



VOICES FROM INSIDE ...

STATEVILLE SPEAKS

MARCH 2008

The Impact of Crime on Victims

Mata M. Weber, Chapter Leader of Parents of Murdered Children, and members of Parents of Murdered Children are working for passage of HB 4154, described in the following pages, and will testify at legislative hearings.

I am the mother of a murdered daughter. My daughter, Karen Weber Hock, was kidnapped, beaten with a tire iron, strangled, and drowned on April 27, 1982. It was the most devastating thing that ever happened to me. My husband and I had never been involved in any kind of criminal situation, and we did not know which way to turn. Fortunately we came into contact with some kind and sympathetic lawmen.

We were lucky compared to today, and we went to trial the same year, September 1982. The perpetrator was found guilty of first-degree murder and sentenced to 50 years. I told the prosecutor that maybe I could now get on with my life, whatever that meant. He said I would hear from this man in about 3 years with an appeal. No one had told me about this.

It was almost 3 years to the day when I saw an article in the newspaper that he was going to get a new trial. Now we had to go through this whole thing again. After one year, I was offered a plea agreement from him, saying yes he did kill my daughter, and he accepted a 25-year sentence. The only thing no one told me was in the state of Illinois at that time for every day he spent in prison he got one day off with good behavior, so he was released from prison in June of 1994—twelve and one half years after he killed my daughter.

In 1995 I read of a family who was starting an organization called Parents of Murdered Children (POMC), and I joined. It was my salvation, and the beginning of a new life. POMC was a

program that helped people deal with the grief of losing a loved one, but also helped them deal with the justice system. There was information from many sources and people who could help you through the night when you could not sleep. I am still involved with the group; the original people retired about ten years ago and I took over the chapter. I can't begin to tell you how many families I have spoken to over the years.

One day I received a call from the woman in charge of Probation and Parole in Missouri, asking me if I knew anyone in my group who would be interested in speaking to inmates in Missouri. I said I didn't know but I would ask.

Continued on page 3.

hope / change / redemption

Coverage

WHEN YOU NEED IT

INMATES IN EACH DOC PRISON CAN SUBMIT ARTICLES TO
STATEVILLE SPEAKS

Elderly Sentence Adjustment



Bill Ryan

** Elderly prisoner battling Lung Cancer in the prison hospice.*

The Elderly Sentence Adjustment legislation provides an opportunity for prisoners who have reached age 50 and have served 25 consecutive years to demonstrate in a variety of ways that she/he is reformed and no longer a threat to public safety. The petition for sentence adjustment would be filed with the sentencing court.

The petitioner will also document relevant medical conditions and have an opportunity to participate in Restorative Justice programs modeled after the successful Impact of Crime on Victims classes in Missouri Department of Corrections. Victim families, prisoners and prison staff attest to the positive benefits of this program and have offered to assist Illinois in implementing the program. Victims' families will receive timely notification and be kept informed about the process.

Elderly Sentence Adjustment is not for everyone nor should it be. This legislation is a small step toward addressing inflexible sentencing laws and the fact there is no parole in Illinois, except for small number of prisoners sentenced prior

to 1978 to indeterminate sentences (the so-called C#s). Elderly sentence adjustment is for those women and men who demonstrate genuine, consistent behavior change over a period of years. These are prisoners who have grown, matured and changed while incarcerated.

Democratic systems should work on the principle of minimum restraint, exerting the least force necessary to maintain safety. Forcing elderly, reformed people, often with chronic and debilitating conditions, to die in prison is not using the least force. It is cruel and it is costly. The Illinois Department of Corrections' budget exceeds \$1 billion, which keeps 46,000 individuals in a prison system that is overcrowded, with overworked staff and no relief in sight. About 10% of the prisoners have sentences of 30 years or more, and this number will continue to escalate in the next years because of rigid, inflexible sentencing laws.

Researchers in the field of Corrections consider prisoners to be "elderly" at the age of 50 due to the increased stress in prison, inadequate medical care, and health problems before prison. The costs

of maintaining the elderly person in prison is three times what it costs for others. In Illinois that is about \$70,000 a year. It would be prudent to examine an alternative to keeping elderly men and women who are not a public threat in prison. During the first year, it is estimated about 200 men and women will qualify to submit elderly sentence adjustment petitions.

Continued on Page 3.

