your state representatives to express your support or any thoughts you have on the bills, both positive and concerns you may have. You should also encourage loved ones to also write to their state representatives as well. ■

SPECIAL THANKS

Stateville Speaks would like to thank Elizabeth Ames for her clear explanation of the elder bills. Elizabeth is a third-year law student at the Northwestern Pritzker School of Law with a focus on civil rights law. She has experience writing clemency/commutation petitions and working on prison litigation. While she is unable to work on individual cases or answer individual letters, Elizabeth said “She is very excited to be answering your legal questions in this newsletter!” We are very excited to have her as well! ■

FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to another edition of Northeastern Illinois University's Stateville Speaks. Thankfully, we are hearing from many of you that you have made it through what we hope is the worst of this pandemic, (If you received your vaccines) and are getting back to normal...or at least what we unfortunately call the "new normal".

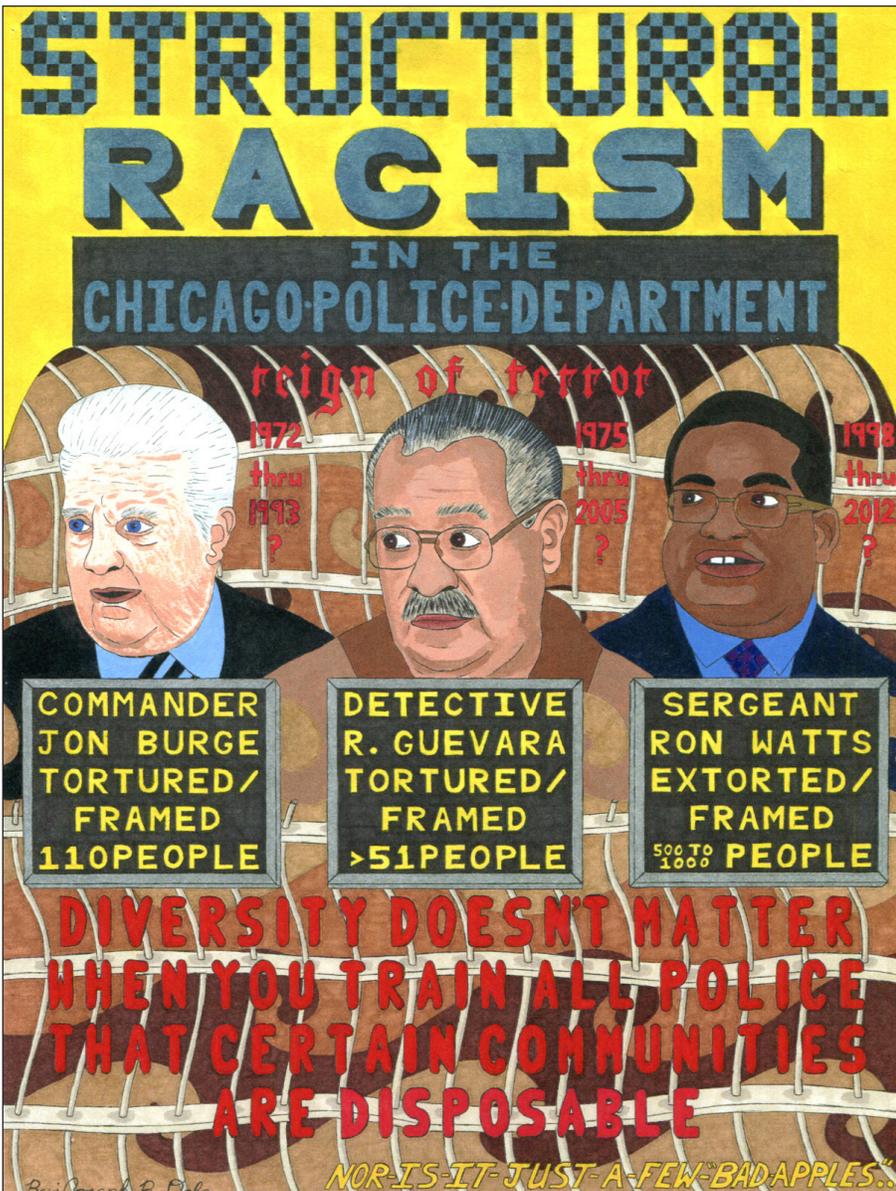
Sadly, we are also grieving for the families and friends who lost loved one. While loss is hard for everyone, we are reminded just how difficult and isolating loss on the inside is. Again, our condolences to all lost to COVID and continued strength and recovery to those that became ill.

