

# STATEVILLE SPEAKS

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE • FALL 2016

## THE STATE OF OUR CARCERAL STATE

By Dawn Larsen  
& Gayle D. Tulipano

Upon taking office, Governor Bruce Rauner established the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform “to examine criminal justice and sentencing policies, practices, and resource allocation in Illinois”. Their goal is to “improve public safety outcomes, while reducing Illinois’ prison population by 25 percent before 2025.”

Although Rauner has been in office for almost two years, and the Commission was formed shortly thereafter, it has yet to release a final report on just how it will achieve the lofty goals it has set forth. While the final recommendations have not been released, Governor Rauner did announce two upcoming changes within IDOC aimed at making progress toward



his stated goal of reforming the Illinois criminal justice system.

In an October 2016 Chicago Sun-Times Newspaper op-ed Governor Rauner announced his plan to close down the F House at Stateville prison. Reasons given for the closure included the age and cost to operate, loud, chaotic condi-

tions, as well as safety concerns for both the staff and prisoners. The F House or roundhouse at Stateville is the last use of the Panopticon design for a prison.

Rauner also cited that the \$10.3 million F House maintenance would be better invested in housing and community-based

programs to help decrease recidivism. His announcement was applauded by many, such as the John Howard Association (JHA) who considered the “deteriorating unit” to be “unsanitary, inhumane and degrading for prisoners and staff alike.” While Rauner did not offer specifics as to when this would occur, or where those who currently reside in F House would go, a source close to Stateville Speaks says the movement of those prisoners has already begun.

The Governor also announced the re-opening of Murphysboro, previously an Illinois Youth Center, as a Life Skills and Re-Entry Facility. The goal is to help prisoners gain useful educational, vocational and life skills upon re-entry. Again, no timetable, or details were given on the repurposing of the Murphysboro facility.

Other progress made by this  
**SEE STATE, PAGE 7**

## REVOLVING DOOR ADMINISTRATION

By Carl Moss

The phrase “revolving door policy” has traditionally been used to describe the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) for their refusal to rehabilitate. The same phrase has recently been used by Governor Rauner to describe the IDOC’s top spot. There have been four different IDOC directors in just nine months of Rauner’s Administration.

The first was the very experienced Salvador Godinez who had retired but agreed to return at the Governor’s request. Next we had

three weeks with Donald Stolworthy who left with no explanation. Stolworthy was replaced by Gladys Taylor, who had been with the IDOC many years. Her role was only temporary while a search was conducted for a permanent replacement.

Rauner’s team located John Baldwin, the retired, former director of the Iowa prison system. Rauner asked Baldwin to assist in the search for a new IDOC director. Baldwin suggested several names for the top spot and then, for some

unknown reason, Rauner offered him the \$150,000.00 job. Baldwin accepted and is (as of this writing) the new Director of the IDOC.

However, it should be noted that he comes to us with a troubled past. As reported in the Chicago Tribune, as Acting Director of the Iowa system Baldwin is reported to have mishandled a multimillion-dollar prison software contract that deprived the state out of royalties.

Director Baldwin is now running one of the most troubled agencies in Illinois government.

His leadership will be under critical scrutiny by many elected officials who don’t approve of the way the IDOC functions. All of the details surrounding the reasons for so many appointments will probably never be revealed to prisoners or to the general public. We can be assured that the partisan political climate and the feculent fingers of organized labor are the major factors.

In the Illinois prison system, prisoners are the inventory necessary for the IDOC and the American Federation of State, County

