

PRISON COVID

★ COVID-19 Information for Prisoners and Staff ★

★ Volume 1, Number 6 ★

★ Fall 2020 ★

YOU'VE BEEN EXPOSED

Greetings and solidarity to all who read this. I thought I would take the time to put this pen to paper and share some insight on the way Oregon DOC has been dealing with the COVID crisis, specifically here at EOCI...A few months back this prison had a wave of illness sweep through this population, that left a couple hundred people on the verge of pneumonia...We had yet to hear about COVID-19 and were being told that we'd simply contracted a strain of influenza that was not covered in our annual vaccine. "Nothing to worry about", we were told. Well I can tell you first hand that what I caught felt like death. It began with the chills, then fatigue and vertigo. Next was the slight sore-throat followed by the bone and joint aches...The pain that developed in my body made me feel as though I'd been hit by a truck. I lost my appetite and didn't eat a bite for five days. I slept in

and out of consciousness like some weird dream mixed with a shitty reality. When I was finally able to see a nurse, I had already lost 10 pounds. I was told that I was "definitely sick" then given a mask along with some pills and told to stay in my cell as much as possible, as to not infect the others (except my cellie apparently). I was told that when I regained my appetite I was to attend chow with the "mask line" which meant that everyone with a mask was to go to chow last, though they did not designate any places for us to sit or bother to keep us separated from everyone else, therefore making our self-isolation pointless.

For the next few days, I had daily check-ups with a nurse, who at one point asked me if I had been hallucinating given the fact that I had a fever for close to a week.... At its worst my lungs began to fill with fluid and I was having a hard time breathing. I dealt with all that for approximately two weeks, then I spent close to a month recovering. I had gone from 175 pounds to 150 and I continued to have respiratory issues for some time.

Our prison dealt with this for at least two months before they started making half-assed changes to protect against COVID-19.

These changes consisted of suspending our visits along with all the programs, education and religious services. They took away our weights and cancelled sports activities but they continue to keep us confined in close quarters and have done nothing to reduce the level of stress and irritation that all this has caused. Yet, while they suspended everything that kept us sane DOC continued to operate both the Garment Factory and the Call Center where they have outside work contracts. What do

these outside companies care if their workers are sick? They don't provide healthcare and they know there are plenty of other prisoners that would gladly take their place because everyone could use that \$200 paycheck...What really gets me though is the fact that the changes that were made were ones that supposedly kept us from gathering amongst each other as though the prisoners are somehow responsible for bringing these viruses in and spreading them. And while they've passed out masks so that we had the option to wear them or not except at certain work places where it becomes mandatory for us they still haven't made these guards or other staff wear them though they are the only ones with contact to the outside world.

What sickens me the most is the level of pride these cops get from refusing to wear the masks. They are quick to quote Trump rhetoric and talk about how COVID-19 is "fake news". They say "you can't believe everything you see on T.V.", that nobody is getting sick out there and that it is all a "left-wing" conspiracy to cause upheaval during hero's election campaign... On the other hand it saddens me to see the level of apathy that exists among Oregon prisoners.

There was rumor circulating about inmates here posing for a photo in the chow hall that showed people wearing masks but also sitting one to a table to prove the prison was complying with COVID-19 regulations. Nothing about that photo is normal procedure and I did not want to believe that any prisoners would willingly participate in that hoax...but on June 3rd 2020 I saw for myself not only how uncaring folks have become out here but also how nonchalantly Oregon DOC puts out deception to the outside community.

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One the morning of June 3rd the prison re-opened its inmate barbershop. We were told that we needed to bring our masks if we wanted a haircut. Upon arriving at the gym where the barbershop is located they asked us to spread out on the bleachers, which was strange since they have us crowded together any other time. But as soon as one of the “inmate secretaries” for the gym came out with a camera it became obvious that this was a planned photo opp. This inmate asked if he could take our picture and I immediately declined and told him and the officers that I wasn’t going to participate in their charade. I stepped aside as did a couple others and the picture was taken. Afterward they proceeded to tell us that the picture was going to be sent to the capitol to show that the prison is acting in accordance with the state’s covid regulations.

Once I heard what I already had suspected I told these guys that I did not condone what they were doing and suggested they take some pictures of the officers not wearing any masks...I believe that this is willful negligence on behalf of EOCI Staff and I encourage anyone who may have litigation pending around this issue request the security tapes be subpoenaed to show the truth about DOC lies and deception.

This prison has many elderly folk who are at a real risk should we get hit with another virus and the prison still hasn’t taken the proper precautions to avoid another outbreak...

I would like to say one last thing before I close...to all the folks doing time behind these walls, bear in mind that no matter the color of your skin, what hood you are from, what gender/sexual orientation you identify with or even what status you carry, we are all in this pit together.

You don’t have to like each other or strive toward becoming social butterflies but there is a time and place for everything and right now, when we are facing a pandemic that has already taken over 100,000 lives in only a few months, and when we are dealing with a fascist government that no longer even pretends to care about the people, in these times we need to be working together toward either bringing about real changes inside these prisons (reformist) or toward dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex from inside out (revolutionary)... Times are a changin’ folks. Let’s see if we can keep up. ♥

In Solidarity

Chris Gonzalez

STATEMENT ON GOP SENATE COVID PACKAGE

“HEALS Act” Fails to Address the Plight of Incarcerated People, Countering Efforts to Eradicate the Virus

In response to Senate Republicans unveiling their one trillion dollar stimulus package, the “HEALS Act” - which Majority Leader Mitch McConnell (R-KY) has said will likely represent lawmakers’ last major legislative response to the pandemic - Maritza Perez, Director of the Office of National Affairs for the Drug Policy Alliance (DPA), released the following statement:

“The Senate’s latest proposal is woefully inadequate and fails to address the plight of incarcerated people, which as the nation has become all too familiar with, have borne the brunt of this crisis without the same protections the rest of us enjoy - such as basic sanitation and the ability to social distance. And as we warned, the result has been devastating and growing more dire by the second with more than 100,000 incarcerated people having been infected and at least 802 incarcerated individuals and correctional officers dead.