The pandemic alone was not all that was on your minds, as you wrote of George, Breonna, Travon-and the continued systemic murder of Black men and women. We thank you for your heartfelt poems and essays, a reminder of how much work still lies ahead. We also thank Joe Dole for his drawing of "Chicago's Finest", reminding us that evil crosses all color lines.

Another huge loss was the passing of onetime Tamms resident and Uptown People's Law Office paralegal Brian Nelson. He was a tireless, selfless advocate and a riveting speaker, leaving the audience in both awe and tears. Our joy is knowing he finally made it home to his family and found purpose in life.

But the news was not all bad as the fight for parole continues, as does the fight for relief for long term elders. We thank Joe Dole and Northwestern Law student Elizabeth Ames for breaking it down. And as always, we are

See EDITOR, Page 5



Artwork by Joseph Dole

ELDER RELIEF BILLS UPDATE

HB2399

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Unified Code of Corrections. Deletes provision that no person serving a term of natural life imprisonment may be paroled or released except through executive clemency. Provides that a person serving a term of natural life imprisonment is eligible for parole or mandatory supervised release. Provides that a committed person who has attained the age of 60 years and served at least 20 consecutive years of imprisonment or a committed person who has served 25 consecutive years of imprisonment may submit a petition to the Prisoner Review Board seeking parole. Provides for the requirements of the petition. Provides that victims' families shall be notified in a timely manner and provided opportunity to participate at the parole hearing concerning

the petitioner's application for parole under this provision in accordance with the Rights of Crime Victims and Witnesses Act, the Open Parole Hearings Act, and this Code. Provides that Prisoner Review Board hearings under this provision shall be conducted by a panel of at least 8 members of the Board and a majority vote of the panel is required to grant the petition and release the petitioner on parole. Provides that if parole is denied, the petitioner shall be eligible to reapply for parole no later than 3 years after denial. Effective immediately.

SB2120

Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Unified Code of Corrections. Provides that a committed person who has attained the age of 60 years and served at

least 20 consecutive years of imprisonment or a committed person who has served 25 consecutive years of imprisonment may submit a petition to the Prisoner Review Board seeking parole. Provides that the petition shall contain a statement by the petitioner, documentation of rehabilitation, character references, evidence of program participation, employment history, criminal history, disciplinary history, and housing plans upon release. Provides that victims' families shall be given timely notification and the opportunity to participate in the parole hearing. Provides that a Board hearing shall be conducted by at least 8 members, with a majority vote needed to grant the petition. Provides when a petitioner is eligible to reapply if parole is denied. Effective immediately. ■

COURT CERTIFIES CLASS IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT LAWSUIT

By Megan Groves and Alan Mills, Uptown People's Law Center

The United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois certified all 28,000+ state prisoners to be part of a class in a class action lawsuit challenging IDOC's excessive use of solitary confinement. Plaintiffs, represented by Uptown People's Law Center and pro bono attorneys with Winston and Strawn, allege that conditions in solitary are horrific, that IDOC permits the use of solitary confinement for minor infractions, and uses lengthy, disproportionate stays, all of which constitute "cruel and unusual punishment" in violation of the Eighth Amendment to the US Constitution. Plaintiffs also allege that prisoners are given no meaningful opportunity to present a defense, and sometimes are not even told why they are being sent to solitary, thereby violating the 14th Amendment by not complying with the minimum requirements of due process.

In today's opinion, the court not only held that plaintiffs had sufficient evidence to support their allegations, but also held that the six named plaintiffs could litigate the claims on behalf of all Illinois prisoners, since every prisoner is subject to being sent to solitary at any time, often for very minor violations. Plaintiffs do not seek damages; rather, they seek a court order to fix the system.

