

Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and National Lifers of America, Inc.

Michigan

Lifers Report

JANUARY 2023

Newsletter

CORRECTIONAL MAIL ROOM EMPLOYEES ARE INTENTIONALLY VIOLATING PRISONERS' FEDERAL AND STATE CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS TO FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND OF THE PRESS

Willis X. Harris

Article 1, Sec. 5 of the Michigan Constitution of 1963 states: Every person may freely speak, write, express and publish his views on all subjects, being responsible for the abuse of such right, and no law shall be enacted to restrain or abridge the liberty of speech or of the press. (Emphasis Added)

Michigan prisoners who subscribe to the Michigan Lifers Report and CURE: Life-Long Newsletters are having selected issued confiscated and rejected by mail-room employees with no proof nor iota of evidence to justify the rejections. They rely on Policy Directive (PD) 05.03.118 "Prisoner Mail". The Notice of Mail Rejection states that the sender has 10 business days to send a letter to the warden of his/her opposition to the rejection. (No letter to the warden has ever been answered.)

Our November, 2022 issue of the Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter was rejected at the Baraga Correctional Facility by A. Pittsley, GOA-Mail Room, stating "Prisoners are prohibited from receiving mail that may pose a threat to security, good order, or discipline of the facility..."

"Includes writings that were written by prisoners currently housed in Michigan Department of Corrections facilities. It presents a unique risk to our agency. Because the prisoner authors are currently incarcerated in MDOC facilities, influence/pressure could be ... (Cont. on p. 3)

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FROM THE NLA NATIONAL CHAIRMAN'S DESK...

MICHIGAN LIFERS REPORT NEWSLETTER

Michigan Lifers Association, Inc.
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Detroit, MI 48201-1214

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Send articles to:

Michigan Lifers Association, Inc.
Attention: Willis X. Harris
4417 2nd Ave., Ste. 211
Detroit, MI 48201-1214
(Limit articles to 600 words)

Dear Comrades,

It is my deepest hopes that this missive finds you in great health and striving to maintain a peaceful state of mind in spite of the increment circumstances that you currently exist in.

After deep introspection and consideration I am extremely honored to inform you that I am appointing Jamie Meade as the new Vice Chairman of the NLA National Board. Jamie has shown unwavering dedication to the NLA and its mission since his tenure and has worked tirelessly on so many different projects with great success. He's accomplished every assignment that has ever been given to him, including keeping the NLA together during a time when our s ructure was threatened.

In addition, I am honored to bring/appoint two more dedicated had workers to the National Board as "Administrators", Jawan X Hayes and Kevin A. Pittman-Bey. Both of these men have demonstrated sincere devotion over the years to criminal justice reform and still continue to work daily on behalf of prisoners rights and criminal justice issues. All three of these appointments are effective immediately upon receipt of this communique. If, however, there are any concerns, comments, or oppositions to these appointments get with me.

I am encouraging you to select individuals to be placed on the National Board who have been dedicated to the NLA and its mission. Selecting such individuals is not just the responsibility of the Chairman or the Vice Chairman, whenever there is someone who you would like to be placed on the National Board, send the Vice Chairman his/her name/number/location and a brief statement why you selected and are endorsing them.

As I averred within a previous communique it's time for us to take this beautiful and mighty organization to the next level and in order to do such each and everyone of you must give 100 percent of yourself to our objectives and agenda. This organization was founded over 40 years ago by individuals who were true freedom fighters for justice and who worked had to change laws, policies, as well as the minds of politicians and the public. We have been blessed to take on the torch of freedom fighting for justice at a time when the scales of justice have weighed in our favor. Wherefore, let us not be distracted by our lower desires nor the noises of the prison environment that are so pervasively present. We have been invested with a very critical responsibility to help the masses who can't help themselves.

... (Cont. on p. 3)

(Correctional Mail Room, from p. 1) ... exerted to have the newsletter distributed by or for other prisoners as a means of communication or influence peddling..."

We have also received ridiculous similar notices of rejection from Gus Harrison, Oaks, and Kinross Correction Facilities unsupported with any evidence or facts to support their rejections. They rely on the fallacy of "may cause", "may disrupt", and "may pose a threat".