One Prisoner, One Vote

The **One Prisoner/One Vote** insert provides the opportunity for each prisoner to identify a person in the world to represent her or him. The concept of One Prisoner/One Vote was described in the January 2007 issue by editor Anaviel Rakemehu. It is crucial that the voices of prisoners be heard, and this is an excellent way to achieve this goal. There are 45,000 prisoners in the state. If half of them completed this form, we would be a political force for positive change. This is your chance to be heard! Complete the form and send it to Bill Ryan.

ONE PRISONER/ ONE VOTE
c/o Bill Ryan
2237 Sunnyside
Westchester, IL 60154

Stateville Speaks Staff

Publisher: Bill Ryan
Editors: Donald McDonald, Aldwin McNeal, Anaviel B. Rakemeyahu
Assistant Editors: Stanley Howard, Rich Dyches, Jeanene Clay, Vincent Galloway, Renaldo Hudson, Tom Odle, Mychal Thompson, Ronnie Carrasquillo, Theresa Heater, Margaret Majos
Women's Issues: Millie Lee and Janet Jackson
Sports Page: Angel Torres
Legal Page: Joe Dole
Layout and Design: Ibi Cole
Copyeditor: Katy Ryan
Printer: Irish Press

"Impact of Crime" Continued...

I spoke to some of the people in my group, and they said yes, so we made our first trip into the Missouri prison system to speak to men who had committed crimes like the ones that had been committed against our loved ones. Our first trip was only two hours long, and we realized we had to go back because we had so many questions. We had to know more about this program.

We have been doing this program for eight years, and it is the best program in the prison system. It gives inmates a chance to change their lives and take responsibility for their actions. We have met the worst of the worst, men on death row and lifers. We have seen hardened men change their attitude and take responsibility for what they have done. The state of Missouri offers this program in each one of its prisons, and they have seen a dramatic change in the attitude of the men who have taken the program. The program is called the IMPACT OF CRIME on VICTIMS classes. We are now going to eight prisons in Missouri, and we have been in the federal prison in Greenville, Illinois.

As a victim/survivor, I have been able through the years to tell men who (may have committed murder) just how I felt, how much pain I have gone through, how I feel about what crimes they have committed and how they owe us as victims. I can't talk about others in my group, but I have seen a change in them also. I will work forever to keep this program in the prison system in Missouri and work toward getting it into other states such as Illinois. I am still a victim but I am also a survivor.!

"Elderly Sentence Adjustment" Cont...

If, for example, 10 of the elderly earned sentence adjustment, this would save \$700,000. Study after study has demonstrated that the elderly are less

likely to reoffend than any other group. In a Pennsylvania study less than 2% of the elderly who had served 25 years reoffended, none for a crime against a person.

I would add a personal note that during the past 15 years writing, visiting, communicating with prisoners and, for three years, publishing *Stateville Speaks*, I know people who have managed to survive and even grow in prison. I know others who have not. I am not smart enough to know why some people are able to change and be positive while others are not. I am convinced true reformation and change occurs after some sort of spiritual awakening and belief they can change and be positive even while locked in a cage. Such people deserve a chance to show that their change is genuine and to have their sentence adjusted.!



Elderly Sentence Adjustment Pilot Program

Synopsis of House Bill 4154

As introduced, the bill amends the Unified Code of Corrections. Provides that a committed person who is at least 50 years of age and who has served at least 25

Continued on page 4.

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“Elderly Sentence Pilot Program” Cont.

consecutive years of imprisonment in a Department of Corrections institution or facility and is serving a sentence other than death may petition the circuit court for an elderly sentence adjustment. Provides the contents of such petition and establishes criteria that the court shall use to determine whether the committed person shall be granted an elderly sentence adjustment. Provides that the court shall consider the petition in its entirety and may not order the release of the committed person if the court finds that the committed person poses a threat to public safety. Provides that if the court determines that a committed person is eligible for an elderly sentence adjustment and determines that the committed person should receive a sentence adjustment, the court shall set the conditions for the committed person's release from prison before the expiration of the committed person's sentence imposed by the sentencing court. Provides for notification of the families of victims if a petition for elderly sentence adjustment is filed. Provides that the Department of Corrections shall develop a pilot program patterned after the Impact of Crime on Victims Class (ICVC), including the Restorative Justice segment, used by the Missouri Department of Corrections. Provides that the pilot program shall be implemented in one maximum security prison for women and one maximum security prison for men. Provides that the ICVC shall be made available to prisoners eligible for elderly sentence adjustment on a voluntary basis.:

Elderly Sentence Adjustment Pilot Program: House Bill 4154

This bill would amend the criminal code. Below are the proposed changes to the code.