"Illinois' prison system locks up too many people, for too long, in horrific conditions. And as solitary confinement is prison within prison, it, too, is overused. The UN states that over 15 days of solitary is torture, yet sometimes people in Illinois spend decades there. And everyone who spends more than a couple of weeks ends up traumatized. We welcome the chance to finally expose these horrors in federal court," said Alan

Mills, attorney from Uptown People's Law Center

Magistrate Judge Beatty stated in the ruling that prisoners "routinely are not offered the full amount of yard time required by IDOC policy. Even when they are, they often refuse to go because the yards are unstimulating, unsanitary, and/or unsafe. Cells are extremely small but nevertheless frequently occupied by two [prisoners]. Guards regularly use force against prisoners, chemical spray on prisoners, and use racial epithets and slurs when speaking. While variations undoubtedly exist between facilities as to other conditions, such as cleanliness, cell fixtures, and rodent and insect control, these dissimilarities do not bear on or somehow negate the broader, baseline conditions the facilities all have in common." Judge Beatty concluded that he found the conditions described by plaintiffs and their experts "disturbing, and quite frankly distressing."

Uptown People's Law Center (UPLC) is a nonprofit legal services organization specializing in prisoners' rights, Social Security disability, and tenants' rights and eviction defense. In addition to the above lawsuit, UPLC currently has five other active class action lawsuits regarding jail and prison conditions including:

- Richard v. Pritzker: COVID-19, Call to Release Vulnerable Prisoners
- Rasha v. Jeffreys: Mental Health Care
- Holmes v. Jeffreys: Deaf and Hard of Hearing Prisoners
- Lippert v. Jeffreys: Medical Care
- Davis v. Jeffreys: Solitary Confinement ■



BILL STATUS OF SB2333

102nd General Assembly
Synopsis As Introduced

Amends the Unified Code of Corrections. Provides that notwithstanding to the contrary, any provision of the Code, the Post-Conviction Hearing Article of the Code of Criminal Procedure of 1963, or the Habeas Corpus Article or the relief from judgment provisions of the Code of Civil Procedure, a person serving a term of imprisonment, including a term of natural life, in a Department of Corrections institution or facility is eligible for earned discretionary reentry if he or she has served a term of imprisonment of at least 20 years. Provides that petitions for earned discretionary reentry shall be administered by the Prisoner Review Board. Establishes procedures for the hearing. Removes provision that no person serving a term of natural life imprisonment may be paroled or released except through executive clemency. Provides that if any incarcerated person is released on earned discretionary reentry, his or her sentence shall be considered complete after the term of mandatory supervised release. Applies retroactively. Contains a severability provision. ■

LETTER TO GEORGE FLOYD

By Preston G. Gresham

My dear brother,

I sat in anger and indignation when I saw the tape of you being murdered in broad daylight. I twisted in my seat as I heard you beg for your life – not just yours, but all Black lives, which by the way – Really Do Matter! I stood numb from the excuses that have been hurled around like the lies that have been told for decades.

I have watched the emasculation of our Black brothers and the separation of our crown jewel, the Black family. Is it supposed to hurt to the Black? I am saddened by the way your cries for mercy were ignored. As you lay there with that knee on your neck, I felt the air go out of my lungs, as I symbolically gasped for air.

Emmett Till, Trayvon Martin, Michael Brown, Laquan McDonald, Sandra Bland, Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, George Floyd. All vibrant, important young Black men and women, speaking from the grave and reminding us of the canyon of hate that permeates the American society, even to this day.

George, you represent us all.

Peace. ■

SUBMISSIONS WANTED

Stateville Speaks wants to publish your article, essay, letter, poem or artwork in an upcoming issue. Please try to limit articles to around 500 words. Articles may be edited for length. Artwork will most likely be published in color. Due to the volume of submissions we receive, work will not be returned. If you have a topic you would like us to address in an upcoming edition, drop us a line and let us know. See page 7 for address.



RACISM, COCAINE AND ANGER MATRIX

By Lawrence Frazier

In the current climate of things, racism may simply be defined as the discrimination of people based on skin color or ethnicity. It involves the unrighteous use of power against people toward whom we harbor prejudice, which is the emotional foundation of discrimination. Racism is equally unrighteous whether practiced by Whites toward Blacks, Blacks toward Hispanics, Hispanics towards Asians, or any other combination thereof.