We have over 100 Michigan prisoner subscribers to the Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter and over 65 subscribers to CURE: Life-Long Newsletter, all paid subscribers for both newsletters. We send our newsletters to all MDOC facilities, including correctional employees, director of corrections, parole board, and Governor Gretchen Whitmer. There has been no problems in any facility resulting from our newsletters.

Of the 28 MDOC facilities in operation, only the few above named facilities foresee possible disruptions based solely on their unfounded beliefs and attribute their beliefs negatively upon the prison population.

Whether prisoners are currently incarcerated or formerly incarcerated, they have both State and Federal Constitutional Rights, not privileges, to freedom of the press and to express their opinions/views on their prison experiences and are held personally responsible for any abuses. No abuse has ever been documented.

When we write to prison wardens where the rejections occur, we never receive answers nor can we verify that the wardens receive mail sent to them.

The Michigan Lifers Report and CURE: Life-Long Newsletters are mailed to both civilians and prisoners nationwide in federal and state prisons including Hawaii and Alaska. No one besides the MDOC has imaginary problems to deny prisoners of their constitutional rights to freedom of the press and freedom of speech, whether confined, on parole, or formerly incarcerated.

It would be wise for our corrections director, Heidi Washington, to review and revise Policy Directive 05.03.118 "Prisoner Mail".

Our newsletters are to educate both civilians, corrections employees, and prisoners. It also is a therapeutic outlet for prisoners with pinned-up emotions to express themselves regarding their experiences of incarceration.

A legal challenge in federal court may not be necessary. We all hope not. <>

(From The NLA Chairman's Desk, from p. 2) ...

I am personally working on the State Board of Directors (Civilian), both agendas, and a NLA website. All of you will be updated on all progress. Look forward to "new" changes in the protocol of the National Board and expect personal assignments from my office to yours. I have been receiving a lot of helpful insight and issues from a number of you in which I deeply appreciate. I apologize for any slow responses or any ineptness on my part. I will work harder to be more prompt.

I would like to thank Sybil Padgett for all the work she has been doing at the women's facility for all these years. You are greatly appreciated. The women have been front line soldiers for a long time now and for that we pay homage to you all.

I hear you Sybil, and I am asking everyone else to hear you as well. You are an important link in the NLA chain and a powerful voice. I am working on sending you all the things that you requested. Please be patient.

Please be advised that Nadia El-Anani will be working with the NLA on behalf of TARP. She has already been working diligently to help us in areas that are lacking. We thank The Universe/God for her help in our affairs.

I leave you all in a supreme state of peace and prosperity.

Your Brother and Comrade,

Eddie "Malijah" Gee
NLA National Chairman

ON CRUELTY: A RETIRED PRISON WARDEN'S REFLECTIONS

Joseph Abramajtys, Ph.D.

Our ability to engage and disengage our moral standards...helps explain how people can be barbarically cruel in one moment and compassionate in the next.

-Albert Bandura, The New York Times, February 7, 2006

Institutional settings are breeding grounds for cruelty. Be it prisons, nursing homes, mental hospitals, schools, or even day-care centers, whenever one person is placed under the control of another, physical and mental abuse is always a real possibility. The greater the level of control and dependence, the larger the threat of abuse. The more vulnerable the group, the more likely it will be a target of cruelty.

There are several overlapping explanations why people persist in being cruel, and often feel much gratification. Some think that an ideology that justifies cruelty (such as the belief that males must dominate females, or blacks are innately inferior to whites) is necessary for one group to mistreat another. Others think it is because of dehumanization; one group fails to see the humanity in another group.

A recent theory says it is precisely because we do see the humanity in others different from us that we abuse them; we see them as a threat to our way of life, our morality, our power. In a recent published article entitled "The Souls of White Folk," William Spivey stated:

When discussing the souls of white folks, I don't mean to imply they don't have souls, just that they are selective about what matters to them; cruelty to animals will have them up in arms; cruelty to people that don't look like them, not so much. They seem to be for multiple guns in every household unless the residents are black. When armed white men went to the Michigan Capitol, little was said, and nothing was done. When armed Black men once legally went to the California Capitol, laws were passed with the full support of the NRA, Republicans, and Democrats.