(730ILCS 5/5-8-1.4 new)

(a) A committed person as defined in subsection (c) of Section 3-1.2 of this Code who is at least 50 years of age and

who has served at least 25 consecutive years of imprisonment in a Department of Corrections institution or facility and is serving a sentence other than death may petition the circuit court for an elderly sentence adjustment as provided in this Section. If the committed person files such a petition, the families of the victims of the committed person's offenses shall be notified in a timely manner after the filing of the petition.

(b) The circuit court may grant the petitioner an elderly sentence adjustment if the petitioner documents and demonstrates to the court the following: (1) successful participation by the committed person in programs designed to restore the committed person as a useful and productive person in the community upon release and if such programs are not available that the committed person has attempted to participate in such programs; (2) genuine reform and changed behavior by the committed person over a period of years; (3) the committed person's remorse for actions that have caused pain and suffering to victims of his or her 25 offenses; (4) the committed person's ability to socialize with others in an acceptable manner; (5) the committed person's renunciation of criminal activity and gang affiliation if the committed person was a member of a gang.

(c) The petition shall contain: (1) documentation of the committed person's relevant medical history, including current medical prognosis; (2) the committed person's prison and criminal history. The criminal history shall include any claims of innocence and the degree of the committed person's responsibility for his or her convictions and if such claims of responsibility have impacted the committed person's feeling of remorse.

Continued on page 5.



"Elderly Pilot Program" Cont...

(d) The court shall consider the petition in its entirety and may not order the release of the committed person if the court finds that the committed person poses a threat to public safety. If the court determines that a committed person is eligible for a sentence adjustment under this Section and determines that the committed person should receive a sentence adjustment the court shall set the conditions for the committed person's release from prison before the expiration of the committed person's sentence imposed by the sentencing court.

(e) (1) The Department of Corrections shall develop a pilot program patterned after the Impact of Crime on Victims Class (ICVC), including the Restorative Justice segment, used by the HB 4154 - 12- LRB095 13759 RLC 29742b in the Missouri Department of Corrections. This pilot program shall be implemented in one maximum security prison for women and one maximum security prison for men. The ICVC shall be made available to prisoners eligible for elderly sentence adjustment on a voluntary basis. (2) The Department of Corrections shall promulgate rules and regulations for operation of the pilot program established pursuant to this subsection; (3) Any proposed programs or strategy created under this subsection (e) shall be developed after identification of a need in the community for such programs, through consultation with

Continued on page 10.

HJR80 Update

Ted Pearson

The Joint Legislative Committee on Long Term Prisoners heard a brief report from the Subcommittee on Prison Health Care, especially as it affects long term prisoners. Subcommittee Chairperson, Bill Ryan, was unable to attend but sent the following comments.

1. We continue to cooperate with Ted Pearson and the National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression-Chicago (NAARPR-Chicago). Mr. Pearson will provide an update to the medical project NAARPR-Chicago is conducting.
2. Gloria Johnson whose son Montell is not receiving appropriate care from IDOC medical staff will make a presentation as well.
3. I understand Sharon Beeler will be making a report regarding Restorative Justice programs. I have received correspondence from Missouri officials inviting members of this committee to visit and observe the Impact of Crime on Victims Class (ICVC) in a Missouri prison.

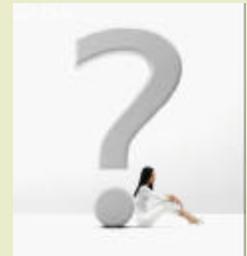
Ted Pearson presented a preliminary report on the NARPR-Chicago Medical Project. That report "examines a self-selected sample of the prisoners. Patterns regarding health care within the system are being documented . . . In 23 per cent of cases the medical records provide prima facie evidence that medical care in the IDOC does not meet generally accepted standards of care.

"Certain categories of problems are most often inadequately treated. Hepatitis C and problems of substance abuse are inadequately managed in 64 and 56 per cent of

Continued on page 7.

Lost?

Wanna Help But Don't Know Where to Begin?



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1.

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The N.I.V. is a lobbying force. With a large number of voting members, N.I.V. can help influence legislators

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www.IllinoisPrisonTalk.com

4.

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5.

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Attend announced HJR80 meetings, CER meetings and whatever you get an invitation to. Not getting an invitation?

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Essays, Letters and Insight

PROPOSALS AND PERSUASIVE EDITORIALS



Letters from Participants in the Impact of Crime on Victims Classes

My name is James Hardy. I have been incarcerated since the age of 17, serving a sentence of life without parole. I am now 35 years old. Prison has been a very surreal place to grow up and mature. In fact, in many aspects, it has been a hindrance to both. However, many opportunities have presented themselves that have made the maturation process more complete.