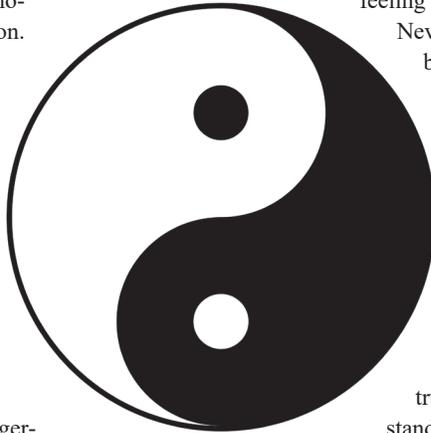
Resentment is the cocaine of emotions. It causes our blood to pump and our energy level to rise. But, also like cocaine, it demands increasingly larger and more frequent dosages. However, there is a dangerous point at which anger ceases to be an emotion and becomes a driving force. A person bent on revenge moves unknowingly further and further away from being able to forgive, because to be without the anger is to be without a source of energy. This explains why the bitter complain to any and to all who will listen. They want and need to have their fire fanned. That helps explain the existence of the white supremacist, KKK, the skin heads, and any other hate group organizations.

Members of these groups feed one another's anger. That's why the resentful often appear to be unreasonable, they need each other to have the same mindset to be who they are. They are addicted to their mindset of bitterness, they don't want to surrender their anger, for to do so would be to surrender their reason to live. Yet, I have been confined with Klan members and skin heads in prison and the number of individuals with that same mindset are reduced drastically, and is replaced by Blacks and Latinos, who disproportionally outnumber those individuals in prison. As a result, they humble themselves and become reasonable, for to not do so, could be a detriment to their physical well-being, or their life, and as such their flames are basically extinguished.

Take the bigotry from the racist and what does he have left? Remove the revenge from the heart of a zealot, and her life is empty. Extract chauvinism from the radical sexist and what remains? Resentment is like cocaine in another way too. Cocaine can kill the addict. Anger can kill the angry. It can kill physically, from the inside out. Chronic anger has been linked with elevated cholesterol, high blood pressure and other deadly conditions. **Hatred** is the rapid dog that turns on its owner. **Revenge** is the raging fire that consumes the arsonist. **Bitterness** is the trap that snares the hunter. And **mercy** is the choice that can set them all free. ■

By Christopher Kennedy

Time, capturing my thoughts, creating new dreams, imagining a new future, and turning all possibilities into reality. My life in a new way, accomplished! From the inside out, thinking, feeling and actions is where it begins.



Never having a passion and desire burning so greatly inside my soul to achieve a future with no uncertainties or regrets. Concentration directed solely on excelling and achieving maximum growth in all things.

Love, such an amazing emotion, having the ability to make one strive for perfection. Wondering deep within who we truly are, confusion, no understanding, feeling crazy and lost at times of doubt. Desperately in search for

the comprehension needed to fully understand our inner being, our purpose.

Acknowledgements, remembering and accepting our past failures and mistakes, fully realizing the chaotic periods in our life which we formed, showing no care. Being conscious that we, with all certainty, come to a moment in our lives where our unjust and adverse ways will without any doubt cost us the ultimate.

Deepest desires, forgiveness, we pray for to our God, as we have come to understand and believe in him. Realizing we will continue to fall short as we will constantly be tempted with all the worldly falsehoods. We continue to reach for perfection knowing we shall never touch it. Truly desiring the strength, wisdom, and courage to be righteous, yet so easily falling victim to the madness of this world. As we challenge every critical step to create what we know to be our destiny, our fate which has already been foreseen, yet so untruly known to our own mind and soul, has surely been decided.

Trials and tribulations, we individuals referred to by most as black sheep and outcasts, who are frowned down upon by our society as reflection of our lifestyle portrays an image of our individualism. We surely, having the power of choice, held personal play in the destruction of our own livelihood, but most assuredly did not give birth to the insanity in which we display. Now as we struggle to implore innovation into our lives, we are at war, not only with the beast within ourselves, but as well with our fellow man who so chooses to pass criticism upon and condemn us. Truly we are soldiers and will continue fighting this battle with due diligence, longing for peace and serenity in our existence.

God give us strength where it is so truly desired. ■

WHAT COULD BE

By Vincent Galloway

The revolution is being televised... the people hit the streets in mass, Say her name, Breonna Taylor!

George Floyd's daughter Gianna, said it best when she saw all the people demanding justice, she shouted "DADDY CHANGED THE WORLD"!

We must not let the CHANGE stop. the massive outpouring must not become boring.