Finally, there is the argument that we get group approval, social acceptance and reinforcement, by treating members of other hated groups badly. A good example is a quote Dan Foster included in his article entitled "What all Mass Shooters Have in Common" concerning the recent massacre at a LGBTQ+ nightclub in Colorado Springs:

"In an interview with C.B.S. News, which has since gone viral, Aaron Brink, the father of the Colorado shooter, reacted to the news of his son's deadly shooting by saying, 'They started telling me about the incident, a shooting... And then I go on to find out it's a gay bar. I got scared, 'Shit, is he gay?' And he's not gay, so I say, phew... I am a conservative Republican.'"

All of these reasons for cruelty are valid and work in a cooperative mix depending on the situation. An example of multi-factor cruelty interaction is a response to a Facebook post that asked, "If you could delete anything in the world what would it be?"

An answer: "The devil and all who serve him!!!!!! Basically all evil!!!!!! And everything that's against Jesus Christ and the Bible."

We all have the capacity to abuse others, or at least countenance such abuse.

People working in controlling institutions have a running start on abuse because they are already in a highly stratified social situation. There is a clear distinction between who is in control and who is being controlled.

Because there are few institutions as controlling as a prison, Warden Biggie Biggins had to occasionally remind himself that part of his job was to be alert to abuse situations so as to prevent them or at least stop them before becoming part of the prison culture. The alternatives were for him to either ... (Cont. on p. 5)

(On Cruelty: A Retired Prison Warden's Reflections, from p. 4) ... tacitly or overtly participate in abuse, both of which are seductive because of the extreme gratification and validation we feel when we abuse others and can shelter behind group anonymity.

Prison workers do see convicts as people: as moral agents who deserve being punished; and as people whose behavior threatens the workers' worldview. Prison workers also operate in a highly stratified social environment where the acknowledgement and support from their peers is not only gratifying, but necessary for survival.

using power to strike cruelly is a natural human response both common and ubiquitous. It can't be tolerated, and must be exposed, and stopped, but thinking cruelty isn't a natural human reaction reinforced by group norms is a mistake. Until this is understood, we will not be able to control the cruelty in ourselves or others.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Joseph Abramajty, Ph.D., is a former warden in the Michigan Department of Corrections. He was also a strong supporter of the Chance For Life Organization.

DOES MICHIGAN HAVE A DEATH PENALTY?

YOU DECIDE

Michael Dinoffria

In 2010, the United States Supreme Court said the following: "Society changes, knowledge accumulates. We learn from our mistakes. Punishments that did not seem cruel and unusual at one time may in the light of reason and experience be found cruel and unusual at a later time. Standards of decency have evolved. They will never stop doing so." See Graham v. Florida, 560 US 46 (2010).

In 2013, the European Court of Human Rights ruled in a U.K. case that life sentences without the possibility of parole (LWOP) violates human rights standards.

In 2014, the Vatican abolished life sentences, with Pope Francis calling them a hidden death sentence. See The Correctional Law Reporter, Feb/Mar, pg. 75.

Michigan in the past three decades has taken a hard stance, saying loud and clear, "Life Means Life", sticking to that position that when a citizen is sentenced to LWOP, they are, for all intents and purposes, being sentenced to a death penalty. With a defunct commutation system in place and a customary review after 15 years and a file review every 5 years thereafter by the parole board, a former citizen will spend decade after decade slowly dying a cruel and unusual, uneventful death. It is very

important to note that the Michigan Constitution of 1963, Article 4 § 46, forbids the death penalty in Michigan.

With approximately 5,100 plus men and women serving life sentences in Michigan, and a majority of whom committed their offenses while under 26 years of age, we are faced with thousands of men and women who will live 20, 30, 40, and 50 plus years within the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). If we were to stop and calculate the growing cost of an aging prison population of this size, the numbers become staggering. The National Institute of Corrections estimates that health care costs for prisoners over 50 is double that of younger prisoners. Costs aside, the decades of being subjected to horrendous environments and conditions begin to multiply with the outdated prison policies and buildings as well. In the words of Derek Gilna, "The forced confinement in small spaces of large numbers of individuals of disparate ages, social backgrounds, physical and mental health, and varying amounts of their sensitivity, and the correctional culture is admittedly long on punishment and short on rehabilitation..." See Prison Legal News, November, 2017.

