

A Publication of The Pennsylvania Prison Society

# GRATERFRIENDS

*Promoting a humane, just and constructive correctional system and a rational approach to criminal justice since 1787*

## Special Report COVID-19

*Pennsylvania Prison Society Staff*

### Recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

The Centers for Disease Control recommends the following everyday preventive actions to help prevent the spread of respiratory diseases, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth.
- For the Nonincarcerated: Stay home when you are sick.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces using a regular household cleaning spray or wipe.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds, especially after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing.
- If soap and water are not readily available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol. Always wash hands with soap and water if hands are visibly dirty.

CDC does not recommend that people who are well wear a facemask to protect themselves from respiratory diseases, including COVID-19. Facemasks should be used by people who show symptoms of COVID-19 and for health workers.

### Should You Be Worried About the Coronavirus?

Public health experts explain the risks and what we still don't know.

For the third time this century, a new strain of coronavirus, a family of pathogens that cause respiratory illness in birds and mammals, has jumped species and infected humans. Having broken out in the city of Wuhan (in China, probably at a market where live animals are slaughtered and sold). How worried should you really be? Here's what public health experts and others are saying.

According to health professionals, you should treat the virus seriously, but you should not panic.

Although the outbreak is a "very serious public-health threat, the immediate risk to the U.S. public is low at this time," Nancy Messonnier, director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, said. For perspective: the flu kills roughly 35,000 Americans every year. This season, it has already sickened an estimated 15 million Americans and killed 8,200, the CDC estimates.

COVID-19 is not entirely understood as of yet, but we do know that it is more deadly than the flu. Around 80 percent of cases are mild to moderate and most people re-

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cover without medical intervention within a few weeks. Those most susceptible to developing major complications, such as pneumonia, are those with preexisting health problems and the elderly.

According to data from nearly 56,000 laboratory-confirmed COVID-19 patients in China, these are the most common symptoms:

- 88 percent had a fever
- 68 percent had a dry cough
- 38 percent had fatigue
- 33 percent coughed up phlegm
- 19 percent had shortness of breath
- 15 percent had joint or muscle pain
- 14 percent had a sore throat
- 14 percent headache
- 11 percent had chills
- 5 percent had nausea or vomiting
- 5 percent had nasal congestion
- 4 percent had diarrhea
- Less than 1 percent coughed up blood or blood-stained mucus

**(See Special Report, continued on page 3)**

# FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



"We should do everything we can possibly do. When you think you are maybe overreacting, you are probably not acting as forcefully as you should." - Dr. Anthony Fauci, Director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease

In the midst of this public health crisis, Dr Fauci is a voice of truth, rationality, and leadership. He does not downplay this situation, falsely reassure, or peg his remarks solely on hopes. Nor does he fearmonger

or hedge. He speaks to facts and does so calmly - "do everything we can possibly do" - is a call-to-action for all of us, every person, every community, and most definitely every prison.

Throughout Pennsylvania, officials are taking measures to help keep people who are confined in prisons and who work in prisons healthy - and to de-escalate growing anxiety and tension behind prison walls. But these next few weeks are the calm before the storm. There is much, much more to be done.

In keeping with the recommendations of the criminal justice reform community, many Pennsylvania jurisdictions are

- **Working to reduce the number of people in prison** by stemming the number of new admissions to prison and seeking to release individuals who can safely return to the community, particularly those individuals who are at high medical risk; Allegheny, Berks, and Philadelphia Counties have all taken action.
- **Planning and preparing for medical treatment;** state prisons are waving the medical co-pay for virus testing and treatment.
- **Employing multiple approaches to stress reduction;** Philadelphia and Pennsylvania prisons are providing additional free phone calls. state prisons and Westmoreland County are attempting to develop new video visiting opportunities.
- **Providing the public with information.**

But for every county that has started providing free phone calls, there is another county that has not. For every medically vulnerable person who has been released in the last week, the petitions of another 20 people remain contested or in limbo. While medical co-pays are suspended for virus testing and treatment at state prisons, co-pays which discourage sick people in custody from seeking care are still in place in all county and state prisons except Philadelphia.

At the Prison Society, we applaud the efforts of so many criminal justice officials around the Commonwealth. But as Dr. Fauci

## GRATERFRIENDS

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Graterfriends is a publication from the Pennsylvania Prison Society. The organization was founded in 1787 to promote humane prisons and a rational approach to criminal justice.

We reserve the right to edit submissions. Original submissions will not be returned. We will not print anonymous letters. Allegations of misconduct must be documented and statistics should be supported by sources. All submissions should be no more than 500 words, or two double-spaced pages. Letters more than 200 words, or one double-spaced page, will not be published in their entirety and may be shortened for clarity and space.

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If you have a question about Graterfriends, please contact our staff by mail, email, or phone.

reminds us, in this pandemic, “when you think you are maybe overreacting you are probably not acting as forcefully as you should.”

We call on all of the criminal justice officials in the Commonwealth – prosecutors, judges, correctional leaders, and county commissioners – to take Dr. Fauci’s words to heart. For those jurisdictions that have not acted, act now. For those jurisdictions that have taken proactive measures, take more.

- **Take measures to address stress within facilities for both incarcerated people and staff.**
- **Increase virtual family access.**
- **Eliminate all medical co-pays.**
- **And make the bold, responsible, and humane step of releasing and refusing to incarcerate people who are not a threat to public safety, particularly those in medically vulnerable groups.**

We must all do everything we can possibly do.

Claire Shubik-Richards  
Executive Director

## NOMINATIONS REQUESTED

We encourage all Graterfriends readers to submit nominations for the volunteer, incarcerated person, and correctional employee who will be honored this June in Philadelphia. Please submit your nominations with a brief description of how your nominee has demonstrated leadership and compassion.

Nominations should be sent to Shana Joseph at 230 South Broad Street, Suite 605, Philadelphia, PA 19102 by April 20, 2020.

Thanks!

## CREATIVE ISSUE

We would once again like to remind our readers and contributors about our plans to publish a creative issue of Graterfriends later this year.

This issue will focus on creative writing such as short stories, poems, recipes, as well as visual art. Submissions may be about criminal justice reform or anything that inspires you. All appropriate content will be considered. PPS staff reserve rights to make judgments of what is and is not appropriate.

Thank you!

*(Special Report, continued from page 1)*

The reason officials are treating this virus so much more seriously than other, perhaps more deadly diseases, such as SARS or ebola, is because of how easily it can spread. Though exact figures are still unknown, it is estimated that the virus can live on surfaces and in the air for longer than many other diseases, making the chance of infection much higher.

Social distancing and proper hygiene practices are crucial to protect those who are vulnerable and to not overwhelm our hospitals.

### From the Editors:

The approximately 2 percent mortality rate for COVID-19 is higher than for the flu (0.1 percent) but it is still very low. Most healthy people who get the virus will experience mild symptoms and recover easily with little or no treatment. The biggest concern in the United States is for individuals whose immune systems are compromised, who have severe chronic disease, who are very young or very old. Individuals in these groups should be monitored carefully for symptoms such as: fever, cough, or shortness of breath.

So, while it is easy to panic when we read about a new virus that is spreading across the world, we must remember that the risk is similar to that of the typical winter flu. We encourage you to:

- **Ask your health care providers and administrators about the best ways to prevent the spread of the virus and to get appropriate treatment, if needed.**
- **Send your questions and concerns to PPS (by mail, email, or phone).**

The PPS staff, volunteers, and Official Visitors will be available as usual to monitor the situation and to act as advocates on your behalf.

**Were you recently transferred or assigned a new state ID number? Let us know!**

**The DOC does not alert us when inmates are transferred or assigned a new number.**

**Please write us so we can update our mailing list and ensure quick delivery of your Graterfriends!**

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REPORT FROM

# NICOLE SLOANE, ESQ.

## There is a Fifth Amendment Right Not to Provide Your Password to the Police

By Nicole Sloane, Criminal Defense Attorney



On November 20, 2019, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court decided the case of Commonwealth v. Joseph Davis, 220 A.3d 534 (Pa. 2019). Davis had appealed the decision of the Luzerne County Court of Common Pleas ordering Davis to disclose a password that would have allowed police access to his computer. Police had reason to believe child pornography would be found on Davis' computer. The content of Davis' computer had been encrypted so even

though police had a warrant for the computer, they could not review the content without Davis' password.

Encrypting a computer modifies the data into another form or a code which prevents anyone other than someone with a password from looking at it.