Not only is Senate Republicans’ negligence grotesquely inhumane to those behind bars, but it also puts the lives of others in our communities at risk, as staff spread the virus beyond these facilities’ walls and infections overwhelm hospitals. It is inconceivable how legislators imagine defeating COVID-19 in the United States without providing relief to one of the most at-risk populations.

As Congressional leaders head into negotiations, House leadership must stand firm in supporting the decarceration provisions in the HEROES Act—which includes measures to release certain incarcerated individuals from federal custody into community supervision and provides incentives to states and localities to reduce their jail and prison populations and provides critical reentry funding.”

To help incarcerated people and other vulnerable populations, we urge Congressional Leadership to incorporate recommendations from the Justice Roundtable COVID-19 priorities and DPA’s COVID-19 policy priorities in the next COVID-19 stimulus measure. ♥

EOCI HUNGER STRIKE

WHAT: Hunger Strike at EOCI

**WHERE: Eastern Oregon
Correctional Institute, 2500**

Westgate Pendleton, OR, 97801

WHEN: Monday August 17, 2020

On Monday August 17, 2020, a multi-racial group of prisoners housed in solitary confinement at EOCI are going on hunger strike!

Their Demands

1. Immediate Transfer of Steven Corbett SID#12786124 to a hospital that can provide him with the lifesaving medical care he needs.

Steven Corbett has Crohn’s Disease and has recently been having seizures causing him to fall & hurt himself and for his intestines are coming out of his body. Other men in solitary have been watching him get hurt and believe he is dying, while the nurses assert that “he is faking it”. One of the men in solitary, who knows he is not faking it, responded, “If he’s so messed up that he would fake seizures than he still shouldn’t be here because he needs mental health treatment”. The men that are watching him die refuse to stand by and do nothing so they initiated this hunger strike.

2. Allow the purchase of basic hygiene and cleaning supplies upon arrival to solitary.

When people are transferred to solitary all of their items are stored separate from them. They are given one bar of soap and baking soda. They have to use baking soda to brush their teeth and have to make that one bar of soap last a month until they are then able to order limited hygiene supplies like toothpaste, more soap, deodorant and cleaning supplies. This is dehumanizing and given the outbreak of COVID19 at EOCI is life threatening.

3. Immediate release of everyone who has been placed in solitary confinement for a non-violent rule violation and a permanent end to the use of solitary confinement for all non-violent rule violations.

Solitary confinement is torture. The emotional and psychological effects of solitary confinement are detrimental to our loved ones. These effects are well documented. Torture is never acceptable but unfortunately due to the volatile power/discretion

the DOC is given at EOCI many people have been placed in solitary confinement for non-violent rules violations. While some of the men on this strike will not benefit from this demand, they believe it is important to address the harm being caused to their peers.

4. One call a week for all people in solitary confinement, and an immediate end to the “green card” system which allows correctional officers to arbitrarily deny communication to loved ones on the outside.

Finally, these men are demanding the ability to communicate once a week with their loved ones on the outside. As it stands when a person is sent to solitary confinement at EOCI they are unable to communicate with their loved ones for 30 days. After 30 days they can “earn” 10-minute phone calls once a week but CO’s arbitrarily deny them phone calls with no process for appeal. Based on all the abuse and neglect that occurs in prisons, it is imperative that our loved ones inside can call us and tell us what is going on.

When we, as family members, call the prison we are given incomplete information and we are lied to. The only way we really know what is going on inside is to be able to talk to our loved ones on the phone. When our loved ones write us letters detailing abuse those letters are frequently “lost”. Another man died in DOC’S custody at SRCI on August 12, 2020 due to COVID19. Did his cellmates have to watch as he slowly died unable to call for help. With the crisis of COVID in the prisons we need to be able to hear from our loved ones.

I expect the prison to lie and say, “nobody is on hunger strike”. The first day they will be “bending the truth”, as they don’t consider it a “hunger strike” until our loved ones have refused three meals in a row. After that they still may lie and say nobody is on hunger strike but I know my loved one and he will be on strike until these demands are met.

I will know the strike is over when he is able to call again.

They are putting their bodies, their health and safety on the line and they are calling us on the outside to support them by calling in to the Superintendent, the Director and the Governor. ♥

Take Action Now!

Call and support these demands!
Don’t let DOC abuse and kill our loved ones!

EOCI Superintendent
Ron Miles
(541) 276-0700
Executive Assist. to Director of DOC
Jessica Freeburn
(503) 945-0978
DOC Director Colette Peters
(503) 945 0927
colette.s.peters@doc.state.or.us
Governor Kate brown
(503) 378 4582, press 3 & leave a message



LATE BREAKING VIRUS NEWS

4th Oregon prison inmate dies of COVID-19

The Oregon Department of Corrections said Wednesday a fourth inmate in their custody has died from COVID-19 during the pandemic. The inmate was serving their sentence at the Eastern Oregon Correctional Institution in Pendleton, the DOC said.

<https://www.opb.org/article/2020/08/27/4th-oregon-prison-inmate-dies-of-covid-19/>

With 811 coronavirus cases in Oregon prisons, Gov. Brown considers new round of inmate commutations

With 811 coronavirus cases among Oregon prison staff and inmates, Gov. Kate Brown is considering another round of commutations to protect medically vulnerable inmates and those nearing their release dates. In a letter to corrections Director Colette Peter, Brown requested a list of inmates who are medically vulnerable or within two months of their release.

<https://www.statesmanjournal.com/story/news/crime/2020/08/26/covid-cases-prisons-oregon-gov-brown-inmate-release/3444432001/>

2 more Florida inmates die from COVID-19 complications

Two more Florida inmates have died from complications of COVID-19, bringing the coronavirus death toll among prisoners to 88, according to a report released

by state corrections officials. The latest report showed that an additional 44 inmates and 30 corrections workers tested positive for the highly contagious coronavirus, which causes the respiratory illness known as COVID-19, since Tuesday. As of mid-Wednesday, 15,445 inmates and 2,496 corrections workers have been diagnosed with COVID-19

<https://www.news4jax.com/news/florida/2020/08/26/2-more-florida-inmates-die-from-covid-19-complications/>

And the beat goes on....