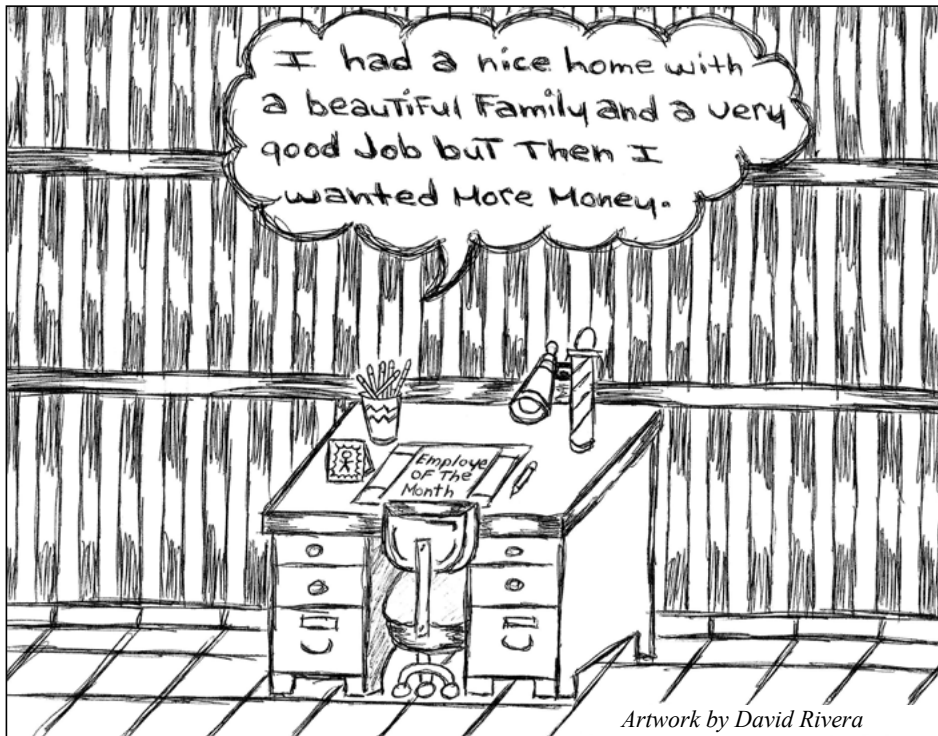
**SEE DOOR, PAGE 2**

*Hope...Redemption...Change*

## ARE YOU READY FOR THIS?

By Scott Chambers

Oftentimes I sit and stare at the walls of this (blank) cell.  
I question myself, where did I go wrong?  
How did I fail? God didn't intend this dead end reality for me...  
I was supposed to see the world.  
He meant for me to live free. Now is a deferred dream,  
Nothing in life comes easily; every situation is a test, but to want to walk in my "state boots", I  
would think deeply about making that request an unpredictable environment.  
Simple thoughts no longer your own, people playing with your mail, money is funny.  
And although you are surrounded by others, it's as if you are all alone.  
Ask yourself "are you ready for this?"  
Are you ready to look back on life as it is/has zoomed by...  
Telling your "homies" the same war "stories" over and over again, lying to one another about what  
should have been and continuing to ask yourself, why, why, why?  
Ready to be treated like a dog? Getting mistreated, getting kicked while your down by some  
unworthy jerk, who has brought his problems from home to work?  
Viewed as the worst in the world,  
how about regulations and hugs and kisses from your girl?  
Troubles? I can guarantee that my problems are greater than yours and I honestly don't think you  
are ready for the slamming of these doors.  
So think about your family, your little woman, all the precious milestones you'll miss. And then  
ask yourself again,  
AM I TRULY READY FOR THIS? ■



### DOOR, FROM PAGE 1

and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) to keep everyone employed. If the states erumpent prison population were to be reduced by the use of effective programs that would lower the rate of recidivism (currently at about 50%) there would have to be layoffs of prison staff. Neither the AFSCME nor the IDOC would permit this to

happen. The IDOC is like a living organism. Like every other living thing, its primary instinct is to survive. Therefore any change that could result in fewer prisoners (loss of inventory) is contrary to the best interest of prison employees and the union that depends on dues paying members to survive. ■

## Rana: The Future of the IDOC?

By Carl Moss

In 2009, the Illinois Legislature passed the Crime Reduction Act (CRA). CRA caused the establishment of the Risk, Assets and Needs Assessment taskforce (RANA). RANA called in the Vera Institute to help provide the format necessary to meet the statutory obligations of the CRA. The Vera Institute called in a Canadian firm called Orbis to provide the template that RANA intends to use to shape the future of the IDOC. Orbis has received \$853,975.00 of Illinois tax dollars as the initial payment for their efforts.

Since 2009, the RANA taskforce has been trying to get the proposed system operational. Their efforts have been met with resistance by those opposed to a reduction in the rate of recidivism, and a lack of inertia to change, but more about that later.