The Pennsylvania Office of Attorney General was investigating Davis for child pornography. It all started when agents used a computer with software designed to connect remotely with other computers to download a file containing child pornography from a computer in Luzerne County. That file was confirmed to contain child pornography. The agents got a court order to force the computer's internet provider to give the agents subscriber information associated with the IP address. "IP" stands for internet protocol, a number assigned to each device connected to a computer network that uses the internet protocol for communication. In this case, the internet provider identified Joseph Davis as the registered user of the IP address where the child pornography file had been sent from. The internet provider also gave agents Davis' physical address.

The agents obtained a warrant to search Davis' apartment and recovered a Dell computer. Later examination of the Dell computer revealed that the hard drive (the data storage of the computer) had been wiped clean.

A year later, agents identified a different child pornography video that was shared with a different IP address. Another subpoena served on the internet provider returned the name and address of Joseph Davis. Agents again executed a search warrant for Davis' apartment. Agents found a single computer, an HP Envy 700 desktop.

After agents gave Davis his Miranda warnings, Davis admitted that he lived alone and was the sole user of the computer. Agents arrested Davis for the videos that had been transferred from his IP

address and seized Davis' computer for further investigation.

On the way to his arraignment, Davis spoke openly about watching various pornographic movies involving children under the age of 14.

Unable to access the computer files suspected to contain illegal pornographic images and/or videos, agents asked Davis for the password. Davis responded that the password was 64 characters and said "we both know what's on there. It's only going to hurt me." Davis refused to give agents his computer password.

The Commonwealth filed a motion asking the court to enter an order forcing Davis to give agents the password to access his computer. The court agreed and entered the order. Davis' attorney appealed to the Superior Court. The Superior Court agreed with the Commonwealth and the lower court that Davis had to provide his password to the Attorney General agents.

That was not the end of it because Davis' attorney asked the Pennsylvania Supreme Court to step in and review the decision. Davis argued that an individual should not be forced to give police his memorized password because doing so would violate his rights under the Fifth Amendment to the United States Constitution and Article 1, Section 9 of the Pennsylvania Constitution. One of the rights under the Fifth Amendment is the right to refuse to answer a question on the grounds that the answer might be incriminating.

The Pennsylvania Supreme Court agreed with Davis that forcing Davis to give up his password would be "testimonial" in nature and therefore privileged under the Fifth Amendment. The lower court decisions were reversed and Davis was not required to give his password to police.

## REPORT FROM FAMM

### Life Without Parole

For more than 5,400 people serving life without parole in Pennsylvania, the commutation process is currently the only pathway to relief from endless incapacitation. Life without parole is the mandatory minimum sentence for both first- and second-degree murder in Pennsylvania — a draconian policy that ignores the capacity for humans to change and mature; it's simply a death sentence under another name. As a direct result of these retributive policies, Pennsylvania's lifer population ranks among the highest in the nation, and the world.

For many years, Pennsylvania's Board of Pardons successfully operated under a simple 3-2 majority requirement to advance a person with a life-sentence or the death penalty to the Governor for commutation. The Board recommended 267 people during Governor Schapp's tenure (1971 to 1978) for commutation of their life sentences, and 251 of those people were extended the grace of



clemency. From 1979 through 1994, the Board recommended 193 people to Pennsylvania's governors for commutation of their life sentences.

In 1992, the Board voted 4-1 to approve the commutation application of Reginald McFadden, a man serving a life without parole sentence for an offense committed when he was just 16 years old. In the months after McFadden's commutation was granted by Governor Casey in 1994, he committed a high-profile series of violent offenses in other states. In response to the McFadden case, the legislature quickly acted to change the Board of Pardons required vote from 3-2 to unanimous in order to advance to the Governor's desk for approval, and commutations all but stopped. This reactionary tough-on-crime policy has resulted in the perpetual punishment of thousands of people who deserve to come home, continued family disruption, and has burdened taxpayers with an unconscionable price tag.

These policies have also contributed to the inflating population of aging and ill people in Pennsylvania's prisons. There are currently more than 10,000 people over the age of 50 living in our state correctional facilities, a group that costs the Department of Corrections over \$2.9 million each month in prescription costs, alone. Many of these people have already served decades of their prison sentence, are mentors inside their facilities, and would make our communities stronger if given a second chance. A 2005 report prepared by the Advisory Committee on Geriatric and Seriously Ill Inmates showed a cumulative conviction recidivism rate of just 1.01% for people age 50 or older whose life sentences were commuted in Pennsylvania.

In the twenty years before Governor Wolf was in office, only thirty life-sentenced people's applications were heard by the Board, twenty recommended to the Governor, and just six people were ultimately commuted. The Wolf administration has boosted efforts to expand clemency in the Commonwealth, which have been amplified under the leadership of Lt. Governor John Fetterman and his staff. Since Governor Wolf took office in 2015, the Board has heard the pleas of 56 people and their loved ones serving life without parole asking for mercy. Twenty-three of those people have been recommended to Governor Wolf, and he has granted 19 commutations of life sentences, thus far.

There are currently legislative efforts in both the Pennsylvania House and Senate to change the Board of Pardons vote requirement to a more fair ratio. Senators Bartolotta (R) and Farnese (D) have introduced SB 884, which aims to change the Board of Pardons vote requirement from unanimous to a 4-1 majority. With HB 2262, State Representatives McClinton (D) and Kinsey (D) are working to return the Board of Pardons vote back to the pre-1997 simple 3-2 majority. Both of these bills seek to amend the Pennsylvania Constitution, a process that requires successful passage through the legislative process in two consecutive sessions, followed by a favorable vote by the electorate.

While changing the Board of Pardons vote requirement is a crucial improvement to the status quo, we must also urge our policymakers to immediately support second chances for people

in prison through policies and procedures that recognize the power of redemption, the human capacity for change, and mercy. Pennsylvania is in desperate need of abolishing our indiscriminately punitive mandatory minimum sentencing requirement for both first- and second-degree murder, expansion of medical parole, and the introduction of second-look laws that allow grace for people sentenced to excessive or virtual-life sentences.

We should not let singular horrific cases deter the application of mercy and compassion to the multitude of deserving people in the Pennsylvania prison system. We should be focusing on people like Naomi Blount, George Trudel, and Tyrone Werts — people who have been extended grace, and are using their second chances to better our communities and advocate for those still fighting for relief from excessive sentences. It is time to make Pennsylvania a national and world leader in hope, mercy, and justice — not unending punishment.

**Please remember that any submissions we receive will NOT be published without permission to print and a note stating that you are the original author.**

**Submissions without either of these two requirements will not be printed. We also cannot print copyrighted material. Original submissions will not be returned.**

### *Wondering about the status of a submission?*



**We think it is important for you to know that, because we receive many submissions, we are unable to print every article.**

**You may receive a postcard like the one above in the mail as a thank you for your submission with either confirmation that it has been considered for publication or a reason for denial.**

**If we believe that the issue presented in a submission is of serious concern, your letter may be forwarded to an official visitor or relevant personnel for further inquiry.**

# BOOK CASE

## Free Book Services

Recommended by James Arthur, 457097, Riverhead Maximum Security Institution, Hening TN. These programs provide books and magazines to individuals incarcerated in U.S. prisons. Simply send your written request to them, listing your preferred subjects.

### Books to Prisoners

c/o Left Bank Books  
92 Pike St, Box A  
Seattle WA 98101  
[www.bookstoprisoners.net](http://www.bookstoprisoners.net)  
Does not ship books to prisons that require new books. Must wait nine months between requests.

### DC Books to Prisoners

P O Box 34190  
Washington DC 20043  
Must wait five months (150 days) between requests.

### Prison Book Program

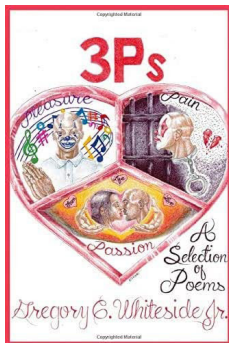
c/o Lucy Parson's Bookstore  
1306 Hancock St, Suite 100  
Quincy MA 02169  
Offers free six-page resource list.

### Prisoners Literature Project

c/o Bound Together Bookstore  
1369 Haight St  
San Francisco CA 94117  
[www.prisonlite.org](http://www.prisonlite.org)

## 3P's - Pleasure, Pain, and Passion

By Alberto O. Cappas



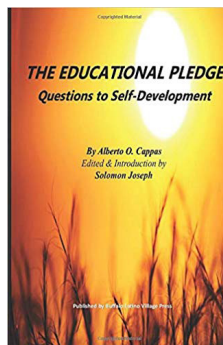
I've come to extend my hand to you in friendship, fellowship, and brotherhood. I am currently an inmate on San Quentin's Death Row, working on my appeal to clear my name.

During my time here on the "Row", I've been staying positive and productive by studying The Bible, staying in prayer, enrolling in college, as well as working on a book of poetry. I've recently been blessed to get my poetry book published and up

for sale on Amazon.com.