In the past decade, neurological scientists Dr. ... (Cont. on p. 8)

TODAY'S CULTURE OF GLORIFIED GUN VIOLENCE AND MASS SHOOTINGS

Jerry Metcalf

Another mentally deranged kid marches into a school and mows down nineteen other kids and two teacher with an assault rifle. How the hell do we keep allowing this to happen? How many children must die before Congress tunes the fuck in, sets aside their partisan bullshit, and passes a law that forbids anyone under the age of 26 from purchasing a firearm?

Sandyhook, Parkland, Oxford, I'm sick of waking up and watching the faces of murdered school children scroll across my TV screen. I weep for the lives they'll never live, for their parents who'll never again hug them, or kiss them, or laugh with them as they grow older, graduate school, and eventually have children of their own. I weep for a society which revels in gun violence and refuses to enact change simply because the NRA poisons their thoughts with half-truths and crackpot propaganda.

Back in 1995, when I was 20 years old, I shot and killed a man with a gun I'd legally purchased. And let me tell you, under zero circumstances was I mature enough to own a firearm. I take full responsibility for my actions, and I'm paying the price for those actions as I sit here in my prison cell all these years later writing this article. But I'd also like to stress how I'm no longer that irresponsible 20-year-old kid. I understand the catastrophic devastation my actions caused to not only my victim and his family, but to my family and my community as well. So, with that in mind, I write in the hopes that my words reach the right ears and help enact positive change.

People often say "guns don't kill people, people kill people", and I laugh at the absurdity of this argument. Surely such a catchphrase had to have been conjured up by a man or woman who has never shot another human being with a gun, because, having experienced the act, and having lived with thousands of other men over the years who've also experienced the act, I can tell you with complete honesty and candor that guns do in fact kill

people. Had I not possessed a gun on the night I committed my crime, I'd not have had the impulsive option to shoot my victim to death. Had I been forbidden from purchasing said gun at such a young age (I bought my gun in a person to person sale), I'd not have owned that gun to make such a rash decision.

Please, America, wake up. Kids and young adults don't need firearms. How is it that the Uvalde, Texas shooter was too young to buy a pack of cigarettes or a bottle of beer, yet old enough to stroll into a gun shop or a gun show and purchase an assault rifle, ammunition, and a tactical vest?

The most current science tells us that the juvenile brain doesn't reach maturity until somewhere around age 26, so how about our lawmakers act like the supposedly-mature adults they are and hike the age of gun purchase in the U.S. to 26?

America, please call your House Representatives, your Senators, and President Joe Biden to demand that the legal age for purchasing a firearm be raised to 26. And if they ask you why you feel this way, feel from to tell them a contrite, 47-year-old incarcerated man who murdered someone with a gun when he was a stupid 20-year-old kid convinced you it's the right thing to do.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Jerry Metcalf is a contributing writer for PrisonWriters and The Marshall Project. Find him at [Facebook.com/jerryametcalf.jr](https://www.facebook.com/jerryametcalf.jr).

HOW CAN WE REESTABLISH TRUST IN POLICING WHEN THE POLICE CONTINUE TO COMMIT CRIME AGAINST CIVILIANS?

Jamie Meade

On January 7, 2023, 29-year-old Tyre Nichols was severely beaten by Memphis police officers of the notorious Scorpion Unit (Demetrius Haley, Desmond Mills, Jr., Emmitt Martin III, Justin Smith, and Tadarrius Bean). All five officers would be later fired and charged with second-degree murder. How can we trust the police after this type of ... (Cont. on p. 8)

THE IMPORTANCE OF PRISON PROGRAMMING

A CULTURAL PERSPECTIVE

Dwight Henley, M.B.A.

Research has repeatedly shown prison programming reduces recidivism. Some programs are so effective that they provide a \$2 savings (from the reduction in recidivism) for every \$1 invested in the program. This research focuses on how programs impact individual prisoners and, in turn, corrections' budgets. However, prison programming plays a vital role at both an individual and cultural level.