I have been involved in a program called Restorative Justice for the last five years. My involvement began in July of 2000 when I was challenged by an administrator to help pioneer the Impact of Crime on Victims Classes (ICVC). I was still involved in many negative aspects of prison life, but I agreed to help with the program. Quite simply, this program changed my life!

At its inception, the ICVC course was slotted for 40 hours of class time; it covers a range of crimes focusing on how crime affects victims. At the end of the curriculum the participants attend a Victims Impact Panel. This panel consists of victims of crime or representatives of murder victims. The panel shares their stories. Lives are changed. It seems a simple thing, these words, but there are no others that can encompass the depth at which offender participants are able to experience true empathic emotion—most for the first time in many years.

Prison kills positive emotional response. At least that has been my observation. ICVC brings those emotions back to life; and in so doing, the course and its graduates evolve into a community inside the prison, a peer group that supports positive activity and is a sort of safe haven. And the coolest thing about it is that the old "knuckle-head" offenders benefit most! Their lives begin to have a meaning, and in so many ways they truly begin doing time for their victims.

The program is not a panacea. It doesn't cure all the woes experienced by prison administrators. But I guarantee it will fix some of them. I have seen it change hundreds of lives . . . most importantly my own.

--James Hardy

My name is Christopher Santillan, and I have created victims. Being incarcerated for first degree murder, one would think this to be a fairly obvious statement, but I didn't feel the full weight of those words until I first went through the Impact of Crime on Victims Class. In fact, I was so profoundly affected by the experience that I

consider it directly responsible for changing my entire way of living.

Before I took the Impact of Crime on Victims Class, I was basically living my life in a fog. I was so self-absorbed, concerned only with my own plight in prison, that I couldn't sympathize with anyone else's feelings. It was all about me—my actions which got me in prison, how I ruined my life, the consequences I am suffering for my crime. I clung to that attitude for the first six years of my prison sentence, and during that time I felt my world getting smaller and smaller until all I could see in my life was myself. And to tell the truth, by that time I was the last person I wanted to be around. I was sick and tired of my self-centered attitude, and I was desperate for a change. Ultimately, this is what motivated me to make the best decision of my life: taking the Impact of Crime on Victims Class.

I had first heard about the ICVC class in the summer of 2000 from a friend who had told me that it really helped him see crime from the victims' perspective. At the time, I had an inkling about the emotions victims must go through, but it was at best a vague impression of their ordeal. Through the two-week intensive program, which covered a wide spectrum of crimes ranging from simple property crimes to the more violent crimes of sexual assault and murder, ICVC allowed me to take a unique and necessary view into the world of crime through the victims'

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“HJR80 update” Cont.

cases reviewed, respectively. A third of cases of high cholesterol are inadequately managed. Other problems are documented in the areas of congestive heart failure, multiple sclerosis, coronary artery disease, and tinea.

“There is often a wide discrepancy between the patient’s account of medical care received and the patient medical chart. One must start from the assumption that unless proven false, the accounts of prisoners and medical workers are both true. This contradiction can only be resolved by independent examination by medical professionals. There may be objective reasons for the disparity relating to failures of communication between patient and medical staff, lack of trust between patients and staff, and problems specific to the prison environment that are not documented in the medical record.”

Several people spoke in the discussion, including Gloria John-Ester, who spoke passionately about her struggle to have her son, Montell Johnson, receive the care guaranteed by the Constitution and Supreme Court decisions. Her son has multiple sclerosis, is largely paralyzed, and can’t attend to the most basic needs of daily life. Yet he receives little or no attention, has developed serious infections and bedsores, and is in pain constantly.

Others who spoke included Attorney James Chapman and Attorney Aviva Futorian, who have great experience dealing with prison issues and prison health care.

Copies of the NAARPR-Chicago preliminary report may be obtained by sending an email, calling, or writing to Ted Pearson
National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression-Chicago
1325 S. Wabash Ave. Suite 105
Chicago IL 60605 312-939-2750
info@naarpr.org
Continued on page 8.