My book, entitled "3P's - Pleasure, Pain, and Passion," includes 185 poems that cover everything from love to heartbreak, from joy to sorrow, from the spiritual to worldly subjects too. So I'm sure that within this poetry book you will find quite a few poems that will touch your heart and mind. (Available in paperback from Amazon for \$17.)

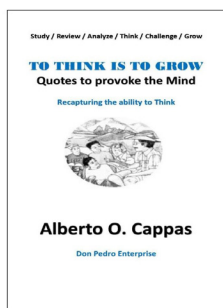
## The Educational Pledge By Alberto O. Cappas



This is a book about understanding the importance of personal growth, taking charge of your personal life, and beginning to live life as it was intended. It introduces young readers to the concepts of self-esteem, self-development, personal responsibility, values and standards. This book belongs in every public school library and is also recommended for educators, counselors, mentors, and parents.

This is the first edition of the Manifest Diversity Series founded by Solomon Joseph, who is featured as the editor of this book. (Available at Amazon.com for \$3 to \$14.)

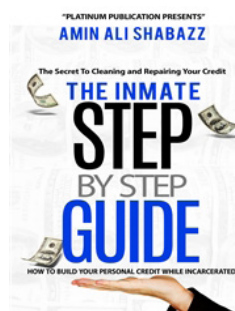
## To Think is to Grow By Alberto O. Cappas



This book is a collection of quotes Cappas has used during his presentations and lectures at colleges, universities, correctional facilities, parent associations, and the public school system. The book was written for young people, providing an opportunity to provoke conversation and discussion - as a way to understand the life around them. (Available from Amazon.com for \$12.)

## The Inmate Step by Step Guide: How to Build Your Personal Credit While Incarcerated

By Amin Ali Shabazz



This book guides a credit novice through the process of checking their existing credit score, rehabilitating credit, building their current credit score and all information included can be completed while behind the wall. The book explains why it's mandatory to have "good credit" after being released from a facility in order to obtain better housing, reliable transportation and a successful job. My teaching while behind the walls includes the basics of credit and the importance of maintaining great credit for your day to day life experiences upon release. (Available at TheBookPatch.com for \$23.)

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# ADVICE

## Depression

*Roger R. Reister, #1062727 Coffield Unit, Texas*

This column is about sharing some helpful health advice with the incarcerated community. I hope that each of you will find something useful in my words.

Well, now I need your help. I can see that each of you cares about the other. Oh no, you've never said it out loud but I can still tell. It's that playful punch in the arm, the odd nicknames you give to each other, and the way you always seem to understand each other, that give your feelings away. No, I won't tell anyone because I know how important it is to not show any kind of weakness in this place. Of course, I also understand how important it is to have friends in here.

A lot of guys believe that only women get depressed. That's wrong! "While it is true that depression is more common in women than men, American men face a 12% lifetime risk of depression, and they are four times more likely to commit suicide than women" (Harvard Men's Health Watch, May 2010). Yes, it's that serious but "once depression is diagnosed, it can respond well to treatment."

Don't get me wrong, everyone gets a little sad or "blue" sometimes. That's a natural, healthy reaction to the disappointments in life and the forced separation that we on the inside must endure. But there's a big difference between feeling sad and being depressed. Sadness is normal; depression is dangerous. Depression takes the joy out of living leaving a person drained and unable to perform simple daily tasks.

I am confident that you and your friends are strong, smart individuals but anyone can get depressed. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, "about 15 million Americans will suffer from depression sometime this year. Over the course of a lifetime, one in seven of us will have at least one bout of depression." This illness can occur at any time – sometimes with no warning, and other times under stressful conditions. Of course, just living in prison is stressful.

Because everyone has a unique personality, depression can be hard to recognize, especially in men. We tend to ignore the symptoms and put on a "tough guy" persona to the rest of the world. That's where you come in. Who better than a close friend can spot a dangerous change in behavior? I'll help you out by giving you specific things to look for.

According to the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (5th Edition), at least one of these two symptoms should be present for someone to be diagnosed with depression: (1) depressed mood (more than usual) and (2) severely diminished interest in or pleasure from activities that are usually pleasurable (or were pleasurable for them in the past). To be diagnosed with depression, one needs to experience at least four of the following

other seven symptoms:

Substantial change in appetite or weight loss;

Insomnia;

Fatigue or loss of energy;

Impaired ability to think, concentrate or make decisions;

Recurrent thoughts of death or suicide; and/or

Diminished self-esteem with feeling of worthlessness or inappropriate guilt.

If, after reading this, you believe that you or a close friend might be slipping into depression, ask for help. It may be hard to believe when you consider where we are, but there actually are individuals who truly care about you and your welfare. It is easy to recognize the genuinely good people who will help. There are also lifestyle changes, such as exercise, stress management activities, and spiritual practices that can be useful. The most important thing is to do something! When left untreated, depression can lead to problems that range from heart disease to suicide. DO NOT let it get that bad. Please, ask for help.

As you go through your daily activities, lend a helping hand to someone in need, tell your favorite joke during a commercial break to lighten the mood, or just listen to a friend who needs to talk. Always strive to be the kind of friend that you would turn to in a time of need. And remember, mentally and physically, you are responsible for your health.

## Change is a Must

*Earl Smith, GS-3221, SCI Huntington*

Change is a Must when you come to jail. Those who think you come to jail and do your time and that's it, are just setting themselves up for failure. If you're happy with being locked up, cool, this may be the place for you. But not for those of us who see clearly now and understand what living is truly about – about building yourself up and learning from your mistakes.

I believe that the time we spend locked up should be used to find ourselves and seek out what we were meant to do with our life. If we're able to focus, with a clear mind, we can take advantage of this time.

Now I understand the words "Do the time, don't let the time do you." It is so easy to get caught up in here talking about the what if's and what I almost did. Next thing you know, years have passed and you're thinking damn, 13 years went by fast. That's what I fear, I will look up and see 13 years pass and I'll say "where did it go?" I told myself, no more, I have to do something even if it's just writing in my journal. There is so much more I want to do with my life – to be the example for those that are lost and need to be found. It's not easy but I must pick myself up when I fall because I know that being trapped in here is not where I belong.

So, try to remind yourself daily where you want to be, who you're doing it for, and why. I'm tired of hurting my family, they're the motivation for me to stay strong and focused. I'm done with my old life. I'm not worried about the looks I get from people. Perhaps they want to be where I am, they just need the right push and the right example.



# OUR VOICES

## Opening Prayer for MLK

*George Rahsaan Brooks, AP-4884, SCI Coal Township*

As I prepare to celebrate and honor on his birthday Rev. Martin Luther King Jr, a man who was murdered because he celebrated differences and preached love, justice and equality, I have been thinking about what it means to love in difficult times. It seems that most of the news on my radio as I sit in my prison cell is bad news. The world You, God, made for us, seems to be a mess. Maybe this is part of Your design, but I believe we are letting You down. You need us to cooperate with Your plan, with Your Creation. You need us to cherish life, to protect it. It was hard enough for me when I was a member of a free society. It is much harder to think about cherishing life here in prison. But, You are a mighty God. You call us to "walk in right relation" with one another and to honor the work of Your hand and the life You created. It is a challenge, God, but continue to teach me to honor Your will. Amen.

I am told in Psalm 133, Right relations are like a precious ointment. I read in Jeremiah 14:17-22 the Prophet Jeremiah cries about the pain of the world; I saw in Isaiah 58:1-12 what God requires of us: justice; I remember in Matthew 5:43-48, that Jesus offers a challenge: love even your enemies; I know in Matthew 22:34-40 the commandments of Jesus: to love God and one another; I learned in 1 Corinthians, 12:4-11 Paul urges us to appreciate each other's strengths; I read in 1 Corinthians 12:12-31 Paul explained that we are all connected to each other; and, I read in John 4:7 21 that those who say, "I love God," and hate their brothers or sisters, are liars!

It is important to remember that Dr. King both wrote and said: "I know it isn't popular to talk about love in some circles today. I'm not talking about emotional bosh when I talk about love, I'm talking about a strong, demanding love. And I have seen too much hate. I've seen too much hate on the faces of sheriffs in the south. I'm seen too much hate on the faces of klansmen and too many White Citizens Councilors in the South to want to hate, myself, because every time I see it, I know that it does something to their faces and their personalities and I say to myself that hate is too much a burden to bear."

I choose to love.

## Fortune-Telling-Black-Ball or Wheel of Freedom

*Jules Jetté, EW-4679, SCI-Houtzdale*

For more than 17 years I have been helping inmates prepare to see the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole - most of the time either helping them write their offense version or helping them develop their reentry packet.