Prison culture is not a uniform whole. In fact, prison culture can be rather diverse and dissected in many ways--e.g., the legendary book The Felon divides prison culture in five broad categories. In terms of programming, it pays tribute to bifurcate prison culture into the general prison culture, the prisoners that embrace criminal values, and the pro-social culture, or those prisoners who seek to turn their lives around. Each of these cultures influence prisoners through social rewards and social sanctions for adhering to or violating respective cultural norms. It is at this point that the amount of programming--particularly evidenced-based programming--impacts prison culture as much as, if not more than, a program impacts individuals.

An effective program positively impacts the prisoner; he or she leaves a class thinking about wanting to make positive changes. However, the prisoner then gets thrust back into the predominant prison culture. At this point, the culture morphs the person, impacting his or her desire to make responsible decisions and positive changes. The individual's efforts to take positive steps forward, or act responsibly, gets socially challenged, usually via negative social sanctions. These challenges range from social isolation to direct sanctions--chastising, threats, robbery, and even assaults.

The broad influence of the criminal prison culture and its overwhelming dominance over the pro-social culture is why prisons need more programming. That is, more programs means more prisoners in pro-

gramming. And more prisoners involved in programming means a larger pro-social culture, a culture where incarcerated people can get their social needs met and receive positive reinforcement for acting responsible.

The negative influence of prison culture usurps most prisoners. Until corrections begin to take steps to change prison culture, prison will continue to undermine prisoner rehabilitation, criminalize prisoners, and waste human lives. The impact of this reality is felt in society via the crimes committed by repeat offenders. One step corrections can take to start changing prison culture is to expand programming and provide incentives for more prisoners to enroll in programs. Unfortunately, states such as Michigan have taken a step backwards in the COVID-19 pandemic and continue to use COVID as a reason to reduce programming.

ARE PRISONS PLACES OF REFORM OR PUNISHMENT?

Bryan Noonan

Public debate about how prisons should operate, and how prisoners should be treated, have often centered on whether or not prisons should do more for prisoners, or do more to prisoners. In other words, should prisons be more of a place of reform, or a place of punishment?

The goal of reforming prisoners is fairly new in penal philosophy. New as in within the last 250 years. The philosophy of making prisons places of moral and behavior reformation began around 1779, but it really picked up steam when the English Quakers got involved in prison reform.

Quakers believed that religion could reform people, but also that it was the only thing that could produce true alterations in aberrant character. In fact, this belief in the power of faith led them to spearhead reforms in how prisoners were treated in English prisons. They believed that in addition to faith, kindness would produce reforms where misery would not.

Today's progressive prison reformers are less concerned with ... (Cont. on p. 9)

(Does Michigan Have, from p. 5) ... Laurence Steinberg, who is the world's leading scientist in regards to adolescent brain development, has testified in a number of courts around the country, stating that "the human brain is not fully developed until the age of 26." The United States Supreme Court has relied upon his expert opinion in the case of Miller v. Alabama, 567 US 470 (2012), where the court ruled that "it is cruel and unusual to sentence a juvenile to a mandatory life without parole sentence." Even more recently the court in the case of Cruz v. United States, 2018 WL 1541898 (March 29, 2018) has used Dr. Steinberg's opinion to also include individuals who were 18 years of age at the time they committed their offense(s). The Michigan Supreme Court recently ruled in People v. Kemo Knicombi Parks, 2022 Mich. LEXIS 1483, that "Mandatorily subjecting 18-year-old defendants convicted of first-degree murder to a sentence of life imprisonment without the possibility of parole violates the principle of proportionality derived from the Michigan Constitution and thus constitutes unconstitutionally cruel punishment..."

In states where lethal injection is used in death penalty cases, the Eighth Amendment prohibits the use of certain methods of administering those poisonous drugs and which drugs are allowed to be used. The United States Supreme Court has even abolished certain practices of administering death to prisoners.

However, the State of Michigan continues its practices of utilizing a long, painful methodology of killing its prisoners through life in prison. Warehousing prisoners in "pole barns", packed in eight-man stalls like cattle one on top of the other, causes psychological trauma. If we were farm animals, PETA and the FDA would have shut these practices down years ago. The inhumane treatment is breadth taking. The poor ventilation in tight confinement causes such small things as a common cold or the flu to become an epidemic, spreading to the whole population within days. Living in the Michigan prison system during the height of the COVID-19 pandemic was psychological torture, and in some instances, it still is because of the

continuous use of lock downs and lack of programming.