“Letters from Participants” Cont.

eyes and get a true sense of the damage it causes in people’s lives. As I went through each chapter of the class, I saw that every crime creates an ever increasing network of victims who each go through a horrible amount of pain and suffering. The many stories of fear, anger, frustration, grief and loss compelled me to see the incredible amount of damage a solitary crime can have on an individual, a family, both the victim’s and the offender’s community, and even society itself. It was a startling revelation, taking my vague notions of the effects of crime and making them vividly clear by bringing them under the harsh light of the victims’ first-hand experience. This severe light that so drastically changed my perspective on crime was then turned right at me and my actions during the victim-offender dialog on the final day of class. During the dialog, I was confronted by the families of people who have been murdered, co-victims of the same type of crime which I committed upon others. These brave individuals reached inside themselves and showed me the price they paid because someone chose to commit a crime and make them victims. It was then that I realized that what they go through on a daily basis was the true consequence of criminal actions. Their unending suffering, not my incarceration, was the real prison sentence, punishment exacted upon them for crimes they themselves did not commit. At times it seemed that being exposed to the victims’

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Important Announcements

Prisoner Denied Care?

The National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression – Chicago is gathering evidence about medical care in Illinois prisons. The denial of medical care to prisoners who are sick or injured is a denial of the Constitutional right of all prisoners under the Eighth Amendment to be free from cruel and unusual punishment. We are interested in all prisoners with undiagnosed or untreated medical problems. Prisoners with chronic diseases and conditions seem to have the most difficulty, especially people with hepatitis C, diabetes, cancer, high cholesterol, high blood pressure, multiple sclerosis and other debilitating conditions, and mental health issues. If you are interested in participating in this process, write to Ted Pearson, National Alliance Against Racist and Political Repression – Chicago, 1325 S. Wabash Ave. Suite 105, Chicago IL 60605, 312-939-2750.

Time for Action!

Now is the time for people interested in reforming the criminal justice system to step up to the plate. We will have an ambitious legislative agenda this year and supporters are needed. For much too long, critical issues facing prisoners, their families, and supporters have been ignored. This can and must change. You can join our movement by contacting Stateville Speaks, Citizens for Earned Release, Long-term Prison Planning Project, Illinois Prison Talk, and NIV

The N.I.V. builds a database of signatures and members to collectively create a lobbying force to influence and push for legislation, or law changes that are in line with our mission statement. (See ad on page 4) The N.I.V. cannot respond to correspondence making requests due to very limited staff. Our purpose does not allow us to take on or work on individual cases as we have no legal staff. Our mission is to change laws that best effect all who are effected by these laws.

Subscribing to Stateville Speaks also strengthens N.I.V. Subscribe today to help us make positive law changes!

“HJR80 update” Cont.

Further Update on HJR80

Sharon Beeler

The Programs Subcommittee is looking at three areas to recommend to the HJR Committee: Restorative Justice Program; Educational/Vocational Training; and Faith-Based Initiative

Restorative Justice Program

The Restorative Justice Program under review is the Impact of Crime on Victims Class (ICVC) used in Missouri Department of Corrections. ICVC has had tremendous success in not only reducing violence within prisons, but has helped inmates change their attitude and behavior by understanding how others have suffered as a result of crimes against them or family members.

The programs subcommittee will recommend using ICVC (or similar program) as a pilot project in one Women's Correctional Facility and one men's correctional facility. Participation in the program will not reduce sentences of inmates.

Educational/Vocational Training

The programs subcommittee acknowledges the critical importance of educational / vocational training in regard to preparing inmates to reintegrate into society and to reduce recidivism rates. The subcommittee will be reviewing a list of programs currently offered in Illinois Department of Corrections Facilities to see what programs have been most effective in providing training to inmates as well as programs that have been cost-effective.

The subcommittee will obtain additional information on how to implement and fund educational/vocational programs.

Faith-Based Initiatives

Faith-Based Initiatives are sometimes



the only training inmates receive while incarcerated and are successful in helping inmates cope with their incarceration, as well as changing attitudes and behavior. The subcommittee will recommend continued and escalated efforts to provide Faith-Based Programs in all Illinois Correctional Facilities.!

Letters from Participants. Cont.

suffering was too much to bear, but I knew in my heart that I needed to see it, to learn about their experience and try to understand how it feels to be victimized. And as I heard their stories, I was convicted, shamed by the knowledge that through my criminal actions I was responsible for these same feelings and emotions in the lives of my victims. I caused suffering in the lives of so many people. I hurt people in ways that I could never possibly understand. And after too many years, I finally realized how wrong my actions were when I took someone else's life.