As of August 28th, 2020, more than 108,000 prisoners have tested positive for COVID-19, an increase of five percent over last week’s tally. At least 928 prisoners and 72 prison employees across the country have died of coronavirus-related causes. Over 24,000 employees have tested positive.

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/?ref=nav>

Today's top 9 prison virus headlines

August 28th. Here are some of today's headlines from news stories about the Coronavirus in U.S. prisons:

1. The growing litigation battle over COVID-19 in the nation’s prisons
2. More than a quarter of inmates at Green Bay Prison test positive for COVID-19
3. Officials: Pa. inmates illegally received coronavirus unemployment benefits
4. More than half of inmates at Muskegon prison positive for Covid
5. 688 new Kentucky COVID-19 cases and 10 deaths
6. Vermont inmates in Mississippi testing positive for Covid-19 climbs to 84%
7. Feds and state authorities charge 33, including inmates, with COVID benefit fraud
8. Mock-graveyard at capitol created to demonstrate inmate deaths from COVID-19
9. Prisoners continued being sent to laundry job after co-workers tested positive for COVID-19

If you have outside people, links to any of the above stories can be found on the Prison Covid website.



[What follows is only a small fraction of the available Corona Virus prison-related news from the bourgeois media. We want stories from the inside too. You can send news to our mailing address, or by way of J-Pay to contact@prisoncovid.com. Note, we cannot help you with your legal problems so don't ask.]

The numbers keep climbing

As of August 14, 2020: Another 10 percent increase in COVID-19 cases behind bars as total tally nears 100,000. Coronavirus infections continue to spread at a rapid pace in federal and state prisons across the country. There are over 18,000 cases in Texas, nearly 13,000 in Florida, and roughly the same number in federal prisons. At least 847 prisoners have died of the virus, an increase of five percent over last week. More than 21,000 prison staff also have tested positive but many states don't test.

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/>

The Coronavirus pipeline

In what critics call a "detention-to-deportation" pipeline, federal immigration officials have deported hundreds of Guatemalans infected with COVID-19 back to their native country. U.S. deportations of migrants have exported COVID-19 to Guatemala and prompted fear, chaos, and a collapse of already fragile health services.

<https://www.texasobserver.org/the-coronavirus-pipeline/>

'Con Air' is spreading COVID-19 all over the federal prison system

U.S. Marshals are transporting prisoners without testing them for coronavirus. Federal prisoners are being shipped around the U.S. by plane, van, and bus with no way to know if they are carrying the virus, and exposing other prisoners, staff, and possibly the public along the way.

<https://www.themarshallproject.org/2020/08/13/con-air-is-spreading-covid-19-all-over-the-federal-prison-system>

Inmate COVID-19 cases at Baker Correctional jump from 20 to 561 in a week

561 inmates and 25 staff members at the facility in Sanderson had tested positive for the coronavirus, with 294 pending inmate tests, according to the Florida Department of Corrections. In comparison, a week ago, 20 inmates and 17 staff members had tested positive.

<https://www.news4jax.com/news/local/2020/08/13/inmate-covid-19-cases-at-baker-correctional-jump-from-20-to-561-in-a-week/>

Families of prisoners plead for DOC to release inmates after COVID-19 outbreaks

Families and loved ones of inmates in Washington state prisons are demanding that Gov. Jay Inslee and Department of Corrections Secretary Stephen Sinclair release more inmates from DOC facilities to prevent them from contracting COVID-19. Many family members of prisoners say inmates tell them prison guards do not wear masks while on duty and they fear they will bring COVID-19 into the prisons, resulting in prisoners getting sick and dying.

<https://www.theolympian.com/news/politics-government/article244745402.html>

Virginia rape suspect allegedly killed his accuser after being released from jail due to coronavirus

A man charged with rape is now accused of murdering his accuser after he was released from prison over coronavirus concerns, The Washington Post reports.

<https://thehill.com/homenews/news/511108-virginia-rape-suspect-allegedly-killed-his-accuser-after-released-from-jail-due>

Nearly 11,000 Florida inmates hit by COVID-19

With a major increase in infections reported Friday, nearly 11,000 state prison inmates have tested positive for COVID-19 and 63 have died, according to the Florida Department of Corrections.

<https://www.orlandoweekly.com/Blogs/archives/2020/08/08/nearly-11000-florida-inmates-hit-by-covid-19>

People released from Missouri prisons during pandemic face added challenges

For people released from prison or jail, returning to their communities is a challenge in the best of times. Often, employers don't want to hire them. A criminal record

makes it hard to find housing. Many people have lost touch with family members. The coronavirus pandemic has magnified these challenges. Now, jobs are more scarce, and people are isolated.

<https://www.kirksvilledailyexpress.com/news/20200808/people-released-from-missouri-prisons-during-pandemic-face-added-challenges>

Bureau of Prisons spends nearly \$3 million on UV sanitizing machines

The Bureau of Prisons has spent almost \$3 million dollars on ultraviolet sanitizing devices to combat COVID-19 at 122 federal prisons. The contract, which was obtained by ABC News says that GM Hill Engineering is providing the BOP with ultraviolet sanitizing gates -- even though the World Health Organization says UV light technologies should not be used on human beings and there is no definitive scientific research on the use of UV light to protect against COVID-19.

<https://abcnews.go.com/Politics/bureau-prisons-spends-million-uv-sanitizing-gates-contracts/story?id=72234824>

2 dead at Marion federal prison during COVID-19 surge despite restrictive conditions

A second coronavirus-related death following a weekend surge of positive COVID-19 cases at the Marion federal prison has inmates with medical conditions worried about their health in a prison that is not allowing them to distance, family members and inmates told the Tribune.