I recently helped an inmate prepare to see the Board. He completed his required DOC prescriptive plan, voluntarily completed

self-help and reentry programs the prison offered, and had no misconducts or block-cards. A month or so later he received a one-year-hit. Why?

Another inmate I helped get out years ago was returned in 2012 on a technical violation which carried a nine-month hit. Yet, he will now see the Board again in February 2020. Nothing has changed; he did not commit a new crime. How can the Board justify turning a nine-month technical violation into 90 months? Why?

Everyone who has seen the Board knows there is a short list of boilerplate, one-line phrases to deny parole. But, it is actually impossible to make these assessments of a human being in the 5 to 20 minute interviews:

"YOUR LACK OF REMORSE"

"YOUR REFUSAL TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITY/YOUR MINIMIZATION/DENIAL"

"YOUR FAILURE TO DEMONSTRATE MOTIVATION FOR SUCCESS"

How or who makes these determinations so swiftly?

A most likely culprit is a risk assessment algorithm. A machine, a black-box, but don't try to learn how it works or how it calculates "risk." Its builder will tell you "it's a trade secret."

I have my own theories: the Fortune-Telling-Black-Ball (every executive has one on their desk): shake it up and see what floats up. Somewhere in there is a "PAROLE GRANTED" along with the rest of the reasons for denial of parole; or, the Board has a wheel-of-freedom, rather than a wheel-of-fortune. Spin it and hope for a winner! Picture it, the Board gets together every Friday to place their bets. Ultimately it lets us see who goes home... or not.

## A New Day, A New Start

*William Coward (Juicy Queen Bee), ML-5077, SCI Albion*

Hello Family,

As we lay our heads down to sleep, we should think about what would happen if our days were to end that night. Did we finish all we had to do?

Each day that passes by, starts a new day; and each new day has a new meaning. Lately, I've been reading books to strengthen myself to be better than I was yesterday — for that day may be my last. I'm trying to do all I can to get to where I need to be, even forgiving those who hurt me.

Some people say I'm a fool for giving a person a second chance, but I tell them I do not live my life for them. I live my life for two: for myself and for my higher power, God. How can I ask him to forgive me when I can't forgive those who hurt me?

I've been incarcerated for almost seven years and it took me five



years to get back on track, to knowing that I want to get it right. I have to let go and step out of that shell I was living in, to stop letting pride, hate, and other things get in the way of my path to success.

I don't blame anyone but myself for my downfall and mishaps because no one told me to do the things I did.

My mistakes are the past, and tomorrow isn't promised, only today is. I must focus on today, forgetting yesterday. If I focus on just today and stop dwelling on what yesterday was and what tomorrow may bring, I can remain focused on one task at a time. One thing I can say, I'll never give up no matter what a person might try to do to see me fall. Why? Because my faith is true and strong. So in closing, it's a new day for me and a new start.

#### **We Care Also**

*Earl Smith, GS-3221, SCI Huntingdon*

As a Lifer, I will like to share with you my thoughts. To all of those who have been a victim or has a loved one who is the victim of a crime, I would like to apologize on behalf of myself and others for all of the hurt and pain that we have caused you and your families. Today I believe there's a disconnection between us in prison and those in the free world. There are a lot of us serving time, that have finally woken up and realized that our old ways of thinking are not acceptable. Now understanding how our world really should operate, we start wishing that we could do things all over, but unfortunately we can't. The answer that I came up with, for not being able to relive or undo horrible mistakes is simple, don't do them. If we start to look at us as a whole, as one race, we should have love and respect for one another, no matter what religion or color a person is. When we learn to really love ourselves and those around us, that's when we start to see the wrong in the decisions that we're making and finally begin to understand that a change is deeply needed within.

Here's just some thoughts on things that I felt like sharing with you, so hopefully you can find a use for this and share it with those who need it.

#### **The Ends, Don't Justify the Means**

*Casey Lee Hoey FH-5454, SCI Forest*

Here at SCI Forest, we are placed and remain on lockdown far more than any other prison in Pennsylvania. When even one prisoner on your housing block gets into a fight, your entire block is locked-down for 36 hours to three days. If an inmate on either side of your housing unit fights or gets attacked, both your housing unit and the other housing unit do not get any main rec yard for two or three days.

The Superintendent here, Derek Oberlander, claimed & vowed that this so-called "violence reduction strategy" is working. The opposite is true.

In September 2019, in three straight back-to-back weeks, we were placed on lock-down for three days each time - the entire prison

locked down 24/7. The first time was because an inmate on B-unit West Side, had allegedly attacked two guards.

The second time was because of a fight between a prisoner from E-Unit and G-Unit on the East Side. In both random and isolated incidents, all prisoners paid for it, suffering six days total of 24/7 lockdown. And, on October 9 or 10, we were informed that no prisoner could receive any kind of GLP or work-pay for the duration of the six days. Additionally, every cell was searched and torn up by the Cert Team Members from Huntingdon and elsewhere.

These lockdowns, removing the chance to make money from the state, in addition to the limitation on the rec yard and the smoking ban, have only made the violence and anger worse. It has not reduced the violence at all. Forcing everyone not involved in the causes of the lockdown to suffer is uncalled for and abusive. Our grievances and requests go unanswered.

Soon, Forest will also be the only prison using breakfast bags five days of the week. That means no hot or normal breakfasts during those times. There is no incentive for anything to change or for violence to be reduced.

#### **Doubling Up Prisoners**

*Richard Sean Gross, FF-9878, SCI Phoenix*

Although most states in this region have reduced their prison populations, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania is determined to keep mass incarceration going while still closing prisons. They are doing this by doubling up all prisoners. People who would have had a X-code (single cell) in the past for being filthy, violent, a thief, or disturbingly mentally ill are now housed with someone else. People who in the past earned an A-code (single cell) for good behavior are now being punished by having to take a celly. Old men who lived alone for 30 or 40 years are now having to adapt to someone sharing their small space. There is no reward for good behavior in PA. No good time, no single cell, no pre-release, nothing.

#### **Know an inmate with an interesting life story?**

Interview them and send in a submission to have their story published in the next edition of Graterfriends.

Please be sure to include permission to publish from the author and the person profiled.

#### **Do you have a reentry success story?**

We are looking for articles written by or about former inmates about their lives after prison. If you have any advice about successful reentry or want to tell us your story, send us a submission!

# ADVOCATES

## Prisoners of the World (POW) Movement

*Randy A. Watterson, 0427985, Pasquotank CI, NC*

We are asking all prisoners in the U.S. and abroad to work with us to abolish most mandatory minimums, eliminate long-term solitary confinement, establish parole procedures for lifers who demonstrate rehabilitation, demand better food, a minimum wage, more meaningful rehabilitation opportunities, better health care and the overturning of the 13th amendment which permits involuntary servitude of individuals convicted of a crime.

If Pennsylvania prisoners would like more information on what we are calling the Prisoners of the World (POW) movement, they can access our newsletter at [www.ItsGoingDown.org](http://www.ItsGoingDown.org) or write to **Activities for Prisoners, Attn: Randy Watterson, 732 8th Street, Suite 532, Durham, NC 27705.**

Mail us a request for the most recently published edition of our newsletter. We would like to hear more about what Pennsylvania prisoners are doing to support prison reform. I salute all Pennsylvania prisoners and look forward to hearing from you and organizing with you. Keep your heads up and your grievances flowing - especially on that mail policy. And remember, you are not alone in your struggles. In solidarity and until every cage is open.

## Lawsuit Win for Incarcerated Sex Offenders

*Jeffrey Deeter, GC-2380, SCI Somerset*

The SCI Somerset Education Department recently announced a new educational program entitled "The Mass Incarceration Inside-Out Exchange Program" provided in collaboration with the University of Pittsburgh. Of the four criteria for excluding inmates from these classes, one was being a level 2 sex offender. After my written campaign asking staff members for a justification for excluding level 2 sex offenders, I received no answer that made any rational sense.

I filed a Motion for a Preliminary Injunction to halt the class until a rationale was provided. After jumping through all of the Court's hoops, filing my Request for Admission to the named respondents, filing a Motion for Expedited Consideration etc., I finally heard from the DOC's Attorney requesting a phone conversation.

In this phone call, the DOC admitted that the current "policy or procedures" did not meet the requirements of the law as it now stands. An immediate offer was made over the phone and followed up in writing. I made changes to the first draft Agreement. The final Agreement was signed by both parties and is now a lawful contract. I am now a student of the Mass Incarceration course that began at SCI Somerset in January.

Please note this changes the procedures across the entire state. Individuals incarcerated in PA prisons cannot be blocked from all college courses solely on the basis that they are sex offenders.