Tamir Rice, Eric Garner, we must remember all the fallen. George Jackson said "anyone who can pass the Civil Service Examination today can kill me tomorrow".

No more tomorrows tears and injustice... calling it a justice system gives a false impression.

Just using the term "justice" gives you the sense that it is a just system.

Just for who? we in the streets, because I CAN'T BREATHE... ■

EDITOR, from page 3

thankful to everyone at Uptown People's Law Center for holding IDOC accountable on so many levels.

We thank Briana Alexander, the smart and talented daughter of David Alexander, for her creative take on America's justice system, shown on page one.

Finally, thank you Melissa Fisher for your essay Black History. It is upbeat, strong, and inspiring. We hope that it is a prelude of more to come.

And once more, we thank you for your support. ■

To subscribe to Stateville Speaks, make a donation, or sponsor an issue, see page 7 for details.

- IN MEMORIAM -

JUDITH STUART

Judith Stuart passed away in hospital near her home in Thedford, in Norfolk, England. The Chicago Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression sends our deepest condolences to her family and to the thousands of people incarcerated in Illinois prisons with whom she has communicated over the last 25 years.

Judith was one of the good people through and through. She became involved with the CAARPR and prison correspondence many years ago, during her work to abolish the death penalty, to which she devoted much of her life. She would travel regularly from her home in the U.K. to personally visit with prisoners on Death Row. Paralyzed and unable to walk, Judith traveled in a wheelchair. She worked on correspondence entirely using her computer in Thedford, receiving scanned copies of letters from Illinois prisoners and responding to them electronically. Her responses were printed and mailed from Chicago, so few knew she was in England.

She became especially close to James Harris, incarcerated at Stateville C.C. Harris suffered from the failure of the prison system to care properly for his diabetes, which was very advanced. Judith fought valiantly to secure adequate medical treatment for Harris. He died in prison in 2016.

In fighting for medical care for her close friend and countless other Illinois prisoners, Judith had only her telephone, but she learned who the people were who could get problems solved in prison. Many problems were bureaucratic issues and rules that could be cleared away just by focusing attention on the fact that lives were in danger. She developed personal relationships with local prison Health Care Unit Administrators and staff, and several Medical Directors of the prison system.

Additionally, she also started a dog rescue organization. Dogs were sent from post-socialist Romania that had been found living on the streets or beaten, burned, or almost starved to death in public shelters. She founded "Friends of Animals in Need," a charity which can be found on at [facebook.com/pages/Friends-Of-Animals-In-Need/1421245938103094](https://www.facebook.com/pages/Friends-Of-Animals-In-Need/1421245938103094). She personally took into her home several dogs, who served her as companions until her hospitalization.

Rest in peace, Judith. You will be in our hearts forever, and we will carry your struggle forward. - Ted Pearson ■



BRIAN NELSON

Dear Friends,

For those of you who haven't yet heard, it is with deep sadness that I report that my coworker, former client, co-struggler, and most important of all, my good friend, Brian Nelson, died unexpectedly over the weekend.

Brian was a survivor of over 20 years of solitary confinement in the Illinois prison system. I first met him in the mid-1980s when he testified in my first-class action case against the Illinois Department of Corrections—regarding his inability to access the law library.

At that time, he was new to the prison system. We stayed in touch, and over the next 20+ years I represented him in several cases, including one establishing precedent in the Seventh Circuit Court of Appeals regarding his right to receive a religious diet.

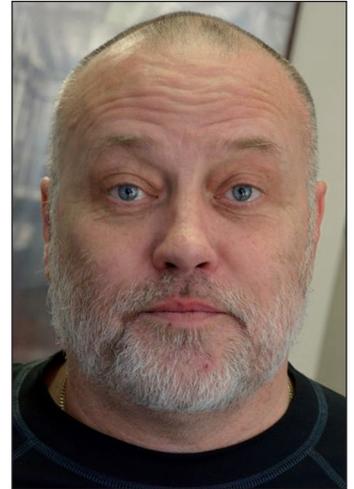
He spent over 20 years in solitary, but continually advocated for himself and the other men trapped in the horror of Tamms supermax prison. A year after his release, he came to work at UPLC.

Brian was Prisoners' Rights Coordinator and an investigator for us for over a decade. During his time here, he read and responded to tens of thousands of letters from prisoners across the state, recording the issues brought up by each one. This work was vital, as these letters inform our lawsuits that work to protect the human rights of prisoners in IDOC. Brian always said that helping others who were where he had been was the best therapy he received.