<https://www.chicagotribune.com/coronavirus/ct-marion-federal-prison-covid-deaths-numbers-20200807-swoge2zwx-feu3nitbndvdpdjh4-story.html>

Inside the federal prison where three out of every four inmates have tested positive for coronavirus

As coronavirus has spread rapidly through prisons and jails around the country in recent months, the Texas lockup where Giannetta spent his last days has emerged as the hardest-hit federal prison in the United States. More than 1,300 of the roughly 1,750 prisoners at FCI Seagoville prison and camp have tested positive for the virus, according to data from the federal Bureau of Prisons -- a stunning three out of every four inmates. So far, three inmates at the prison, including Giannetta, have died from Covid-19.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/08/us/federal-prison-coronavirus-outbreak-invs/>

COVID cases climb in Ohio prisons, worrying families and those employed to serve prisoners

Conditions in Ohio's pandemic-stricken prisons are helping ensure the spread of COVID-19 rather than stop it, putting entire communities at greater risk, according to data crunchers, inmate advocates and prison workers throughout the state. Ohio's prisons have a 9% rate of infection, compared with less than 1% for the rest of the population, according to data released by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and analyzed by the UCLA COVID-19 Behind Bars.

<https://www.cincinnati.com/story/news/2020/08/06/covid-cases-climb-worrying-families-ohios-prison-inmates/5547310002/>

U.S. Supreme Court blocks mandate requiring better coronavirus protections for Orange County inmates

The U.S. Supreme Court on Wednesday, Aug. 5, blocked a lower court order that the Orange County jail system practice social distancing, distribute hand sanitizer and keep the facilities clean to avoid the spread of COVID-19. Justices voted 5-4 to stay the earlier order issued by U.S. District Judge Jesus G. Bernal against Orange County Sheriff Don Barnes. The sheriff asked for an emergency appeal after Bernal ruled in May that Barnes had been inconsistent in following federal guidelines to protect jail inmates from the spread of coronavirus.

<https://www.oeregister.com/2020/08/05/u-s-supreme-court-blocks-judges-order-that-oc-jail-must-take-better-care-of-inmates-exposed-to-coronavirus/>

Governor signs executive order requiring COVID-19 testing in prisons and jails

Governor Whitmer signed a revised executive order on jails and prisons Saturday that requires adoption of testing protocols for Michigan Department of Corrections facilities, and requires that jails adopt comparable protocols in order to transfer prisons to state facilities, according to the Michigan Executive Office of the Governor. "Testing is at the very center of any strategy to keep prison and jail populations safe," said Governor Whitmer.

<https://www.uppermichiganssource.com/2020/08/15/governor-whitmer-signs->

[executive-order-requiring-covid-19-testing-in-prisons-and-jails/](#)

Baltimore City jail sees its largest jump in coronavirus cases among staff and inmates in four months

The Baltimore City Central Booking and Intake Center has confirmed 55 new cases of coronavirus — the largest weekly increase at the facility since April, according to numbers from the Maryland Department of Health. The figures include 30 new cases among corrections staff and 15 among inmates at Central Booking in the past week, according to data released by the state.

<https://www.baltimoresun.com/coronavirus/bs-md-coronavirus-cases-increase-baltimore-facilities-20200814-luqkbtzgzg5be7vw3qdqvkf4e-story.html>

DeSantis' response to COVID-19 spread in state prisons still disappointing

In the state prisons, nearly 14,271 inmates and 2,185 staffers have reportedly tested positive for COVID-19. That's up from "1,600 cases in 13 'hot spot' facilities" just six weeks ago. To date, 75 inmates have died from the virus, including at least 14 who were eligible for parole, as of August 13th.

<https://www.floridatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/08/14/desantis-response-covid-19-spread-state-prisons-still-disappointing-our-view/5584221002/>

COVID-19 Cases Erupt At Oahu Correctional Facility — 70 More Inmates, 7 guards Test Positive

Of 110 jail inmates who were tested for COVID-19 earlier this week at the Oahu Community Correctional Center, 70 turned out to have the disease in exactly the kind of outbreak inside correctional facilities that advocates have feared. A statement released Thursday morning by the state Department of Public Safety revealed that seven additional adult correctional officers also tested positive, bringing the totals to 86 inmates and 14 staff members who have tested positive at the state's jail so far.

[+https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/08/covid-19-cases-erupt-at-occc-70-more-inmates-7-acos-test-positive/](https://www.civilbeat.org/2020/08/covid-19-cases-erupt-at-occc-70-more-inmates-7-acos-test-positive/)

Hawaii Supreme Court orders Oahu Correctional Facility inmate release due to COVID-19

Some Hawaii prisoners and jail inmates will be released early due to COVID-19 risks, starting Wednesday. The Hawaii Su-

preme Court released its legal order Sunday evening, addressing inmates at Oahu Community Correctional Facility. It cited the unrest at OCCC in its order. Anyone let out early will have to check back in with the court next February.

<https://www.kitv.com/story/42501682/supreme-court-orders-prisonjail-inmate-release-due-to-covid19>

Faulty thermometers, untrained screeners may have helped COVID-19 infiltrate prisons

Vague testing guidelines, faulty thermometers and inadequate staff training may have contributed to the COVID-19 outbreak in California prisons that has killed at least 54 inmates and sickened more than 9,500 others, the state's Office of Inspector General reported.

<https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2020-08-17/coronavirus-staff-guards-screening-testing-inspector-general>

As the coronavirus rages in prisons, ethical issues of crime and punishment now more compelling

New Jersey's correctional facilities have been hit particularly hard. With 29 deaths for every 100,000 inmates, they have the highest COVID-19-related death rate in the nation.

<https://generocity.org/philly/2020/08/17/as-the-coronavirus-rages-in-prisons-ethical-issues-of-crime-and-punishment-become-more-compelling/>

As Covid-19 cases in prisons climb, data on race remain largely obscured

By mid-August, jails, prisons, and other detention centers accounted for all of the top 10 Covid-19 clusters in the country. This week, the number of Covid-19 deaths among inmates and correctional officers passed 1,000, with more than 160,000 infected. But as Covid-19 cases among incarcerated people continue to climb, the racial makeup of those cases has remained obscured, despite the fact that the groups most affected by Covid-19 — people of color, and in particular, Black people — have also been disproportionately incarcerated.