I was so moved by the Impact of Crime on Victims Class that I made a vow to take its motto, "No More Victims," as my own personal affirmation. I decided to dedicate the rest of my life to not only try to ease the suffering of victims of crime, but also to prevent the crimes that perpetuate the cycle of victims. I became one of the first ICVC offender facilitators, sharing the important message of the class to my

fellow offenders. I am involved in Offenders Offering Alternatives, a counseling program where offenders talk to at-risk youths, probationers, and parolees in an effort to dissuade them from making the same mistakes they made that ultimately led to not only their incarceration, but the creation of more victims. I am a member of a Restorative Justice Committee, a group whose mission is to create ways for sincerely remorseful offenders to give back to the communities from which they took through their crimes. Restorative Justice projects range from donating hair to Locks Of Love to collecting soda tabs for Ronald McDonald House to raising funds to pay for the travel expenses of the victims who speak at the ICVC dialogues. As of this writing, plans are being discussed to try to provide relief to an impoverished area by forming a cooperative with various civic groups for the purpose of using offender resources to generate teaching supplies, greeting cards, and other items of need to schools, nursing homes, and churches in the area.

On a more personal level, my relationship with my family has greatly improved because of the lessons I learned from the ICVC class. Not only have I apologized to my family and friends for all the pain and shame I caused them because of my crime, but I have also tried to use every day as an opportunity to let them know how much I care about them. And I continue to share the victims' stories with everyone I know, hopefully helping to give the victims a voice where they once went unheard.

The Impact of Crime on Victims Class has made an indelible impression upon my life. I have finally learned how interconnected we are as a society. We touch people everyday with our actions. We may not be able to see those consequences,

Continued on page 10.



Grassroots Political Movement

Bill Ryan

It will be necessary to develop an active, well prepared, community-based cadre of people and organizations if we are to persuade our legislators and Governor to support needed progressive legislation. A good example is HB 4154, the Elderly Sentence Adjustment Act that is discussed in this issue. This is a very modest approach, involving about 200 men and women in a pilot program the first year and about half that number in future years. This legislation does not mean every elderly prisoner who has served at least 25 years will be released. A judge will determine if a person has earned a sentence adjustment and is no longer a threat to public safety. Some will earn sentence adjustment, and some will not.

This legislation also establishes Impact of Crime on Victims (ICVC) classes that have been so positive and successful in Missouri. Part of the 40 hours ICVC class is a Restorative Justice section led by Parents of Murdered Children. The Parents support HB 4154 because they have seen prisoners change and reform. This includes lifers and long-term prisoners. The pain and suffering of victims needs to be recognized, and this program is a most effective way of achieving this objective. Those eligible for elderly sentence adjustment will be provided an opportunity to participate in ICVC on a voluntary basis. Legislative process is a long and sometime arduous process. The first step is drafting and filing (this is the status of HB 4154 now), then a committee conducts a hearing and votes. If approved, it goes to the full

legislative chamber, then the process is repeated in the other chamber. If approved, it goes to the Governor who can sign or veto the bill. At practically any stage, there can be amendments or changes.

All those who support HB 4154 need to become familiar with the contents of the bill, the rationale for it, and then talk with friends, neighbors, churches, civic groups, whomever you can. If anyone has questions or suggestion about how to proceed, please contact Bill Ryan or a member of one of the groups listed below. Only a true grassroots movement will have any hope of impacting our legislators and Governor who are locked into a gridlock of inaction.

Remember to always be courteous and respectful when discussing sensitive issues. Each of us needs to practice active listening so we can learn as we interact with people.

Various groups and individuals are joining together to develop this movement: the Citizens for Earned Release (www.ilcer.org); Long-Term Prison Project; Campaign Against the Death Penalty; Illinois Prison Talk (www.Illinoisprisonstalk.com); Tamms Committee and the Tamms Poetry Committee; several prison ministries and other groups. An umbrella coalition is being developed to coordinate legislative activities.

It is also vital we hear from the men and women in prison and from their supporters on the outside. If anyone reading this is not on the mailing list of one of member groups, let us know. We need to be active and work as a team.

Our political agenda and how we proceed with HB 4154 and other

legislative matters will be determined by the feedback we get from our members. So, let's get moving.

The members of the House of Representatives Prison Reform Committee will be conducting legislative hearings. Feel free to contact these members as well as your legislators, and have a discussion about HB 4154.

Chair Eddie Washington (D) 141A S. Genesee St., Waukegan, IL 60085, 847.623-0060

Vice Chair Elga Jefferies (D) 435 E. 35th St., 1st floor, Chicago, IL 60616, 773.373.9400

Minority Spokesperson Jim Sacia (R) 19 S. Chicago Ave., Freeport, IL 61032, 815.232.0774

Franco Coladipietro (R) 126 W. Lake St., Bloomingdale 60108, 630.582.0045
Paul Froehlich (D) 15 W. Weathersfield Way, Schaumburg 60193, 847.985.9210

Julie Hamos (D) 820 Davis St., Suite 103. Evanston 60201, 847.424.9898

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Art Turner (D) 3849 W. Ogden, Chicago 60623, 773.277.4700

Correction

We incorrectly attributed a poem, "Trapped in Time," in the last issue to Teresa Heater. If the actual author would contact *Stateville Speaks*, we will publish the correction. Our apologies.!