When he wasn't working at UPLC, Brian was a tireless advocate for people reentering society from prison. He supported them, took their late-night calls, and helped them do all the things they needed to in order to not be considered in violation of their parole.

Thank you to everyone who has expressed their condolences. I know many of you are grieving, too. Brian touched countless lives, both in direct service and by sharing his painful story. It is a dark time for UPLC, and for the prisoners' rights movement. Our fight to stop solitary confinement continues even stronger in his honor.

Be well,
Alan Mills ■



ANTHONY PORTER

Stateville Speaks would like to offer our condolences to friends, family, and supporters of Anthony Porter, who passed away this July. Porter, as you may recall, spent almost 20 years in prison, much of them on death row for murders, he did not commit. Given a stay just 50 hours from his execution, Porter became the face and the strong case in the abolition of the death penalty in Illinois. He was 66 years old. Rest in peace Anthony, rest in peace. ■



Photo by Sal Barry

BLACK HISTORY

By Melissa Fisher

The epitome of Black history is not just one month to me, but a celebration everyday of what “The Black Family” made it to be. We marched for a revolution. We picketed for our rights for a solution. We put our fists in the air for equality with devotion. We continue fighting for “Black Lives Matter” to stop racism pollution!

Therefore, my hero and a pioneer Mayor Harold Washington provided jobs for Black Chicagoans winning diversification. He fought hard, struggling politically with determination. So as a little girl growing up in the streets of Chicago, my family faced racial profiling and discrimination. So, I continued in following my dreams like Vice President, Kamala Harris fighting for justification with motivation.

If I was able to write a petition on Black pioneers’ ambitions, no sheet of paper is long enough to write and mention. Just to obtain schools and streets with our name, I’m proud that “The Black Family” stand tall with no shame. As a Black woman, I acknowledge the movie “The Hate You Give”, and I continue praying for unity and love to forgive!!! ■



MASS INCARCERATION

By Brett Beddard

Overcrowded, shrouded in mystique
The prison system thrives, the public in disbelief
Rural economies propped up on the backs of Black men
Uncanny parallels to a time back when slavery prevailed.
Plantation to the cell
So, we are getting hard on the yard, gotta’ be another day
Mass incarceration, the American way ■

FOLLOWING THE MONEY

By John Lavelle

Recently here at Danville Correctional Center they started selling antacids again. Also, recently, the Nurse Practitioner has stopped renewing prescriptions for acid reflux/gird meds such as Prilosec. When asked why, he responded by showing me highlighted items on a compiled list of my commissary purchases for the last 4 months and told me that now I can buy antacids on commissary.

Question – Is this due to the recent litigation and shortages of these products?

Question – Is this yet another attempt by Wexford to discourage medical attention and incurring medical costs?

Questions – When will blood pressure pills & insulin be sold through the commissary as well?

Inmate state pay being what it is, how far do they think we can stretch it? Is the IDOC compliant in this? Is this happening at other institutions? ■

SUBSCRIBE OR DONATE TO STATEVILLE SPEAKS

Stateville Speaks is housed and creatively supported, **but not funded financially**, by the University. **Stateville Speaks is free to inmates that cannot afford it.** The \$10.00 subscription fee is appreciated and accepted from those that can help defray our publishing costs. Stateville Speaks can only continue toward positive reform with your support.

I WANT TO SUBSCRIBE TO STATEVILLE SPEAKS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

E-MAIL (for e-mail subscription) _____

Mail this coupon along with check or money order for \$10, to: Stateville Speaks Subscription, c/o Justice Studies, LWH 4062, Northeastern IL University, 5500 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625-4699

STATEVILLE SPEAKS

STAFF • SUMMER 2021

Senior Editor: Gayle Tulipano

Managing Editor: Dawn Larsen

Consulting Editors:

Bill Ryan & Renaldo Hudson

Associate Editor & Designer : Sal Barry

Editors:

Aldwin McNeal & Anaviel B. Rakemeyahu

Assistant Editors:

Stanley Howard, Janene Clay,
Vincent Galloway, Tom Odle, Angel Torres,
Margaret Majos & Ron Kliner