While this may be just one small win, it is a victory for all Sex Offenders in the PA DOC system. I am sharing this info to alert all incarcerated individuals so they can assess whether their prison is in compliance with this agreement. For more information, see the case: *Deeter v. PA DOC (et al) 471 M.D. 2019.*

## The Mumia Papers

*Reginald S. Lewis, AY-2902, SCI Phoenix*

On Thursday, May 16, 2019, Private Investigator Noelle Hanrahan mailed me copies of legal material in three thick envelopes. Pursuant to a court ordered discovery request in *Commonwealth v. Mumia Abu-Jamal*, brilliant attorneys Judith L. Ritter of Widener University Law School and Samuel Spital of the NAACP Legal Defense Fund forced the Commonwealth to produce material long buried in countless boxes, some labeled, "legislative files."

We gaze, awestruck, into the deep, dark, seedy crucible of an intrinsically racist mindset of the Legislative Unit in the Philadelphia District Attorney's office under Ronald D. Castille, who exploited Mumia's high-profile status and unjust conviction to stoke the apoplectic fear of a prototypical "Willie Horton" to lobby a powerful political establishment to pass laws requiring Governors to sign death warrants, speed up executions, dismantle the protections of the U.S. Constitution, and provide a blueprint for judges to convert precedential cases sent down from the United States Supreme Court into impotent and lifeless formulas, of no effect in Pennsylvania.

Well we know Philadelphia county's long history of excluding African-Americans from serving on juries. Yet, in July 1991, a few short years after the U.S. Supreme Court made it illegal for prosecutors to strike blacks from serving on juries solely on account of their race, Castille sent his Deputy District Attorney Gael Barthold to testify under oath before Congress that racial discrimination in jury selections didn't exist. Those newly-elected sista soldiers in the House of Representatives would have run her out of town.

Powerful new evidence clearly shows that Castille and then Pennsylvania Senator D. Michael Fisher, were, indeed, wedded in an evil symbiosis of a wicked Orwellian plot to ensure Mumia's appeals, and countless other death row inmates, were defeated at every level.

In one letter, dated May 25, 1988, Assistant District Attorney Kathleen McDonnell responded to Senator D. Michael Fisher's request for the names and status of appeals of nine death row inmates, Mumia's name was number 1 on the list of course. This writer, yours truly, was number 5. I once came within 48 hours of being executed.

A March 27, 1990 memo shows Castille's personal significant involvement in 72 more capital cases. He even sent a June 15, 1990 letter to then Governor Casey, urging him to sign the death warrants for 16 additional death row inmates, in violation of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Williams V. Pennsylvania*, as well as Pennsylvania's Code of Judicial Conduct.

Decades before the Williams ruling, Mumia sought Castille's recusal during prior PCRA proceedings, citing his judicial bias. Castille refused. But what the newly discovered evidence clearly proves Castille closely monitored and tracked each of these cases from his position as District Attorney to Chief Justice on the Pennsylvania Supreme Court. And in complicity and coordination with D. Michael Fisher from a pro prosecution, pro-death penalty State Senator to a twice-elected Attorney General to a judge on the Third Circuit of Appeals, where he refused to recuse himself from this writer's habeas proceeding.

At an August 30, 2018 Evidentiary hearing before Common Pleas Judge Leon W. Tucker, Attorney Judith L. Ritter argued that key documents were conspicuously and suspiciously purged from the Mumia files. Addressing the Commonwealth on this issue, the Honorable Leon Tucker noted: "I guess what concerns me logically is...what else has not been disclosed? That's what's troubling to me... It really is..."

So let us dare ask these questions: On whose orders did a white senator from Pittsburgh request the names of mostly black death row inmates from Philadelphia? What were the promises made and kept and gifts and money exchanged between Fisher and Castille? Shouldn't Mumia Abu Jamal be set free? Shouldn't this embolden Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf to immediately sign an Executive Order abolishing the death penalty, heretofore and forever? Shouldn't lawyers petition the courts in Pennsylvania to reopen and grant relief for every death row prisoner who appeared on those lists?

### Price Gouging

*Richard Grosso, CW-6956, SCI Greene*

This is in response to the January 2019 article concerning the General Labor Pool (GLP) fiasco as well as costs relating to commissary items, overseas phone calls, cable and hygienic costs.

The Human Rights Coalition in Philadelphia conducted a financial study concerning the yearly profits earned statewide by the PA DOC. Accordingly, the DOC earns a little over \$38 million. Even though these profits are supposed to be applied into the Inmate General Welfare Fund (IGWF) exclusively for "Future Inmate Commissary costs price reductions," they aren't. The profits are normally used for anything each and every state prison needs such as yard repairs, visiting room scanners, flat screen TV's for the officers dining rooms and the command center as well as the cost for running the Therapeutic Community program. The PA DOC needs to protect the annual \$2 billion funding to pay staff their salary, their over-time salary, all pensions and all medical costs for said staff and their immediate families plus a huge portion of that \$2 billion must also be used to power-up and run each SCI.

If we had an honest audit conducted for each and every SCI and the PA DOC applied the marginal profits it reaps (\$38 million yearly) to the real intended purpose of the IGWF, we wouldn't be paying \$17 for monthly cable, nor \$191 for a TV which only costs \$91 on the streets, nor \$157 for a tablet which also only costs \$11

on the streets, nor \$1.91 for each song GTL hawks to us which costs less than \$1 on the streets. The cost of everything would plummet. The root cause of this profound and problematic situation lies directly upon the doorstep of secretary John E. Wetzel, who was appointed by Governor Tom Corbett to financially bleed all state prisoners as well as their families. This entire issue needs to be highlighted not only with our legislators, but especially in the media.

### National Grievance Petition Day

*Randy A. Watterson, 0427985, Pasquotank Correctional Institution, Elizabeth City, NC*

North Carolina prisoners are calling on all incarcerated individuals and citizens to join us on May 7, 2020 by filing a pre-typed national grievance petition with the United States Department of Justice as a follow-up on our 2018 summer prison strike. To receive a free copy of this grievance petition, to use as is or adapt to your state, contact:

John Roberts, Att: RW's National Grievance Petition, 732 9th St, #532, Durham NC 27705

John Roberts at 919-907-1484 or andyyoung@riseup.net

If you want to see incarcerated individuals rehabilitated and restored before returning to our communities, if you want to see an end to virtual slavery, long-term solitary confinement, excessive sentencing, life sentences, recidivism, violence, censorship, wrongful convictions, and bullying, if you'd like to receive fair wages for your prison labor and have your voting rights restored; and if you'd like to see police, prosecutors, attorneys, and corrections officials be held accountable for corruption, dereliction of duty or misconduct, then, write to us for the petition that is circulating in the correctional facilities of all 50 states. So, let's all join hands in solidarity and together, let "us" make America great again.

### Retaliatory Lockdowns

*Brian Boyer, MC-3876, SCI Mahanoy*

In Volume 47, Issue 9, Robert B. Mowry pointed out the retaliatory nature of lockdowns at SCI Mahanoy that follow an isolated fight. I am writing to counsel individuals who have experienced this to file grievances.

When the DOC punishes you, you should demand due process. Whether retaliatory or due to a safety policy, when they remove you from your activities, confine you to your cell, disallow your scheduled visits to the law library, they must give you, as an individual, due process. These acts are "sanctions."

File the grievance. When it is denied, appeal it to the Facility Administrative Executive (Superintendent) and then to Mechanicsburg. When all these get denied, appeal to the Commonwealth court, citing a violation of 14th Amendment protections. Make sure you follow all appeal rules, this will change this wrongheaded policy - nothing else will.

# RESOURCES

## PA State Officials

### Governor Tom Wolfe

Governor's Correspondence Office  
508 Main Office Building  
Harrisburg, PA 17120  
P: 717-787-3391  
F: 717-772-8284

### Attorney General Josh Shapiro

PO Box 22653  
Philadelphia, PA 19110  
P: 215-886-7376

### Senator \_\_\_\_\_

Senate PO Box 203 \_\_\_\_ \*  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

### Representative \_\_\_\_\_

PO Box 202 \_\_\_\_ \*  
Harrisburg, PA 17120

\*If you know the three-digit district number for your Senator or Representative, add it to the PO Box number. If you do not know, information for Senators is available at [www.pasen.gov](http://www.pasen.gov); information for Representatives is available at [www.house.state.pa.us](http://www.house.state.pa.us).

### DOC Secretary John Wetzel

19020 Technology Parkway  
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050  
P: 717-728-2573  
W: [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov)  
E: [ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov](mailto:ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov)

## PPS Mentoring Program

Families and Individuals Reintegrating Successfully Together (F.I.R.S.T.), our mentoring program, is a voluntary program for men currently in the Transitional Housing Unit (THU) at SCI Chester and SCI Phoenix.