The Canadian firm Orbis has chosen the unfortunate acronym of "SPIn" for the Service Planning Instrument that is supposed to be used on all Illinois prisoners. The goal will be to evaluate every prisoner and then to provide for her/him according to specific needs with the purpose of rehabilitation and a reduction in recidivism and to comport with the IDOC Mission Statement.

However, like every living thing, the IDOC has, as its primary instinct, the will to survive. Any reduction in prison population will result in fewer members to pay dues to the guards union and will therefore be resisted by any means necessary. This explains the current stalemate. A counselor at Dixon has stated that the implementation of RANA is being delayed because people need to be hired and trained to administer the SPIn testing instrument. A letter written to the person who was already paid \$55,000 to train the people who will train others to administer the SPIn test has gone unanswered as of this date.

In conclusion, the expenditure of \$854,000 for a test called "SPIn" and a promise of a computer program destined to solve all the problems of the troubled Illinois prison system has not been accomplished and the beat goes on. County jails keep returning parole violators to the IDOC who have not been rehabilitated and are lacking both life and job skills necessary to survive in the free world. The IDOC, in its perpetual growth mode keeps on hiring and training more prison guards and the erumpent system keeps on providing employment of ever more relatives and people owed patronage favors. As stated elsewhere, "Prisoners are the inventory necessary to keep this business of employment operating." ■

# FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to another edition of Stateville Speaks. As promised, we continue to update you on any changes that may be important to our readership, however sparse they may be. While the Illinois State Commission on Criminal Justice and Sentencing Reform (the Commission) was formed under the newly elected Governor, Bruce Rauner almost 2 years ago it has still not made final recommendations on how it will accomplish the very catchy phrase/goal of reducing the prison population by 25% by 2025. The prison population has dropped over the last 2 years, but it is too early to tell if it is a trend that will continue, or just an ebb in the flow. Regardless of the reasons, it is indeed worth noting.

In past issues of Stateville Speaks we wrote about how former Chicago Police Commander John Burge managed to get a “golden retirement parachute” even with his role in police torture, thanks to the naive and deep-pocketed taxpayers. Apparently, he has kept good company, as the former Cook County State’s Attorney (later rewarded with position of Mayor) has been able to avoid even a question regarding his knowledge of the torture.

It appears, the city/county/state, (represent-

ing the taxpayers, the defendants, the original defendants, now victims) has managed to evade this by simply settling the cases prior to testimony, settlements that haven’t come cheap. According to Attorney Flint Taylor, of the Peoples Law Office, \$100 million dollars has already been paid out in both legal fees (why?) and settlements (no amount is enough for wrongfully being tortured and imprisoned) and it is far from over.

A ruling by U.S. District Judge Amy St. Eve stated that Daley will have to answer questions in a current lawsuit filed against him, on what he knew of the police torture in the cases prosecuted under his tenure. While he can’t be found criminally accountable for his knowledge of any torture it would open us (the taxpayers) for still more monetary settlements. This is still another example of what Nedrick Jeffery Hardy Sr. has pointed out as a conflict of interest in his Prison Reform Observations (see page 4).

To those of you who lost loved ones, relatives, cellmates, buddies while they were incarcerated, please send your thoughts to The Death in Custody Project. This is a chance to acknowledge that they were more than just a prisoner

number, but someone who mattered. Upon request they will send you a “printed” copy. And as always, we at Stateville Speaks are sorry for the loss of your loved one.

Based on your letters, your interests are about elder release, juvenile life cases, truth-in-sentencing, meritorious good time and post-conviction appeals. While we do stress that we are not lawyers or even law students we do have the pleasure, from time to time, to benefit from the wisdom of Attorney’s Alan Mills, Jean Maclean-Snyder or Aviva Futorian, to name a few. It is with that spirit that we introduce Attorney Ron Haze. Having worked 2 decades with the Public Defender’s office we look forward to drawing on his knowledge from time to time.

While he is open to reviewing a few cases for possible appeal, please be cautious and understand that these cases are hard to open, hard to appeal, hard to win. We ask you to do your homework, use the best judgement you have, be realistic, but still, never give up hope.