Women’s Issues: Janet Jackson

Cartoonist: Arkee

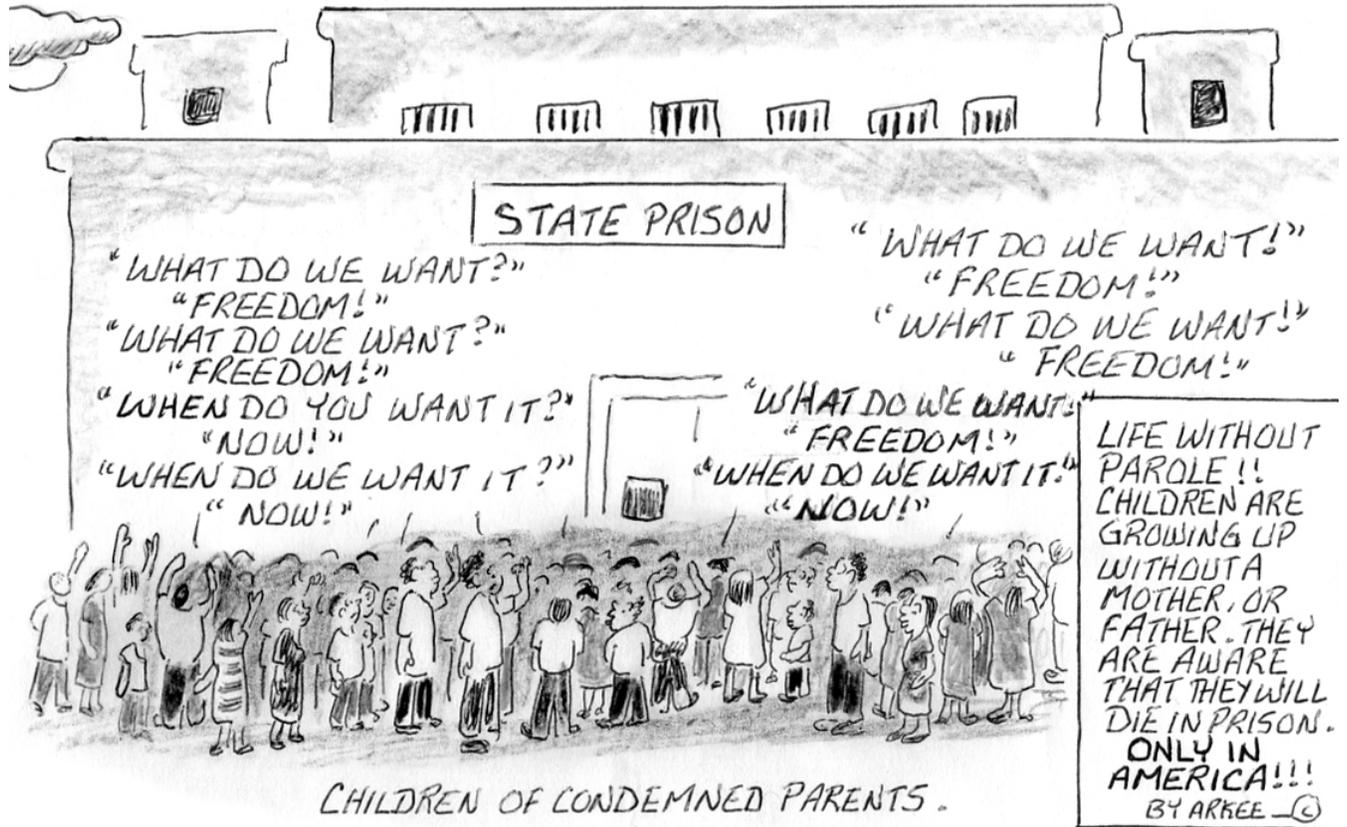
Send letters & submissions to:

Stateville Speaks
c/o Justice Studies
LWH 4062
Northeastern IL University
5500 N. St. Louis Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625-4699

Stateville Speaks needs artwork for publication in future issues. Please send us your illustrations or political cartoons. Artwork will be published in color. Unfortunately, we may not be able to return original work.

We also need essays and articles. Please limit submissions to around 500 words.

POLITICAL 'TOON BY ARKEE



Stateville Speaks
c/o Justice Studies
LWH 4062
Northeastern IL University
5500 N. St. Louis Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625-4699