<https://www.statnews.com/2020/08/20/covid19-prisons-race-ethnicity-data/>

COVID-19 testing approach in Mississippi prisons 'inadequate and

Virus News..... Continued on page 10

LETTERS

[Editors Note: Letters are edited for length, spelling, and some punctuation errors. You can send your letters, articles, or opinions to Prison Covid, PO Box 48064, Burien, WA 98148, or reach us through J-Pay at contact@prisoncovid.com.]

Want's Documents

Great newsletter. I'm dismayed though about the demands for the Walla Walla hunger strike. had I known porn was one of the demands I would not have participated. For years I have argued a strike for Pell grants, removal of the PRA, and abolition of the 13th amendment, return of minimum wage jobs. I only added the food when it appeared from the first Walla Walla hunger strike that it was something a majority of the population would support, hopping they would expand their energies to the other demands. I would note that I did not eat for a week. it is not the first time and it is in my record I have gone 30 days or more. DOC policy 620.100(I)(A) mandates monitoring, encouraging to eat and regular medical checkups. None of that happened.

I'm very appreciative of the "To Members Of The Judiciary And The Legal Community" information. That will help me with my current project. Where do I write to obtain a copy of the letter? Also, where do I write to get a copy of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights?

It is getting a lot harder to find information these days. Newspapers are so expensive very few prisoners get them anymore. they are still available in most prison libraries, but they have made it very difficult to even get there and they have all been closed due to Covid. here when its open you have to sign up (not a problem) then you have to skip lunch because that is when they call it, you have to go through four check points, three metal detectors, two pat searches and a host of guards with bad attitudes for a very small library at an hour every other week. You used to be able to get copies of information through the library (which is run and paid by the state library) but in the last few years they have been telling them we need to go through public records to get information.

A shout out to Bryan Mac Donald. Retaliation, isolation, for asserting your rights and not giving in takes a lot of mental fortitude. Though I am now at the belief litiga-

tion is not the means to the end, it is still pushing forward. Personally, for pre-trial I believe all should represent themselves and demand their speedy trial. Public defense has turned into (or maybe it always was) shut up and take the deal. The few who want to represent detainees are so overwhelmed by case numbers they could not provide quality representation. As for county jail or even prison Covid response/ issues I firmly believe collective refusal to work is the most powerful means of change we possess.

The latest report from here, still no law clerk, and on 7/14/20 at about 7:00 pm a guy in Rainier B Mod hit the cell call button and notified staff he felt feverish, had a headache, and breathing problems. he was told to sign up for sick call, which he did. as of 7/18/20 no one has responded. protocol was immediate isolation for 14 days.

As for the proposed budget cuts, DOC should get rid of community custody. They paid for a study years ago that found community custody had no effect on public safety or reduced recidivism. They should also give every non-life LWOP 1/3 off EVERYONE and cut lose all that are 12 months to ERD. For those they need to provide some adequate transition.

Name withheld, WSP

[Editor's Note: We are too small and too busy to provide the documents you seek. They can be obtained either from the state Supreme Court or the United Nations, the address of which is in your law library.]

Need high-powered lawyers

If you don't get some high-powered attorneys to advocate on our side for us, then guess we are all fucked, right? Your newsletter does me no justice, right? It's been like this for months. People with money can buy their way out. Me, I have no money. I guess I'm condemned, right? So be it. This Corona virus does damage. I guess what ever happens, happens! Stop sending me your newsletter for it reminds me of the painful journey that led me here.

Name withheld, Monroe

[Ed's Response: Well, here you go, another prisoner looking for someone else, this time some outside lawyers, to solve what is a collective problem. If you are looking outside for help, rather than inside, you're going to continue playing the role of helpless victim, rather than the more positive role of active agent for constructive change. There are no individual solutions.]

Facemask Issues

I am a prisoner at the Washington State Penitentiary. I was a Law Library Clerk here at the South Complex Building until June 23, 2020 when I had to quit because staff does not follow face covering mandates issued by management.

I explained what happen to my supervisor when checking in that a officer came up to me and stood real close to me with no mask on and began talking to me. I believe this was done on purpose because of an event that happen regarding officers not wearing masks and, in some cases, not wearing masks while taking temperatures on June 20, 2020. Where I had asked the officers if it was optional mask day today or something and the officer said you can go back to your unit. So when I explained to my supervisor that I was going for surgery soon and to protect my health I needed to quit until staff start wearing their mask that are required for the safety of the incarcerated I was infracted for not programing which is a major infraction .

I wrote the grievance coordinator after each event with a kite back saying they sent my letters to administration. Capt. Windows of the institution put out a memo to all staff, to wear their masks twice, once on the week of June 21, 2020 after my first letter and again on the week of June 28 , 2020 after an additional letter was sent to report staff not giving a shit about their directives .

After getting an infraction for my failure to report to work to protect myself with several advance letters as to what is occurring to the Superintendent Holbrook of which I asked for his intervention into this injustice and the infraction.! am put through the ringer of hearings, loss of work/job rather than fixing the problem and investigating why the officers are not wearing masks around inmates and in buildings . They just don' t respond, and he ignored my letter.

On July 20, 2020 I was taken out of the facility to a post operation exam of the surgery/health condition in question, and my advanced age with lung problems an officer does my temperature check with no mask on just before I leave the facility and go into a hospital setting.

Report this,

Joel Zellmer #343003

LETTERS

R-Units Terrible

I am an inmate at the Shelton R-Units and got a hold of your newsletter, **Prison Covid**, and I like it very much. You guys write the news of what's going on, the truth, and that's what it's all about. Staff tells us lies every day about the outside and that's not right. The R-Units treat us like shit. It's unsafe in here. There's no safe haven. And yes, the guards do bring the virus in here. There are three people crammed into a cell designed for one. Please send me anything you have on the Covid problem and on early release.