And once more, thank you for your amazing submissions and for allowing us to help disseminate your thoughtful and astute work. ■

## AHIMSA (NON-VIOLENCE)

By P.L. Daniels

I will take a risk and try to fall in love with me – ignoring the ancient negative narrative that I’ve allowed to constantly plague me.  
I will try to take a step back and allow others their journey –  
I admittedly do no one a favor – (myself included) playing Mr. Fix It.  
It’s okay that I’m afraid –  
violence need not be my response.  
I can peacefully co-exist with all of the intricacies and complexities of life.  
It’s about living in the now –  
fully accepting what I can and cannot control.  
Be kinder – less judgmental – more patient –  
more honest – more merciful – toward myself.  
Out of my inner identity and sense of self flows my external experience and interplay with all I encounter.  
Do unto self –  
as I would do unto others –  
truly be the change and world I want to see. ■

Stateville Speaks is generously supported by Cynthia Kobel and the Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Foundation.

## CONGO-FLICTION

By Demetrius Hicks Sr

Who is the M23?  
Authors of Eastern Congo Catastrophe  
Visage’s “gotta” be reflected in me  
Frantz Fanon’s “BLACK SKIN WHITE MASK”  
Neo-colonized Africa’s Panache....  
  
Paper-Tigers ruling the Continent  
Meanwhile the U.N.’s “Venemous Five”  
Won’t relent  
Safeguarding Euro-centric Interests  
\$200 million from U.S. to Rwanda  
Abetting genocidal invest....  
  
Black minds in America’s Unconscious  
Celling-out texts of ignorant Responses  
Spending a gwap on mineral Coltan  
Computer Technology’s Origin. ■

## “SOCIETY”

By Curtis Britton

Society has a lot to do with the economy and people’s social conditions, these conditions that affect men, women and their children in lower class neighborhoods. Neighborhoods where society makes it impossible for them to better their lives. They start to feel hopeless in a country that promises an equal opportunity for everyone. The crime rate in these neighborhoods is rising and prisons are getting more crowded. Why? Because society is more focused on stiff punishment for lawbreakers, and not focusing on how to rehabilitate and demonstrate a healthy environment for these communities. It is time now to work on change and let change work on you. ■

### SUBMISSIONS WANTED

To submit an article, essay, letter, poem or artwork to be published in Stateville Speaks, please see address on page 7. Please do not send original work, as we cannot return them. Please limit articles to around 500 words. Articles may be edited for length.

# PRISON REFORM THOUGHTS

By Nedrick Jeffrey Hardy Sr.

It's easy to come to jail. All it takes is someone to accuse you of something and 20 years later, DNA results free you. The thing is, we have to stop that type of problem from happening in the first place. The States Attorney has to be held liable for these instances, along with the judges, because these are the people hired or put in place to protect the law along with the people who come into contact with the law. They're supposed to make sure that the wrong people don't go to jail and as we've seen too many times; that's not being prevented. The system is dysfunctional. It needs therapy to fix it.

We have to set up problem solvers at each point of encounter with the system, at the arrest – police, the arraignment – prosecutor, judge and public defender. Having those points being checked prevents the wrong person from being

“brought to justice”. The law says the state is supposed to pursue the guilty for the sole sake of justice and not for vindictive reasons, but because there's no consequence for their wrongful acts/convictions, they don't give a care.

We have to make these people accountable for their mistakes that result in guys being wrongfully convicted. When we come to IDOC the state has a carceral burden/obligation to provide us with the basic necessities of life. They have to make sure we get what we have coming to us. If they hire these people, then they have to make sure that they provide the services that they are required to provide, like the medical provider Wexford. Someone has to be telling the truth about how Wexford didn't give them adequate medical care for their serious medical issues. They're killing people down here. They won't run tests like MRI's, cat scans, ultra-

sounds because they cost money that they don't want to pay. A small treatable situation caught early turns into Stage 4 liver cancer or kidney failure. Had they done the necessary testing they could see that this was a serious medical issue. This is what is happening and the state isn't protecting us like they're supposed to.

I'm in the care of the state, or a ward, and the state is responsible for my well-being. But, why is it when I file a complaint saying that an officer beat me up, the state represents them. The officer works for the state and I am a ward of the state, so legally speaking shouldn't the state be representing me? They are responsible for my well-being and me.