The program helps prepare incarcerated individuals for successful reentry mentally, emotionally, and logistically. After a series of workshops on relevant topics (such as social media, applying for medical benefits, securing housing, and obtaining education and jobs), mentees are assigned to mentors, to meet one-on-one for at least six months to develop and achieve a personalized goal plan. We are also working with soon-to-be-released Juvenile Lifers across the state to help them bridge into life outside in the community.

We are always seeking mentors and mentee participants. For more information, or for a mentor application, please contact:

Joseph Robinson, Mentoring Program Case Manager  
P: 215-564-4775, ext. 1005

## FAMM

FAMM, a DC-based sentencing reform organization, is working to fight mandatory minimums in Pennsylvania, but needs case examples to help convince lawmakers to support fair sentencing.

If you are serving a long mandatory sentence for a drug or gun offense, please send 1) your name, 2) your contact information, 3) contact information for an outside friend or family member, 4) a brief description of your offense, and 5) your sentence (example: I received a 10-20 year mandatory minimum), to:

### FAMM

Attn: Pennsylvania Stories  
1100 H Street, NW, Suite 1000  
Washington, DC 20005

*Note: FAMM does not offer direct legal assistance and cannot respond to every letter received, but the organization will contact you by mail if they'd like to learn more about your case.*

## The Prison Society and Broad Street Ministry

The Prison Society at Broad Street Ministry is a collaboration providing reentry support for people returning to Philadelphia. At Broad Street Ministry, individuals can receive a P.O. Box, change of clothes and personal care items, as well as meet with a reentry associate. Broad Street partners with multiple non-profit organizations who offer on-site assistance with medical care, housing, employment, public benefits, and obtaining personal identification.

### Broad Street Ministry

315 South Broad Street  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
P: 215-735-4847  
W: [www.broadstreetministry.org](http://www.broadstreetministry.org)

## Incarcerated LGBT Individuals

Founded in 1973, Lambda Legal is the oldest and largest national legal organization whose mission is to achieve full recognition of the civil rights of lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, transgender people and everyone living with HIV through impact litigation, education and public policy work.

As a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization, we do not charge our clients for legal representation or advocacy, and we receive no government funding. We depend on contributions from supporters around the country.

### National Headquarters

120 Wall Street, 19th Floor  
New York, NY 10005-3919  
P: 212-809-8585  
W: [www.LambdaLegal.org](http://www.LambdaLegal.org)



# RESOURCES

## The Inside-Out Prison Exchange Program

An idea conceived in a prison classroom over twenty years ago has now grown into an international movement comprised of more than 100 correctional and higher education partnerships, hundreds of trained instructors, over two dozen think tanks, and more than 35,000 students worldwide who have benefited from these life-changing courses.

For more information, contact:

The Inside-Out Center

1938 Liacouras Walk

MB 299-06, Suite 301

Temple University

Philadelphia, PA 19122

P: 215-204-5163

E: [insideout@temple.edu](mailto:insideout@temple.edu)

W: [www.insideoutcenter.org](http://www.insideoutcenter.org)

## Expungements

### Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity

1501 Cherry Street

Philadelphia, PA 19102

P: 267-519-5323

### Expunge Philadelphia

Juvenile Expungement Hotline

P: 267-765-6770

### Community Legal Services

Center City Office

1424 Chestnut St.

Philadelphia, PA 19102-2505

P: 215-981-3700

North Philadelphia Law Center

1410 W. Erie Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19140

P: 215-227-2400

## Inmate Authors

If you are a prisoner who has written a book, the Prison Foundation wants to publish it! There is no charge to read or publish your book. Your book will be scanned and published exactly as we receive it. Any language is acceptable. It may contain drawings and photos. For more information, contact

### Prison Foundation

2512 Virginia Avenue, NW Suite 58043

Washington, DC 20037

W: [www.prisonfoundation.org](http://www.prisonfoundation.org)

E: [staff@prisonfoundation.org](mailto:staff@prisonfoundation.org)

## Reentry Services

### Uplift

700 Delsea Drive

Westville, NJ 08093

P: 856-471-2008

E: [info@upliftsolutions.org](mailto:info@upliftsolutions.org)

### Presbytery of Philadelphia

915 East Gowen Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19150

P: 215-242-1400

F: 215-242-1444

E: [office@presbyphl.org](mailto:office@presbyphl.org)

### Jubilee Ministries

235 South 12th Street,

Lebanon, PA 17042

P: 717-274-7528

E: [jubilee@jub.org](mailto:jubilee@jub.org)

### Fair Shake

PO Box 63

Westby, WI 54667

P: 608.634.6363

E: [information@fairshake.net](mailto:information@fairshake.net)

### The National Reentry Resource Center

New York (Headquarters)

22 Cortlandt Street

Floor 22

New York, NY 10007

P: 212-482-2320

E: [info@stepuptogether.org](mailto:info@stepuptogether.org)

## ACLU

For nearly 100 years, the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union) has been our nation's guardian of liberty, working in courts, legislatures, and communities to defend and preserve the individual rights and liberties that the Constitution and the laws of the United States guarantee everyone in this country.

Whether it's achieving full equality for LGBT people, establishing new privacy protections for our digital age of widespread government surveillance, ending mass incarceration, or preserving the right to vote or the right to have an abortion, the ACLU takes up the toughest civil liberties cases and issues to defend all people from government abuse and overreach.

### ACLU Pennsylvania Central Office

P.O. Box 11761

Harrisburg, PA 17108

P: 717-238-2258

W: [www.aclupa.org](http://www.aclupa.org)

E: [hbginfo@aclupa.org](mailto:hbginfo@aclupa.org)

# RESOURCES

## Life Without Parole

### Women Lifers Resume Project of PA

PO Box 324  
New Hope, PA 18938  
P: 814-393-5400 (Cambridge Springs)  
P: 570-546-3171 (Muncy)  
W: [www.wlrpp.org](http://www.wlrpp.org)

### Reconstruction Inc.

ATTN Fight for Lifers  
PO Box 7691  
Philadelphia, PA 19101  
P: 215-223-8180

## Juvenile Life Without Parole

### Juvenile Law Center

The Philadelphia Building  
1315 Walnut Street, 4th Floor  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
P: 800-875-8887 (toll free)

### The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

1319 F Street, NW Suite 303  
Washington, DC 20004  
P: 202-289-4677

## Prisoner's Rights

### Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration

c/o Decarcerate PA  
PO Box 40764  
Philadelphia, PA 19107  
P: 267-217-3372  
W: [www.decarceratepa.info](http://www.decarceratepa.info)  
E: [decarceratepa.pgh@gmail.com](mailto:decarceratepa.pgh@gmail.com) (Pittsburgh)  
E: [cadbiphilly@gmail.com](mailto:cadbiphilly@gmail.com) (Philadelphia)  
E: [decarceratepa@gmail.com](mailto:decarceratepa@gmail.com)

### PA Institutional Law Project: Philadelphia

The Cast Iron Building  
718 Arch Street, Suite 304 South  
Philadelphia, PA 19106  
P: 215-925-2966 (Philadelphia)  
F: 215-925-5337 (Philadelphia)  
P: 570-523-1104 (Lewisburg)  
P: 412-434-6004 (Pittsburgh)  
W: [www.pailp.org](http://www.pailp.org)  
E: [alove@pailp.org](mailto:alove@pailp.org)

### Prison Activist Resource Center

PO Box 70447  
Oakland, CA 94612  
P: 510-893-4648  
W: [www.prisonactivists.org/resources](http://www.prisonactivists.org/resources)  
E: [info@prisonactivists.org](mailto:info@prisonactivists.org)

## Pennsylvania Innocence Project

The Pennsylvania Innocence Project has a four-fold mission to: (1) secure the exoneration, release from imprisonment, and restoration to society of persons who are innocent and have been wrongly convicted; (2) provide clinical training and experience to students in the fields of law, journalism, criminal justice, and forensic science; (3) collaborate with law enforcement agencies and the courts to address systemic causes of wrongful convictions; and (4) strengthen and improve the effectiveness of the criminal justice system in Pennsylvania through public education and advocacy.