Name Withheld, Shelton

A Note From PC

First, please understand that I am accountable for my actions. Both for demoting in custody, as well as the crimes I committed which brought me to prison. I am so sorry for the crimes I did against my victims, and I can never express that enough. I was wrong and hurt people, which is on my mind each day.

I reside in what's called "safe harbor". Essentially, D Unit is separated from the general population. This is because men who don't participate in "prison politics" or have "dropped out" from their Security Threat Groups, have a need to be separated from the "main line" inmates. I refer to this place as protective custody. I myself made a choice to dis-affiliate from my STG, and now have a target on me. Hence, I've given myself a chance to focus on my loved ones, and better myself to the best of my ability.

If you're not opposed, I'd like to share some of my experiences during the pandemic.

We have a gym located within this unit. This is currently the area we're allowed to go mon-fri for recreation. Handball is the only sport allowed to be played, but men are allowed to work out around the court.

Connected to it, is a room with cable weights. Most systems are separated by feet. Fresh air comes in through grated windows lining the back wall. Social distancing would be easily implemented, by caution tape on the machines that are to close to one another.

It boggles my brain, wondering why we're only allowed in the area without fresh air? Strange, but it's just how it is I guess.

I wanted to get in the loop with any info you can help me get about Covid and the prison system. also I have some input and have made a lot of observations dealing with the inner working of prison and have

made complaints and even went thru the grievance process regarding overcrowding issues that put capacity above what its legally supposed to be.

Name and location withheld

We're OK So Far

In regards to covid...I am here now at TRU. It seems that in this particular institution we have some how avoided in mass break outs. I believe that it will happen though because some of the protocols that are supposed to be in place routinely are broken. For example, we once were allowed to go from pod to pod to tutor in what is called the conference rooms. Each tier has them. Since covid that has been banned, no cross tier visits at all. But when we get new support staff they allow men to go to other pods to use the conference rooms, the phones ect... A lot of people half ass mask wearing and in this environment it is near impossible to socially distance. With that said, we all seem to be healthy right now. I know our C.U.S. is diligent in keeping people on point and they hand out soap and new masks on a regular. We seem to be OK for now.

Name withheld, TRU

Thirteenth Amendment Warrior

It is an honour to have my voice amplified along with my fellow Thirteenth Amendment citizens under the unjust authority of the WADOC. Though I have not had to deal with any medical conditions myself, I see many others who are dealing with really bad stuff, such as untreated broken ankles, eye surgeries denied, which result in blindness in at least three prisoners I know in here. I am doing my best sir, to fight against these people. I have written a book called "Unlawfully Restrained", which is my experience of being housed on Death Row at the Penitentiary in 2018-19. My book was rejected by the criminals running the mail room here, and has since been banned state wide. There are many copies sitting rejected in the mail room here of prisoners who ordered the book.

I do my best to help my fellow Thirteenth Amendment citizens fight against the corruption and atrocious medical treatment you speak of. You can meet me anytime, and I have recently written up a proposal/petition to have our hot breakfast put back into place, as the Correctional Industries are denying us what has already been paid by taxpayers to provide.

Name withheld, WSP

SOME SHORT SHOTS

The Compassionate Captors

"She didn't deserve to die there." Saferia Johnson, 36, a mother suffering from asthma, asked the warden at her low-security Florida prison for a "compassionate release" to avoid COVID-19. He denied the request. Not long later Johnson died at a hospital, infected with the virus.

Voting Rights for Ex-Cons

Republican Gov. Kim Reynolds signed an executive order that restores voting rights to perhaps as many as 60,000 people with felony convictions living in the state. Iowa had been the last state to categorically deny such rights to the formerly incarcerated.

Prison Voters?

A survey of 8,266 prisoners by Slate and The Marshall Project found that convicts' political views cannot be easily pigeonholed. Of White respondents, 36% identified as Republicans, 30% Independent, and 18% Democrats. Only 11% of Black respondents identified as Republicans, while 29% identified as Independent and 45% as Democrats.

For fear of reprisals

Aug. 18, 7:30 am WSP: Unit pill line. The lady C/O no mask, eating a banana, standing about 3 feet away checking each persons mouth for checking pills and talking directly to them while they have their mouths wide open. Nobody said anything for fear of reprisal.

Community members expose harmful, racist COVID-19 response in Washington prisons.

Families of incarcerated people, advocates, and community organizers held a press conference Aug. 19th to shine a light on the intersecting crises of racism and COVID-19 in Washington State prisons. The press conference, organized by Seattle COVID-19 Mutual Aid and Columbia Legal Services, denounced the Department of Corrections' (DOC) handling of the pandemic, saying its response has been inadequate, negligent, and harmful.

<https://southseattleemerald.com/2020/08/21/community-members-expose-harmful-racist-covid-19-response-in-washington-prisons/>

WE LOST OUT LIBERTY, NOT OUR HUMANITY!

How COVID-19-Virus Has Negatively Impacted Prisoners at the Monroe Corrections Complex

By Sister "J.Lee" Sutton.

Washington State's Prisoners and Washington Department of Corrections (DOC) employees are faced with the challenge of an invisible virus, which does not discriminate and does not care what type of costumes you wear. COVID-19-Virus will pay you a visit if you're not careful. If you ignore medical professional advice, you may be the next victim of this virus. Social distancing (as directed) is a form, and method used to combat this virus. However, how do you "socially distance" inside an overcrowded Prison?

History Of Covid-19 Virus

In December of 2019, an outbreak of the respiratory disease associated with a novel coronavirus (new virus) was reported in the city of Wuhan in the Hubei province of the People's Republic of China. Unfortunately, this virus has spread worldwide, some say due to a failure by officials to make immediate reports to the World Health Organization (W.H.O). Some say the W.H.O. knew about it early-on and had failed to pass the information forward to the World so that the rest of the World could protect itself. No matter who is to blame, WE all must face this crisis together.

On March 11, 2020, the W.H.O. declared COVID-19 a PANDEMIC. By this time, it had already spread well-beyond the borders of China due to international travel.

The first reported death of COVID-19, in this country, was dated February 2020. According to experts, the first reported positive test and eventual death were registered in Washington State. Our own backyard. Thank you, leaders.