Additionally, you still need to worry about the food borne illnesses that become a norm due to substandard training of kitchen staff, coupled with cost effective food providers. The noise levels teeter on the verge of becoming hazardous and continues day and night. Overhead lighting fixtures illuminate day and night. All of this compounded by the knowledge that one is sentenced to die in this environment is psychological torture severe enough to develop serious mental illness (i.e. PTSD, among a number of other mental illnesses).

If society changes, if knowledge accumulates, if we learn from our mistakes, if punishments that did not seem cruel and unusual at one time may in the light of reason and experience be found cruel and unusual at a later time, if standards of decency have evolved, if they will never stop doing so, when will we as Michiganders stop allowing our former citizens to suffer from cruel and unusual punishment? Let's end LWOP and this living death penalty now! <>

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Michael Dinoffria (Prison ID No. 232848) is serving a LWOP sentence in the MDOC and is housed at the Kinross Correctional Facility, 4533 W. Industrial Park Dr., Kincheloe, MI 49788. Michael is a long-standing member of the National Lifers of America, Inc., and the president of Chapter 1010 at Kinross.

(How Can We Reestablish, from p. 6) ... continuous police misconduct (crime) being committed against civilians?

On January 27, 2023, Memphis Police Department and the Prosecutor's Office released the horrific video (body camera and police street camera) of Tyre being punched, kicked, pepper sprayed, and tased. Pictures of Tyre lying in the hospital bed for three days showed how severely beaten he was by these five police officers.

As a prisoner sitting in prison for life, watching the video made me cringe at the police's conduct. They demonstrated no type of respect for Tyre as a human being. I could only say, "When is this going to stop and police who do this be held to a higher standard?" How many times do we have to see this happen ... (Cont. on p. 9)

(How Can We Reestablish, from p. 8) ... to accept that we have a serious problem in policing in the U.S.? Police misconduct continues to occur leading to death, people in prison, and people on death row. Police are trusted in protecting and being honest. When they break this trust shouldn't they be held to a higher standard of responsibility?

Tyre died after being in the hospital for three days. Reports of reckless driving circulated as the reason they pulled him over initially. This was not substantiated. What was substantiated was the brutality of the police. Tyre was aggressively attacked during the initial stop for no reason. He ran out of fear for his life only to be caught feet from his mother's home by the same police that mistreated him the first time.

Video shows after being severely beaten, police handcuffed Tyre and leaned him against the car. EMS did not arrive to give Tyre medical aide for 28 minutes. Police can be seen walking around talking and looking at Tyre as he clung to life.

It is my opinion the police should have been charged with first degree murder.

We at the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and The National Lifers of America, Inc. want to offer our condolences to the Nichols' family. We are very sorry you had to experience this tragedy. Police violence must end!

(Are Prisons Places Of, from p. 7) ... faith based reformation and more focused on education as a means of change. But their focus is still on what prisons should do for prisoners, not to them. For these reformers, separation from society and loss of freedom is punishment enough for one's crimes.

Scattered throughout Michigan's prison system, one might find a handful of prison administrators who espouse this philosophy of reform, to varying degrees. Yet, the vast majority of administrators and corrections officers demonstrate their belief in the opposing philosophy--prisons ought to emphasize punishment over reform.

Legislative mandates give the appearance of a reform-based philosophy. Prisoners are often mandated to take behavior modifying classes. But in prac-

tice, these classes often have very little affect on prisoners, especially on their underlying character. Most character transformation takes place only when a person is ready to change. Moral transformation cannot be coerced.

Even when prisoners do demonstrate moral transformation, corrections staff, including officers, often view it suspiciously. Instead, many view us an irrevocably corrupt. Programs and classes with reform as their aim usually devolve into meeting legislative objectives on paper. They become sources of funding and job security without much conviction in prisoners' ability or willingness to change.

To be fair, many prisoners confirm this bias that prisoners cannot change. But many more prove otherwise.

I don't believe prisoners should be coerced to reform their character, but I do believe that programs, classes, and policies that encourage and facilitate reform should be offered to prisoners. When a prisoner demonstrates a willingness and readiness to reform, those efforts should receive every bit of encouragement and support.