(I enjoy reading the articles you guys print in the Stateville Speaks. I filed a class action suit 15-437-JPG here in Menard about the living conditions.) ■

Dear Stateville Speaks Readers,

Please allow me to introduce myself. I am an attorney that has recently retired after 20 years with the Office of the Cook County Public Defender. I worked on post-conviction and appellate matters for 18 of those years. I am starting a small private practice in which I will be doing the same kind of work.

I have litigated many post-conviction cases, including capital cases and natural life sentences. I have a good knowledge of DNA litigation and am very familiar with other types of forensic science.

I would be happy to work with new clients who are now serving time in IDOC. Unfortunately, I am unable to work on cases for free, but I believe my fees are very fair. You will get quality work from a very experienced attorney. I am willing to discuss any reasonable repayment plan.

For more information please contact and send me a detailed statement on why you did not receive a fair trial. Did the police use coercive force or trickery in getting a statement? Did your trial attorney make any critical mistakes or fail to properly investigate your case? Was there any prosecutorial misconduct in your case? Is

there any new important information you have learned after the trial that could have made a difference? Also, be sure to give me your case number. **I do not need any additional documents to make a preliminary determination on whether I can take your case.** That can be discussed later.

Please send your correspondences to:

Ronald D. Haze  
Attorney at Law  
413 N. LaSalle St.  
Chicago, IL 60654

**SPECIAL ALERT:** A number of recent decisions have held that if a juvenile or young adult is sentenced in criminal court to a natural life or an extremely lengthy prison term, that sentence is unconstitutional unless the court gave adequate consideration to the defendant's age. This may be true even where the sentence was imposed years ago. If this describes your situation, I would be particularly interested in hearing about it. ■



Thanks to Illinois Prison Talk (IPT) for support and further dissemination of Stateville Speaks and your tireless reform efforts. Visit [www.illinoisprisonstalk.com](http://www.illinoisprisonstalk.com) to learn more.



Artwork by Malave Manuel

## CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS: MOURNING LOST LOVE ONES

The Illinois Deaths in Custody Project seeks to document, archive, highlight and mourn the deaths of all people in custody in Illinois. This site was created and is maintained by a collective of artists, educators and activists in Illinois.

Did you or someone you know lose someone in an Illinois prison? Did your lover, best friend, daughter, son, mother, father, cousin, tia/tio die while in prison? We want to hear your story. The Illinois Deaths in Custody Project would like to publish your memories online.

Remember and honor your lost loved ones with a eulogy to celebrate and recall their lives. A eulogy can be a poem, story, a word of praise, a memory, prayer, letter, card, photo, drawing,

newspaper clipping, something of theirs, or just a sentence you want to dedicate to a person you knew who passed away while in an Illinois prison. Please include the person's legal name, nicknames, the name of prison where the person died, and their birthday and date of death. Please add a return address if you'd like a copy. Preferred length 1-2 pages, handwritten submissions are fine. Mail to:

Therese Quinn  
Museum and Exhibition Studies  
University of Illinois at Chicago  
935 W Harrison St. MC 201  
Chicago, IL 60607

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## PERSONA NON-GRATA?

By Robert West

The public may now begin to know better what they do not know. During census time, when a count of a person determines the representation of the counties and those rural localities which host prisons are to receive taxpayers' dollars appropriated based on their populace, prisoners then are included in the counties population as residents of the community, but on the day of a prisoners' release from imprisonment, a correctional officer escorts him out of town.

In the days, weeks or months after long-time institutionalization ended, reformed ex-prisoners are abandoned to fend for themselves, without the state providing sufficient funds needed to assist their transition. Before the prisoners' return, likely back to familiar inner-city surroundings to endure joblessness and extreme

privation, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) provides a meager \$10 on up to \$50 dollars for the reformed ex-prisoner to sustain himself and his departure out of rural areas. In the matter of time served. There is no guarantee that a prisoner would be released on the date mentioned at the time of sentencing, because the IDOC requires prisoners to produce a "host site" dwelling suitable to the tastes of the corrections employees, as a condition of the prisoner's release. In fact, rather than use prison commissary profits, amassed at the Residents Benefit Fund, to provide half-way houses for those with no means of affording a "host site", those profits are instead being used to defray the costs of prolonged mass incarceration. ■

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## BREAKING THE TIES THAT BIND

By Cornelius Lewis

To ask anyone involved in law enforcement, the judiciary, politics or corrections what the purpose of incarceration is you would probably hear something along the lines of "to protect the public from the hardened criminals who are imprisoned for punishment." And this is just what incarceration should do, which is why the Illinois penal system is so vastly overcrowded and outdated. Something seriously lacking with this concept is that those who control corrections in Illinois have lost sight of the "correction" aspect of incarceration. Punishment and long-term imprisonment should not be the sole

purposes of incarceration. Other significant aspects of incarceration should include, to deter, to reform, to incapacitate and to restore. And to deny an offender these productive avenues is to program the incarcerated offender for failure after release.