Since then, the number of positive cases and relative deaths have been on the rise. This is expected to continue for some time until we can flatten the curve, as they say. (See, U.S. Dept. of Health & Human Services Report # 03, dated on: April 2020. This author has a copy for you if requested through Ed Mead).

Disturbance At WSRU - Minimum Camp

On April 08, 2020, at the "camp-facility" outside the main Reformatory walls, in Monroe, numerous "incarcerated individu-

als" began a disturbance/protest over "living conditions" that they felt were unsafe/unhealthy. It was reported by the families of these Prisoners that they were not being told the truth concerning the extent of the outbreak within the confines of the building they were forced to reside in.

Because of the contributing factor of "overcrowding" within DOC, and the fact that the obsolete buildings are not designed for social distancing, human beings incarcerated (no matter what for) were forced to interact in close quarters with each other, which caused an "incubator" in the Monroe's prison.

Due to this obvious and not disputed fact, numerous human rights organization and attorneys stepped up to offer their help/support. One such law firm is Columbia Legal Services (CLS). (Phone: 206-464-1122 & 206-382-3399). Attorney Nick B. Straley is the lead attorney in the following civil action: *Shyanne Colvin, et al., vs. Jay Inslee, et al.*, Wash. State Supreme Court, Case NO. 98317-8. For context, this litigation began as an "Emergency motion" or "mandamus action" seeking the immediate release of some "vulnerable prisoners" at WSRU and at the Washington Corrections Center for female prisoners. (Purdy).

This case generated much media attention, especially when local T.V.W. channel began broadcasting the live oral arguments via teleconference. Numerous human beings at WSRU had the opportunity to watch these proceedings in the high Court. Especially, your well-known "jailhouse lawyers," commonly known as "writ-writers." This broadcast happened on April 23, 2020. After the high Court heard arguments from both sides, the Court declined to grant the

relief requested.

This Order from the high Court was decided the same day as the T.V.W. broadcast/oral argument hearing. The Court's Order found that, "on the record presented, Petitioners (the prisoners) have not shown that the respondent's (State's) actions constitute deliberate indifference to the COVID-19 risk at DOC facilities" and that "Petitioners have not shown that Respondents are CURRENTLY failing to perform a mandatory, nondiscriminatory duty in addressing the COVID-19 risk at [DOC] facilities." However, this Order did not terminate review. See letter from Deputy Clerk, dated: May 08, 2020.

This case is still active, and CLS is working hard at finding a way to have the Court Order more releases from prison, or to move that the Governor and Secretary of DOC do more to release humans from the confines of prison.

With all the publicity surrounding this topic and due to the immense amount of litigation going around this county concerning the COVID-19 Virus, this author wanted to speak to a person directly impacted by what DOC has either done or not done in response to this virus outbreak within the confines of WSRU. This person is a well-known "jailhouse lawyer" & this person's father is on DOC's Family Counsel, along with this person being connected and in touch with numerous outside organization and prison abolishment groups. This person is J. T.

Interview With Julian Tarver (J.T.)

J. Lee: Greetings J. T.. Thank you for taking your time to be interviewed today. As you know, this COVID-19-Virus is a danger to us all. From your perspective, how has DOC handled it?

J.T.: Not very well. DOC was late in its prevention methods and DOC officials brought the virus to work with them. This, unfortunately, cause d some of "US" to get sick. Some lost their lives over this.

J. Lee: Your speaking about DOC employee lives or the lives of incarcerated individuals?

J.T.: Both. DOC employees brought it inside the Prison. This exposed "US" to the virus and some of "US" got sick, and some of "US" lost our lives. Also, it has



been said that a DOC employee also lost his life while working for DOC. I believe this DOC employee contracted the virus in society, brought it to work with him, didn't know he had it, until her was tested. It turned out to be positive. After exposing "US" he went into the hospital and died shortly thereafter.

J. Lee: So, DOC places "US" all at risk to contract it?

J. T.: Absolutely. This cannot be disputed.

J. Lee: With this unfortunate exposure, how many of "US" at Monroe Prison have been subjected to pain & suffering?

J.T.: the number is substantial. I work alongside the Corrections Ombuds office and I speak to investigators almost every day. They have reports detailing what has happened. If you would like copies of these reports, just phone: E.V. Webb or Joanna Carns @ 360-664-4749. There is also a weekly conference call line, at 360-407-3831. Passcode=821205. Just give them a call, and they can assist you.

J. Lee: How have you been coping with all of this drama?

J.T.: I have a large support team. My father is on fire to make change happen. He meets with the DOC Family Council every week over the phone. I have close friends, such as yourself, that keep me grounded and focused on positive energy. You help me stay away from negative influences. Along with many outside organizations and human-rights advocates, like "Beyond These Walls," I have been able to stay positive while living around a bunch of miserable people.

J. Lee: I suppose then, you are an example for others to follow, as far as how to cope in this negative environment?

J.T.: Yes, you could say that. Most importantly, I have a desire to help those less fortunate than me.

J. Lee: Last question for you. If you were to sum-up what DOC's response to this crisis has been, and place it on a scale of 01-10, 01 (of course being terrible), what would your number on this scale be?

J.T.: My number would be below zero.

J. Lee: Wow! That's significant. Why so low?

J.T.: It's a combination of things. For one, DOC was late rolling-out its prevention measures, then DOC failed to begin testing its employees early on, before they were allowed into the Prison. This contributed to the employees coming into the facility and exposing all Prisoners to the virus. Then,

it's been reported that multiple Prisoners, and DOC employees were getting sick, and some of them actually lost their lives.

The problems within DOC command structure seems to be getting worse, not better. For example, information is not being passed down properly to line staff. Also, there seems to be a "lack of communication" between duty stations. Staff morale is low, due to command staff making their subordinate line staff do "multiple overtime shifts" per week. DOC employees are very tired, stressed to the max, & some of them do not want to come to work.

J. Lee: Wow! So, in your opinion, based on all the facts (that you have been made aware of, DOC is in crisis mode, and it cannot seem to manage its Prisons during this COVID-19 pandemic?