### Philadelphia Office

1515 Market St  
Philadelphia, PA 19102

### Pittsburgh Office

914 Fifth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219

W: [www.InnocenceProjectPA.org](http://www.InnocenceProjectPA.org)  
P: 215-204-4255  
E: [InnocenceProjectPA@temple.edu](mailto:InnocenceProjectPA@temple.edu)

## Pro Bono Services

### Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership

436 Seventh Avenue, 400 Koppers Building  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
P: 412-402-6677

### American Bar Association

W: [www.findlegalhelp.org](http://www.findlegalhelp.org)  
*Allows site users to search for a list of resources available in their state, including pro bono or inexpensive lawyers, legal information, and self-help materials.*

## The Action Committee for Women in Prison

The Action Committee for Women in Prison advocates for the humane and compassionate treatment of all incarcerated women everywhere, and works for the release of all women who are unjustly imprisoned, including individual women prisoners who pose no danger to society. They also strive to reduce the over reliance on incarceration by shifting the focus from punishment to rehabilitation and restorative justice. May not respond to individual letters.

769 Northwestern Drive  
Claremont, CA 91711  
W: <https://acwip.wordpress.com/>  
P: 626-710-7543  
E: [Info@acwip.net](mailto:Info@acwip.net)

# LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

PPS is partnering with FAMM, ACLU of PA, Americans for Prosperity, the Commonwealth Foundation and others to support positive reforms. In January, representatives from all five of these organizations spent a day at the State Capitol sharing their priorities with lawmakers and expressing their bipartisan support for criminal justice reform. The following are new legislative criminal justice initiatives introduced since August. For information on other currently pending criminal justice reform legislation, see previous issue. [Note: SJC = Senate Judiciary Committee, HJC = House Judiciary Committee.]

## SENATE BILLS

**SB 500 (Act 114)** passed and was signed into law by Governor Wolf on 12/18/19. Act 114 establishes the County Adult Probation and Parole Advisory Committee within the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. The Committee is tasked with funding and overseeing improvements to county probation. The bill also provides a funding mechanism to support the Justice Reinvestment Fund and county adult probation and parole departments.

*Prime Sponsors: Sen. Baker (R) and Sen. Bartolotta (R). Signed into law by Gov. Wolf on 12/18/19. PPS and FAMM support this bill.*

**SB 501 (Act 115)** passed and was signed into law by Gov. Wolf on 12/18/19. Act 115 authorizes the PA Sentencing Commission to make risk-related adjustments to the sentencing guidelines, as well as to include cost and recidivism risk-related information. The bill also makes various reforms to probation, parole, and the state drug treatment program. FAMM supported this bill as it passed out of the Senate. However, we opposed the bill after mandatory minimums were added in the House Judiciary Committee and included in the final version of the bill.

Mandatory minimum sentences were added to SB 501 for offenses against people under the age of 16:

Aggravated assault [18 PA.C.S. § 2702(A)(1) AND (4)] - not less than two years.

Rape [18 PA.C.S. § 3121(A)(1), (2), (3), (4) AND (5)] - not less than ten years.

Involuntary deviate sexual intercourse [18 PA.C.S. § 3123] - not less than ten years.

Aggravated indecent assault [18 PA.C.S. § 3125(A)(1) through (6)] - not less than five years.

Mandatory minimum sentences were also added to SB 501 for offenses against people under the age of 13:

Third degree murder [18 PA.C.S. § 2502(C)] - not less than 15 years

Aggravated assault [18 PA.C.S. § 2702(A)(1)] - not less than five years.

Rape [18 PA.C.S. § 3121(C) AND (D)] - not less than ten years.

Aggravated indecent assault (18 PA.C.S. § 3125(A)(7)) - not less than five years.

Aggravated indecent assault of a child (18 PA.C.S. § 3125(B)) - not less than ten years.

These mandatory minimum sentences are to be applied as enhancements to the underlying offense.

*Prime Sponsors: Sen. Killian (R) and Sen. Baker (R). Signed into law by Gov. Wolf on 12/18/19.*

## HOUSE BILLS

**HB 726** would require five-year mandatory minimum sentences for those who possess a firearm or a replica of a firearm while committing a “crime of violence” under Section 9714(g), and would require that these sentences run consecutively (back-to-back) with any other sentence the court imposes.

*Prime Sponsor: Rep. Tony DeLuca (D). Introduced and referred to HJC on 3/6/20. Voted out of HJC on September 24, 2019. Passed the house by a narrow 102-91 margin on 1/13/20. Referred to SJC on 1/23/20. PPS and FAMM oppose this bill.*

**HB 2262** would amend the PA Constitution to return the Board of Pardons vote requirement to a simple 3-2 majority for life-or-death-sentenced commutation petitioners.

*Prime Sponsors: Rep. Joanna McClinton (D) and Rep. Stephen Kinsey (D). PPS and FAMM support this bill.*

**HB 440** passed unanimously out of the house on December 18, 2019. HB 440 would require that charges for which a person has been pardoned or fully acquitted be expunged from the person’s criminal record.

*Prime Sponsors: Rep. Joanna McClinton (D) and Rep. Tedd Nesbit (D). Successfully passed the House, and is currently in the Senate Judiciary Committee. PPS and FAMM support this bill.*

# TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

## THE PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY



### WHERE WE VISIT

We have buses to all PA state prisons except Camp Hill, Chester, Phoenix, and Quehanna Boot Camp.

### WHO CAN TRAVEL

Anyone can travel as long as he or she is on the inmate's official visitor list, including infants and children. Please check with whomever you are visiting prior to purchasing a ticket to ensure that you are on his or her list. You will not be refunded if you are unable to visit because you are not an approved visitor. If you require a handicap accessible bus from PPS, please be sure to request one at least five days before the bus departs by calling the Prison Society office.

### HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased over the phone, in person at our office or online at [www.prisonsociety.org/transportation](http://www.prisonsociety.org/transportation). Cash, debit, and credit cards are accepted. There is a \$2 surcharge per ticket to use a credit card. If you would like to mail in your payment, please note that we only accept money order payments via post mail. Do not send cash in the mail.

### SEND PAYMENTS TO:

Attn: Family Transportation  
Pennsylvania Prison Society  
230 South Broad Street, Suite 605  
Philadelphia, PA, 19102



*Please make money orders payable to: PA Prison Society at the address listed above.*

*When sending payments through the mail, please include your full name, the prison you are visiting, and your phone number. We may need to contact you.*

*A physical copy of your ticket must be presented to the driver. Screenshots will not be accepted.*

*For more information, see bus schedule on page 17 or contact PPS with the information above.*

## FAMILIES OUTSIDE



### ABOUT FAMILIES OUTSIDE

The Families Outside program provides low-cost transportation for families to visit their incarcerated loved ones at state correctional facilities. Children and older adults are welcome. Children must be accompanied on the visit by a parent, other caregiver, or caseworker. Ticket prices are affordable because of a contract with the PA Department of Corrections.

### WHERE THEY VISIT

The program provides transportation to the following institutions: Albion, Cambridge Springs, Greene, Fayette, Houtzdale, Laurel Highlands, Somerset, Forest, Mercer, Rockview, Benner, Phoenix, Frackville, Mahanoy, Muncy, Coal Township, Smithfield, Huntingdon, Camp Hill, Dallas, and Retreat.

### ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Anyone with an incarcerated loved one is eligible to participate. In order to utilize the program, a first time individual must complete a free orientation session.

### HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

For information on how to purchase tickets, please contact Families Outside by phone or email with the information listed below.

### CONTACT

Families Outside  
221 Penn Avenue  
Wilkinsburg, PA 15221  
Phone: (412) 458-6456  
Website: [wfspa.org/service/families-outside](http://wfspa.org/service/families-outside)



*For more information, see the bus schedule on page 18 or contact Families Outside with the information above.*

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## PRISON SOCIETY 2019/2020 BUS SCHEDULE (PHILADELPHIA)

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be posted on our social media pages and the website ASAP.