With prisons being the largest industry growth source in the United States, it stands to reason why long-term punishment and economics remains the greatest motivator for longer prison sentences while keeping offenders unskilled and uneducated in the process. As a 72-year-old offender who has served over 37

consecutive years I no longer possess the culpability I once had. And this applies to many others in my category (50 years of age with 25 consecutive years served). We have paid our debt to society and no longer pose a threat after release. We have developed and gone through a series of positive programs throughout our incarceration. A very significant role bestowed upon lifers and other long-termers by prison staff is to be the "voices of reason" during crisis situations. This is an uncomfortable and compromising position we've never sought, yet, a position we accepted

SEE TIES, PAGE 6

## BATTERED CON SYNDROME

By Dwaine Coleman

You spout lies, I spew truth.  
Truth agitates lies, so you react to abuse.

Emotionally unstable, so you think with your  
boot.  
Bruises heal, but pain remains.

The trauma you cause  
Leaves an indelible stain.

Does your sinecure position  
Justify your sadistic inflictions?

It is apparent you lack contrition,  
With your rendition

Under a cloud of suspicion  
Is every excuse you've ever given.

So how is it you hold the keys  
To the prison?

Did I miss the introduction  
To the culture of corruption?

Or is this standard operating procedure  
How you function?

So obvious is the meeting of the minds,  
To implement the conspirators designs

Isn't this the same behavior  
You indict for war crimes?

Does the public mind,  
The defense of corruption is on their dime?

Why don't the laws I'm punished for  
Apply to your crimes?

Like BDP  
I ask who's gonna police the police

Who can throw the first stone,  
Without getting hit with three?  
Do you think it's positive,  
or is it only me?

\*\*\*

This poem is dedicated to all the silent sufferers of "Battered Con Syndrome". We must unite, fight and illuminate the shadows of corruption with light. We must be corruptions conscious! In solidarity! ■

## SHE CHANGED HIM

By Christopher Toney

Looking in your eyes diffused me; when in my  
reality I am to remain mentally and physically  
armed at all times.

Perhaps in these violent times, the harmony  
within your design neutralized the evil side of  
my own designs desire for genocide.

Maybe it's your cute face, amongst other things  
that suit my extreme tastes.

Still, we mustn't forget that my taste and  
intelligence were derived from evil, for the  
purposes of pure evil.

But yet conversations with you mummified this  
focused evil; why?

When I hold your hand the feeling I get re-  
minds me of the flesh I was born from, versus  
the hell fire my existence represents even from  
before then.

Don't you understand I think you've tamed  
the beast from within, despite the design for a  
perfect killer with no end?

I've been looking for a friend, so please keep  
me within your heart until the very end.

Please don't go, I feel like a human again when  
you're around.

Because the people who helped create the  
design that's trying to configure to your design  
are fighting me tooth and nail now.

As if they could stop you from destroying this  
evil shell that insures my one-way ticket to  
hell.

Hell is what I represent; peace is what you rep-  
resent, so hold me in your arms; even though  
my soul represents an evil as hot as the sun;  
while in turn taking us to a place where evil  
runs from. ■

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around 500 words. Articles may be edited  
for length.

## TIES, FROM PAGE 5

simply because we understand that it's not the  
mere possibility of conflicts or violence that is  
feared, but its destructive mismanagement. And  
because we care!