J.T.: Yes! Absolutely! DOC is in real trouble. DOC is forced to also cut its budget, and furlough workers, due to the crisis. There does not seem to be a way out of this mess, unless drastic measures are taken to protect us all.

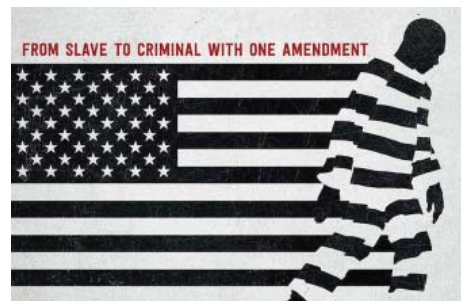
In closing: It is surprising to me, that DOC is allowed to continue to operate, when it seems clear that DOC is in crisis mode, and is failing on every level, and in every department. DOC does not seem to understand that this virus will continue to kill Prisoners, unless DOC Secretary Stephen Sinclair and Governor Jay Inslee do more to Order the immediate release of vulnerable State Prisoners.

Maybe, this State should shut-down all its Prisons, in order to save lives. Oh. right. That seems to be wishful thinking. It is noticeably clear to this author that prisoners' lives do not matter to Governor Inslee or to Secretary Sinclair. Until Prisoner Lives Matter, we will never see significant changes made this "correction system."

Until prisoner lives matter, the pain and misery we all feel will continue to be unabated. We must ALL WORK TOGETHER to make lasting and real change happen, from Inside and out. ♥

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ED'S COMMENTS

In addition to the world's highest incarceration rate, the U.S. also has the highest rate of police killings at 968 a year. The next highest nation is less than 50.

Which brings us to Black Lives Matter (BLM). When representatives of the ruling class are renaming streets after your movement, then you know that movement is doomed to be absorbed into a dead end. See BLM for what it is, a small step in the right direction but destined, like Occupy before it, to fail due to its pervasive liberalism.

What about the backwards whites who chant, "all lives matter"? Imagine, if you will, that you are running down the street to help put out a house that is on fire, and as you're running a woman standing outside her home asks where you're going. You say, "to help put out the house that's on fire." She says, "doesn't my house matter?" Well yes, of course, but it's not on fire! Instead use the term Prison Lives Matter. That is the name of a growing movement led by prisoners. Those who yell all lives matter are usually supporting the death penalty—all lives really don't matter to them.

What about the Democrats, are they any better? Joe Biden boasted in a speech on the Senate floor, "The truth is, every major crime bill since 1976 that's come out of this Congress, every minor crime bill, has had the name of the Democratic senator from the State of Delaware: Joe Biden." That of course includes the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, which directly led to the mass incarceration we see today and the devastation of black communities. Both political parties represent the interests of the rich, although in slightly different ways. Socialism, on the other hand, will represent the interests of the people, not the rich. Why, because there won't be any rich. The means of production, the means of producing wealth, will be in the hands of the working class.

In last month's issue we reported 10 infections at the Washington State Penitentiary, as of August 23rd, according to the DOC's Covid website, there are a 119 confirmed cases at that facility, almost a 1,200 percent increase in a month. The figures we gave last month for Oregon remain essentially unchanged, probably because they don't update their Covid website very often. For example, OSP still has 36 staff and 143 prisoner positives, the exact same numbers as last month.

Ed Mead

dangerous,' lawyer says

Far more inmates inside Mississippi prisons have COVID-19 than are being detected, new reports suggest. "Absent aggressive screening for symptomatic testing or a widespread testing regime through which all staff and prisoners are tested, we must assume the numbers are grossly understated," said J. Cliff Johnson, director of the University of Mississippi School of Law.

<https://www.clarionledger.com/story/news/2020/08/19/covid-19-coronavirus-testing-mississippi-prisons-inadequate/3400170001/>

Florida inmate, prison worker COVID-19 cases soar

Florida's prison system recorded more than 1,500 new COVID-19 cases and two inmate deaths over the weekend of August 6 and 9th, according to data released on August 10th by the state Department of Corrections. The number of prisoners who had tested positive for COVID-19 climbed to 12,438, an increase of 1,463 cases since August 7th. The two inmate deaths brought the total number of inmates who have died

of COVID-19 to 65. Also, an additional 98 corrections workers tested positive for the deadly respiratory illness over that weekend. In total, 2,044 corrections workers had been diagnosed with COVID-19 as of mid-Monday.

<https://www.news4jax.com/news/florida/2020/08/10/florida-inmate-prison-worker-covid-19-cases-soar/>

Florida prison corrections officer and his wife die of coronavirus — one hour apart

Wayne Rogers and his wife, 61, both contracted COVID-19 earlier last month, and were sent home to quarantine after a July 12 trip to the emergency room. Their health declined and they were both admitted to the hospital July 18. The couple got sicker over the course of two weeks, according to their daughter, Tiffany Davis. They died within an hour of each other on July 30.

<https://www.tampabay.com/news/health/2020/08/03/florida-prison-corrections-officer-and-his-wife-die-of-coronavirus-one-hour-apart/>

Ninth staff member dies of Covid-19 at California Department of Corrections

A ninth staff member has died from Covid-19, California's Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation said Sunday. The employee worked at San Quentin State Prison and was the first staff member at California's oldest prison to die of the disease, according to the department.

Covid-19 has claimed the lives of 24 inmates there, according to the department. More than 1,000 staff members statewide are confirmed cases, according to the DOC.

<https://www.cnn.com/2020/08/09/us/covid-19-san-quentin-prison-staff-death/index.html>

Union calls for removal of Michigan prisons director over handling of coronavirus

The union representing Michigan prison officers called for the removal of Corrections Department Director Heidi Washington, saying it has lost confidence in her leadership over the handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

<https://www.freep.com/story/news/local/michigan/2020/08/27/michigan-corrections-department-director-heidi-washington/5645203002/>

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FIRST CLASS MAIL

COMMUNICATION IS A HUMAN RIGHT