A Message from Superintendent

Dave Dormire

Here at the Jefferson City Correctional Center we emphasize programming to compliment our security. We are a 2000-bed maximum security institution. In years past, this institution was one of the most dangerous in the nation for staff and inmates. Several factors have contributed to our current status as one of the safest. Certainly moving out of an old dilapidated institution three years ago, as well as better training and equipment for our staff are major factors but clearly in my mind the atmosphere inside the prison started changing about 10 years ago when we started some specific programs to address the attitudes and behavior of criminals.

In 1995 we instituted a therapeutic community to address drug and alcohol problems as well as criminal behavior.

In 2001 we started our Impact on Victims classes and followed these with related programming. These programs have helped change our institutional climate. We have fewer conduct violations and significantly lower levels of violence. We went from almost daily fights and incidents to a point where we average only one fight a month in our general populations, and we went all of last year without any serious assaults.

Certainly instituting programs comes with some resistance from hard core staff but they have proven to be successful in transforming this institution into a model for a correctional center. I describe these treatment programs as security programs because they have had such an impact on our overall security. They are changing the behavior and attitudes of individuals who have previously been only in a criminal lifestyle. We believe these programs serve us in Missouri in our ultimate goal of the highest public safety possible because when these

inmates are released they are less of a threat to the community. However, we are also reaping the benefits of these programs while these guys are still incarcerated because of how these programs make our staff and all inmates safer.

I welcome anyone to come to the institution and observe what we have going on. I believe you will see that good programs compiled with good security practices compliment each other and make not only correctional institution safer but our communities as well.!

Letters from Participants Cont.

but we are nevertheless responsible for them. Through my criminal actions, I have effected countless people in negative ways, and I now hold myself fully accountable for the damage that I have caused to them. I can never completely undo the harm I have caused, but it is my hope that by turning my life around and committing myself to healing the wounds that I have inflicted upon society, I can finally try to make things as right as possible. This is my duty. This is my privilege. This is my life. I owe my victims nothing less.

Sincerely
Christopher Santillan!

Elderly Pilot Program Cont.

representatives of the general public, judiciary, law enforcement, and defense and prosecution bar. (4) The Department of Corrections may staff programs created under this subsection with employees of the Department or may contract with other public or private agencies for delivery of services as otherwise provided by law; (5) The pilot program shall include wrap-around victim services to ensure the safety of victims upon the release of a committed person under an elderly sentence adjustment program.!

Growing Burden for Aging Population

Sarah Etter

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Corrections is facing an influx of elderly offenders in an age where overcrowding prisons is already a concern. In addition, health care budgets are rising exponentially as a result of the medical needs of this particular population.

According to Dr. Ronald Aday, author of *Aging Prisoners*, the future doesn't look much better for these offenders or the facilities that house them as their population rises. "Based on 2005 statistics from the ACA and my research with a number of states, it's become clear that this population hasn't really even started growing the way it will in the next 10 or 20 years, especially when it comes to the baby boomer population," Aday says. "We will see a tremendous increase. Right now, most DOCs classify 10 percent of their population as geriatric. We can expect to see that rise." Aday, who specializes in aging studies and sociology at Middle Tennessee State University, says many factors are contributing to the rising numbers. "If you look at California, they have one out of six inmates serving life sentences. By 2020, sixteen percent of their inmates will be classified as geriatric," explains Aday. "It's just staggering."

Medical costs for a typical inmate might run an agency around \$33 per day, while costs for an aging inmate could run upwards of \$100. Most DOCs report spending more than 10 percent of the annual budget on elderly care. According to Massachusetts DOC Health Services Director, Dr. Terre Marshall, these costs stem from the types of chronic health problems many aging offenders face.

Continued on page 11.

Creative Corner

WHEN INSPIRATION HITS...POEMS WRITINGS CONNOTATIONS...



"No More War" has won the Best Essay Award in the Prisoners Against the War Essay Contest. Congratulations, Mr. Askew! Each of the writers who submitted to the contest were provided a copy of Homefront, published by Mainstay press and written by Tony Christini.

No More War!