There is very little recidivism data avail-  
able regarding lifers and long-termers simply  
because very few such offenders are released.  
However, it's commonly agreed and proven that  
those who serve 25 consecutive years or more,  
and are 50 years of age and older have the low-  
est recidivism rate of all released offenders.  
What needs to happen in the immediate future  
to allow the release of lifers and other long-term  
offenders who fall into the 25-50 category, is  
to change the mind set of those in law enforce-  
ment, the judiciary, politics, and corrections by  
letting them know that it would be morally, le-  
gally and financially feasible for them to adhere  
to the Constitution of the State of Illinois which  
states in part that: "All penalties shall be deter-  
mined both according to the seriousness of the  
offense and with the objective of restoring the  
offender to useful citizenship".

With no parole board in place for all of-  
fenders, by virtue of their sentences, most lifers  
and other long-term offenders have no opportu-  
nities to return to useful citizenship. And if the  
Illinois State judicial body would have adhered  
to the Illinois Constitution regarding limitations  
of penalties after conviction, there would not be  
any lifers without parole or any long-term of-  
fenders serving "un-servable" sentences. But,  
as long as those with vested interest in our main-  
tained incarceration choose to keep us incarcer-  
ated under illegal sentences, it would be con-  
trary to those interests to prepare us for release.

Any and all legal minds reading this article  
who are unafraid of challenges, and are willing  
to lead us into a Federal court, we desperately  
need your voice, your experiences, and every  
resource at your disposal to put an end to this in-  
stitutionalized slavery under the guise of justice.  
Someone needs to explain to the general public  
why the judicial branch of the Illinois govern-  
ment feels empowered to violate the state con-  
stitution with impunity by sentencing offenders  
to terms of imprisonment contrary to that very  
same state constitution. ■



## CONSIDER THIS

By Ed Slavin

Suppose you worked at any of the states 25 prisons or any other controlled facility or any part of the vast parole system or any company that supplies goods and services to the IDOC – then your career is based squarely on the backs of convicted prisoners.

You need a steady supply of new prisoners to ensure your stability, your way of life for you and your family. Any reduction in this supply will jeopardize your income and threaten your family.

So let's consider your major supplier – Chicago. You actually need a failing school system, more high school dropouts, more gang violence, and more black-on-black crime. Chicago is the main engine supplying what you need most, prisoners. For Chicago's collar counties and the states lesser cities you need more gang expansion, more violence and expanded drug trade.

So do you say thanks when you hear the Chicago school system is on strike and future funding is questionable? Do you say thanks to the multiple shootings during a hot summer weekend? Do you say thanks to the Chicago Police Department (CPD) for using the latest technology to increase conviction rates? Do you say thanks for legislator's writing and passing tougher laws? ■

## STATE, FROM PAGE 1

administration has been with the passage of SB3661, sponsored by Senator Michael Connelly (R-26th) that requires a review of a pre-sentence report. It will be conducted, along with an explanation as to why incarceration (if given) is appropriate for someone with no prior probation or prison convictions. The goal is to help reverse the trend that almost 60% of newly incarcerated individuals were first time offenders, held on a low level conviction.

Not all reforms were directed at the mission to reduce the Illinois prison population, as the goal of HB6200 is to eliminate profits made by telephone venders in both adult and juvenile facilities. Sponsored by Representative Carol Ammons (D-103rd), this bill would limit the cost of local calls to 7 cents per minute and international to no more than 23 cents per minute.

The implications of HB6200 go beyond just the regulation of the cost phone calls. It has the potential to signal the beginning of the end of unjust profits garnered through unregulated pricing of other products and services. It reiterates the importance of family connectivity and may afford those families already struggling with emotional and financial hardships of incarceration some relief. ■

**What's on your mind?** Even if you aren't an artist or a writer, but have a topic you'd like us to address in an upcoming edition, just drop us a line and let us know.

### Important Notice

Please let us know if you have moved so we can update our records and keep your newsletter coming.

## STATEVILLE SPEAKS

STAFF • FALL 2016

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# POLITICAL 'TOON

BY ARKEE & VARGAS

"DO YOU KNOW WHY THE SCALES OF JUSTICE WEAR A BLIND-FOLD?"



"YEAH, BECAUSE JUSTICE IS BLIND."



"NOPE! IT'S BECAUSE SHE CAN'T STAND TO WITNESS ALL THE WRONG THAT'S DONE IN HER NAME."



"LIFE IN PRISON!"



"PLEASE, NOT IN MY NAME!"



BY ARKEE & VARGAS

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