### BENNER/ROCKVIEW

**Bimonthly, 2nd Thursday**

**4:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$40**

Oct 10, 2019	April 9, 2020
Dec 12, 2019	June 11, 2020
Feb 13, 2020	Aug 13, 2020

### FOREST

**Monthly, 2nd Monday**

**2:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$50**

Oct 14, 2019	April 13, 2020
Nov 11, 2019	May 11, 2020
Dec 9, 2019	June 8, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	July 13, 2020
Feb 10, 2020	Aug 10, 2020
Mar 9, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

### DALLAS/RETREAT

**Bimonthly, 4th Monday**

**6:00 am - 7:30 pm, \$35**

Oct 28, 2019	April 27, 2020
Dec 16, 2019	June 22, 2020
Feb 24, 2020	Aug 24, 2020

### PINE GROVE

**Bimonthly, 3rd Friday**

**3:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$50**

Oct 18, 2019	April 17, 2020
Dec 20, 2019	June 19, 2020
Feb 21, 2020	Aug 21, 2020

### GREENE

**Monthly, 1st Friday**

**2:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$50**

Oct 4, 2019	April 3, 2020
Nov 1, 2019	May 1, 2020
Dec 6, 2019	June 5, 2020
Jan 10, 2020*	July 10, 2020
Feb 7, 2020	Aug 7, 2020
Mar 6, 2020	Sept 4, 2020

### FAYETTE

**Monthly, 3rd Friday**

**2:00 am - 9:00 pm, \$50**

Oct 18, 2019	April 17, 2020
Nov 15, 2019	May 15, 2020
Dec 20, 2019	June 19, 2020
Jan 17, 2020	July 17, 2020
Feb 21, 2020	Aug 21, 2020
Mar 20, 2020	Sept 18, 2020

### LAUREL HIGHLANDS/ SOMERSET

**Monthly, 1st Monday**

**4:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$40**

Oct 7, 2019	April 6, 2020
Nov 4, 2019	May 4, 2020
Dec 2, 2019	June 1, 2020
Jan 6, 2020	July 6, 2020
Feb 3, 2020	Aug 3, 2020
Mar 2, 2020	Sept 14, 2020*

### CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS/MERCER

**Bimonthly, 3rd Monday**

**1:00 am - 12:30 am, \$50**

Oct 21, 2019	April 20, 2020
Dec 16, 2019	June 15, 2020
Feb 17, 2020	Aug 17, 2020

### FRACKVILLE/ MAHANAY

**Bimonthly, 2nd Monday**

**6:00 am - 7:30 pm, \$35**

Nov 11, 2019	May 11, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	July 13, 2020
Mar 9, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

### HUNTINGDON/ SMITHFIELD

**Bimonthly, 3rd Monday**

**5:00 am - 9:00 pm, \$40**

Nov 18, 2019	May 18, 2020
Jan 27, 2020*	July 20, 2020
Mar 16, 2020	Sept 21, 2020

### MUNCY

**Bimonthly, 2nd Monday**

**5:00 am - 7:30 pm, \$35**

**PLEASE NOTE: All tickets must be purchased 5 days in advance.**

Nov 11, 2019	May 11, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	July 13, 2020
Mar 9, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

### COAL TOWNSHIP

**Bimonthly, 2nd Friday**

**5:30 am - 7:30 pm, \$35**

Nov 8, 2019	May 8, 2020
Jan 10, 2020	July 10, 2020
Mar 13, 2020	Sept 11, 2020

### HOUTZDALE

**Bimonthly, 2nd Thursday**

**4:00 am - 9:30 pm, \$40**

Oct 10, 2019	April 9, 2020
Dec 12, 2019	June 11, 2020
Feb 13, 2020	Aug 13, 2020

### WAYMART

**Bimonthly, 4th, Saturday**

**6:00 am - 8:00 pm, \$35**

Nov 23, 2019	May 23, 2020
Jan 25, 2020	July 25, 2020
Mar 28, 2020	Sept 26, 2020

### ALBION

**Monthly, 2nd Friday**

**1:00 am - 12:30 am, \$50**

Oct 11, 2019	April 10, 2020
Nov 8, 2019	May 8, 2020
Dec 13, 2019	June 12, 2020
Jan 10, 2020	July 10, 2020
Feb 14, 2020	Aug 14, 2020
Mar 13, 2020	Sept 18, 2020

\* These are exceptions to the usual schedule, due to holidays.

\*\* Ticket prices are per person.

**FAMILIES OUTSIDE 2019/2020 BUS SCHEDULE (PITTSBURGH)****This schedule is subject to change.****CAMP HILL****Bimonthly, Wednesday****6:00 am - 7:30 pm**

Sept 25, 2019	May 20, 2020
Nov 20, 2019	July 22, 2020
Jan 22, 2020	Sept 23, 2020
Mar 25, 2020	

**BENNER/ROCKVIEW****Monthly, Thursday****6:45 am - 6:00 pm**

Aug 15, 2019	Mar 19, 2020
Sept 19, 2019	April 16, 2020
Oct 17, 2019	May 21, 2020
Nov 21, 2019	June 18, 2020
Dec 19, 2019	July 16, 2020
Jan 16, 2020	Aug 13, 2020
Feb 13, 2020	Sept 17, 2020

**LAUREL HIGHLANDS/  
SOMERSET****Monthly, Sunday****8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

Aug 25, 2019	Mar 22, 2020
Sept 29, 2019	April 26, 2020
Oct 27, 2019	May 31, 2020
Nov 17, 2019	June 28, 2020
Dec 22, 2019	July 26, 2020
Jan 26, 2020	Aug 30, 2020
Feb 23, 2020	Sept 27, 2020

**FOREST****Monthly, Sunday****7:00 am - 5:45 pm**

Aug 11, 2019	Mar 15, 2020
Sept 15, 2019	April 12, 2020
Oct 13, 2019	May 17, 2020
Nov 10, 2019	June 14, 2020
Dec 15, 2019	July 12, 2020
Jan 12, 2020	Aug 9, 2020
Feb 9, 2020	Sept 13, 2020

**MERCER****Monthly, Monday****7:30 am - 6:30 pm**

Aug 12, 2019	Mar 9, 2020
Sept 16, 2019	April 13, 2020
Oct 14, 2019	May 11, 2020
Nov 11, 2019	June 8, 2020
Dec 9, 2019	July 13, 2020
Jan 13, 2020	Aug 10, 2020
Feb 10, 2020	Sept 14, 2020

**FAYETTE/GREENE****Monthly, Saturday****8:00 am - 5:00 pm**

Aug 10, 2019	Mar 7, 2020
Sept 14, 2019	April 11, 2020
Oct 12, 2019	May 9, 2020
Nov 9, 2019	June 13, 2020
Dec 14, 2019	July 11, 2020
Jan 11, 2020	Aug 8, 2020
Feb 8, 2020	Sept 12, 2020

**PHOENIX****Bimonthly, Sunday****3:30 am - 9:30 pm**

Sept 22, 2019	May 17, 2020
Nov 17, 2019	July 19, 2020
Jan 12, 2020	Sept 13, 2020
Mar 15, 2020	

**FRACKVILLE/  
MAHANAY****Bimonthly, Sunday****4:00 am - 9:30 pm**

Sept 22, 2019	May 17, 2020
Nov 17, 2019	July 19, 2020
Jan 12, 2020	Sept 13, 2020
Mar 15, 2020	

**ALBION/CAMBRIDGE  
SPRINGS****Monthly, Saturday****6:45 am - 5:30 pm****PLEASE NOTE:**<sup>1</sup>Albion only accepts visitors for inmates whose ID number ends in 6, 7, 8, 9, or 0.<sup>2</sup>Albion only accepts visitors for inmates whose ID number ends in 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5.

Aug 10, 2019 <sup>1</sup>	Mar 21, 2020 <sup>2</sup>
Sept 21, 2019 <sup>2</sup>	April 18, 2020 <sup>1</sup>
Oct 12, 2019 <sup>1</sup>	May 16, 2020 <sup>2</sup>
Nov 16, 2019 <sup>2</sup>	June 13, 2020 <sup>1</sup>
Dec 21, 2019 <sup>1</sup>	July 11, 2020 <sup>2</sup>
Jan, 11, 2020 <sup>2</sup>	Aug 8, 2020 <sup>2</sup>
Feb 8, 2020 <sup>1</sup>	Sept 19, 2020 <sup>1</sup>

**COAL/MUNCY****Bimonthly, Saturday****4:00 a. m. - 9:00 pm**

Aug 17, 2019	April 18, 2020
Oct 19, 2019	June 20, 2020
Dec 21, 2019	Aug 15, 2020
Feb 15, 2020	

**HOUTZDALE****Monthly, Saturday****7:00 am - 6:30 pm**

Aug 24, 2019	Mar 21, 2020
Sept 28, 2019	April 25, 2020
Oct 26, 2019	May 30, 2020
Nov 16, 2019	June 27, 2020
Dec 21, 2019	July 25, 2020
Jan 25, 2020	Aug 15, 2020
Feb 22, 2020	Sept 26, 2020

**DALLAS/  
RETREAT****Bimonthly, Friday****3:30 am - 9:00 pm**

Aug 23, 2019	April 24, 2020
Oct 25, 2019	June 26, 2020
Dec 20, 2019	Aug 21, 2020
Feb 21, 2020	

**HUNTINGDON/  
SMITHFIELD****Bimonthly, Sunday****6:45 am - 6:30 pm**

Aug 11, 2019	April 12, 2020
Oct 13, 2019	June 14, 2020
Dec 15, 2019	Aug 9, 2020
Feb 9, 2020	

# READER SURVEY

*We welcome comments and suggestions from all readers. Please complete this form and mail it to PPS.*

**Is there any information you would like to see in Graterfriends that is not already included?**

**Anything you would like to share with us regarding the COVID-19 outbreak?**

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# Jan/Feb/Mar 2020

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