Prison itself is a punishment, but prisons can also be a place that encourages and supports true change. While we prisoners experience the punishment of prison, we can also learn how to reform our character and behavior.

(Source referenced for history of reforms: The Oxford History of Prison, Norval Morris and David J Rothman eds., 1998.)

ABOUT THE AUTHOR: Bryan Noonan #739416 blogs about prison at HopeOnTheInside.blogspot.com, and he co-authored Insider's Guide to Prison Life. Bryan was awarded a BA from Calvin University in 2021. He is housed at Parnall Correctional Facility, 1780 E. Parnall Rd., Jackson MI 48201.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPY
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

SET GOALS AND LIVE TO YOUR POTENTIAL

NOTICE

TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS & READERS

We are receiving calls from prison officials, civilians, and prisoners wanting to know if the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. is a law firm. We are not!

This question is the result of the article we published, "Michigan LWOP Lifers May Be Serving Illegal Sentences", and the statutes and constitutional section we quoted. Since we published this article, we have had several law offices subscribe to the Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter.

We are also receiving court documents from some of you who are incarcerated. Please do not send us your court documents. Again, we are not a law firm nor a research firm. Our research is limited and only done to support the articles we publish. We provide information designed to inform you to help yourself.

We are pleased to learn that our articles are widely read, not only in Michigan, but across the nation. Our mission is to educate LWOP and other classes of lifers on/about issues they never considered or knew about.

Civilians call almost daily about their sons, daughters, fathers, mothers, brothers, and sisters who are confined for murder 1, murder 2, and virtual life. I know how they feel. My parents, neighbors, and friends called the State Governor, Parole Board, and our State Legislators about me while I was in prison serving a LWOP sentence for murder I never committed and had no knowledge of. I served 23½ years within the Michigan Department of Corrections.

My advice to civilians is to demand changes in our state lifer laws and cap all life sentences at 20 years. No public safety nor law enforcement benefits can be shown anywhere in the U.S. form excessive confinement. All we witness daily on TV and the news media are murders, robberies, rapes, corrupted public officials being caught, prosecuted, convicted, and imprisoned.

Common sense is seldom used and now rehabilitation seems to be a thing of the past and is no emphasized by our correctional and criminal justice experts.

State laws and lawmakers contribute to recidivism which is at an all time high (72%), according to federal officials and BJS.

Civilians, prisoners, and correctional staff need to know that lawmakers are not concerned with crime nor rehabilitation. Their concern is power, personal wealth, and control over our lives. They are not included to change any law that may disrupt their power, wealth, and control over the people in their states.

Some of these politicians will try anything to maintain their power, including challenging the States' and U.S. Constitution.

Many of our judges and prosecutors are corrupted to the core. Our states' and federal parole boards and release systems are still transfixed on what offenders did 20, 30, 40, or 50 years ago and care less than a rat's ass how your family or loved one is today.

Now we all know the truth. Remove from public office those who care less about your concerns. Question these politicians on what they intend to do about your wants and concerns and hold them accountable to what they say prior to casting your votes.

Things will only change when citizens wake up and see that they have been duped and played like a fiddle.

--Willis X. Harris

NOTICE

DAY OF EMPATHY RALLY, MEET AND GREET LEGISLATORS, AND PRESS CONFERENCE

Please join other criminal justice reform groups and advocates for a Day of Empathy at the State Capitol in Lansing, Michigan, on February 23, 2023, starting at 8:30 AM. All are invited. Share your experience with family, friends, and loved ones being incarcerated in Michigan. Meet State Legislators and tell them the change you would like to see in our criminal justice system. Discussion will include Second Look.

SUBSCRIPTION FORM

The expressed purposes of the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and the National Lifers of America, Inc. to publish the "Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter" are to educate and uplift the lifer population, to seek changes in laws that restrict clemency and parole, to educate the general public, and to encourage criminal justice reform, especially in corrections.

PRISONERS

PRISONER'S FULL NAME: _____ Number: _____

NAME OF CORRECTIONAL FACILITY: _____

COMPLETE MAILING ADDRESS: _____

CITY: _____ STATE: _____ Zip Code: _____

CIVILIANS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____ APT. _____

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