Christopher Askew

9/11 has been the basis for this present administration to launch wars in two sovereign nations. Presently American troops are engaged in armed battles in Afghanistan and Iraq, with the latter being the most severe. Undoubtedly, 9/11 had a profound effect upon the psyche of this nation. However, misguided and prolonged military operations are unjustified. Personal vendettas and conjured falsifications, i.e., weapons of mass destruction, have clouded the judgments of the decision makers and placed hundreds of thousands of young Blacks, Whites, Latinos, etc., in harm's way. Propagandized ads and campaigns to increase recruitment continue. Now, everyone is baffled on what course of action to take. Both Republicans and Democrats alike

seem to agree that immediate withdrawal is not an option. While both parties remain uncertain on just what to do, the death toll continues to rise on both sides. Since President Bush's two daughters are not in Afghanistan or Iraq and very few if any members of the U.S. Senate or Congress have any of their children fighting in these wars, expediency is nonexistent. Since the political figures have been and continue to be negligent in their duties, it is going to take the citizens of this nation to rise up against the war and voice their dissatisfactions. If this is not done, the death toll will continue to rise and the financial strain that this war is causing to this country will continue as well. So, let us give the rally cry of NO MORE WAR.!

The second place winner in the Prisoners Against the War Essay Contest. Congratulations, Mr. Velez!

I'm Against the War

(Why I support bringing the troops home)
John Velez

After 9/11, our Secretary of State and former head of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Colin L. Powell, appeared before a Senate Committee to present the Administration's case for war, citing among other things a mobile chemical weapons program otherwise known as "WMD's" (weapons of mass

destruction) and an alleged connection between the Iraqi dictator, Saddam Hussein, and Al-Qaeda leader Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi in Iraq. Shortly after Congress authorized the use of force against the country of Iraq, stating the possibility that WMD's could fall into the hands of terrorists, which was the most compelling reason for authorizing this use of force. We now know that the Administration's "case for war" was based on faulty intelligence, or worse, a flat out lie. Not only were there no weapons of mass destruction, but the so-called link to the terrorist group, Al-Qaeda, was also a fabrication, most likely used to inflame the passions of the Congress and influence a vote that would send our troops to the wrong war in the wrong place. There are several reasons to be against this war but none more "compelling" (this being the word Congress used) than the 3,500 plus U.S. fatalities and countless casualties suffered as a result of a war based on lies. In conclusion, this war is an injustice for which there is only one remedy: bring our troops home now before their lives are cut short for the wrong reasons in a country not their own. !

"Growing Burden..." Cont.

"Cardiovascular disease, cancer, long-term impact of diabetes, high cholesterol, and sedentary lifestyle are all at the top of the list. Cancer and seizure disorders are also a huge issue," adds Marshall. Marshall says the challenge in helping the elderly population is escalated by a shortage of medical employees. Meanwhile, Corrections in general has been impacted by what some consider to be the greatest nursing shortage in history.

"An area that we overlook is the mental health concerns," Aday says. "A recent study found that 40 percent of state prisoners and 52 two percent of jail prisoners have at least one mental health problem.

Continued on back page...

Growing Burden for Aging Population

Sarah Etter

Continued from page 10..

Many also suffer from depression. That's another place health care costs increase. It's not just physical health, but also the drugs for mental problems. They are very expensive."

To address many of these issues, the MADOC created 13-bed unit specifically for offenders who require assisted living care. Some states also are looking at pardons, parole and medical furloughs for aging offenders as the population continues to grow.

"I would say that these pardons and paroles would increase if there are not other options for release like medical furlough. If those aspects are not utilized, I could see that we would have an increase of assistance on an

individual level legally," says Marshall says. Releasing elderly prisoners is not as simple as it seems.

"You have to have a place for people to go. Some of these offenders have outlived their family. Some nursing homes are apprehensive about accepting these offenders. That's certainly a concern. If you don't have family, what is your next option for housing and income? Many of these people have been incarcerated most of their adult lives and cannot fend for themselves," Aday says.

One solution involves releasing aging inmates to existing family or to a support system in the community. Aday offers another innovative idea.

"We have courts for juvenile offenders. Why not have geriatric court systems? We take it into account if one commits a crime in their youth, but we don't review sentences for elderly. That is one aspect worth pursuing."

He adds that research still lacks about this population. Most studies have focused on aspects of specific aging inmates, like sex offenders. Instead, Aday would like to see some statewide or national figures.

"We need an overall picture of this population," Aday adds. "We need to know what they are suffering from and what their needs are so we can begin figuring out the best way to deal with this issue. It's not going to go away."

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