

CURE: LIFELONG NEWSLETTER
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IN HERE AND OUT THERE

THE LIVED EXPERIENCE OF WOMEN LIFERS

(Part One)

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Lived Experiences of Women Lifers
Worst of the Worst

An assumption about women in prison, and specifically lifers, is that "these women" are vastly different (worse) than law-abiding women. In some ways this is true: Eighty-four percent of the women in this study reported histories of some type of past abuse--physical, sexual, and/or emotional. Among these women, abuse began as early as two years of age, or later in their lives (52 years), with an average age at when the abuse began being 19 years (SD = 9 years). Like much of the criminal justice system, the sample of women lifers is disproportionately non-white (> 50%). In these ways, women sentenced to life in prison are some of the most

marginalized and vulnerable members of society.

In other ways, lifers do not resemble the larger population of women in prison, and are similar in sociodemographics and criminal history to non-incarcerated women. Within the study sample, lifers were relatively older with ages ranging from 19 to 78 years, and an average age of 41 years. On average, the women entered prison at 30 years of age (range 12 to 70 years), and had served approximately 12 years in their life sentence at the time of the survey (range 1 to 35 years). Whether achieved before prison or while incarcerated, over a quarter of the women (26 percent) had at least some college, and another 11 percent held a college degree. Over 70 percent were mothers, and 35 percent were grandmothers.

While most of the women (93 percent were convicted of murder charges, the vast majority had no prior offense history, especially for violent crime. Neither of these characteristics are typical of most incarcerated women. As noted already, women lifers reported a high prevalence of victimization. Among women with abusive pasts, 62 percent reported that abuse was a factor in their crime/incarceration. As vividly described in this account: ...a man was trying to kill me and told me he was going to. I fought for my life. I wanted to live, not die. I was beat and a gun was held to my head. I think any other person would have done the same thing. Another woman agree: ...we have almost walked the same journey, being abused and/or manipulated, faced with a situation that we either felt trapped in or done so in the name of love.

Other than various degrees of murder, in this state prison system specifically, some women were sentenced to life in prison for being "a party of the crime of (murder, robbery, kidnapping, or rape)." And, because this state has "seven deadly sins" which are eligible for life sentences and a "two strikes" policy, the remaining women were serving life for any of these offenses as well as drug-related felonies.

However, for 95 percent of the women, this life sentence was their first time being incarcerated. As such, many of the women expressed ... (Cont. on p. 3)

RONALD MELLEN, PH.D. RESPONDS TO THE SIX QUESTIONS WE ALSO
 ASKED RICHARD ALTHOUSE, PH.D. ABOUT SEXUAL DEVIANCY
 (Part Two)

Willis X. Harris

Imprisoned sexual offenders, correctional staff, pastors, parents with sexually abused children, sexually assaulted women and men, and the general public want to know the reasons and motivating factors behind paraphilia and sexual deviancy.

In our initial article on the above subject, we had Dr. Richard Althouse, psychologist, give his professional understanding and experience on the following questions:

- 1) When and where did sexual deviancy start?
- 2) What was the purpose?
- 3) Why are children, especially boys, targeted?
- 4) What do we call predators who rape animals, i.e., sheep, cows, pigs, dogs, and horses?
- 5) Are there any cures or treatments to reverse these perversions? If so, what?
- 6) Lately, Catholic priests and Catholic sports doctors and leaders are being arrested and charged with sexually molesting young girls and boys. What roles, if any, does religion play in sexual deviancy and paraphilia?

Below are Dr. Mellen's full response to the above questions.

(Dr. Mellen) Always good to hear from you brother Willis and to read your publication. Sex offenders are not a population that I usually worked with when I was Director of the Arkansas Special Programs Unit (Arkansas Department of Corrections). Those fellows were assigned to a program that dealt strictly with sex offenders. So my database is limited but I'll respond to each of your questions best I can.

First, what comes to my mind with sexual offenders are three possibilities, early childhood experiences, head trauma, and cortical variable associated with

addictions. However, life can be quite creative, so I'm sure there are other possibilities.

The human brain is like a computer only on steroids. The world chess champion Gary Kasparov was defeated by a supercomputer in 1996. The computer's success was impressive. But that supercomputer weighed in at 32 tons and cannot cook eggs for breakfast. The human brain weighs three pounds, is 75 percent water, and can carry out 10,000 trillion operations per second. One beautiful aspect of the brain is that of constant change, which empowers us to create ourselves anew.

For treatment I would recommend a program that included brain stimulation devices which can bring about more permanent positive physical changes in brain operations. Examples might include the Alpha-Stim for increasing brain production of serotonin. Many addiction related relapses occur during times of unusual stress. Also, training in meditation techniques and mindfulness would be important.

Video games where the inmate receives positive reward points for creating the appropriate brain reactions (reduced/increased energy levels where appropriate) when he is viewing stimulating pictures (this needs a EEG device to read and reward the inmate's brain responses) could be very important. These cortical improvements would tie in with individual and group counseling that could help him understand and utilize introspection.

Counselors must have compassion and an understanding that at any given moment a person is doing the best he can with the tools (beliefs, life experiences, etc.) he has. Deepening self-understanding is essential.

Second, I was ... (Cont. on p. 7)

(In Here And Out There, from p. 1) ... thoughts of shock and surprise at first receiving their life sentence. For example, one woman responded: ...my life was over at 46. I lost everything--job of 22 years, house, and brand new car. How I would life without my children and how they'd life without me? It was devastating. I'm a good person so this can happen to anyone. Of her initial adjustment, another woman described it as: Very difficult. I had never been in trouble before and this environment was scary.

Women lifers reported a number of mental health problems including depression and anxiety related to histories of abuse as well as their current first-time prison experiences. While over 64 percent of the women had been treated for a mental health problem at some point in their lives, five percent of the women rated their current mental health as "poor" and others as "fair" (30 percent) or "good" (46 percent). Just under 20 percent rated their mental health as "excellent". About half of the women reported, at least sometimes, "being afraid of going crazy" in prison while about 40 percent were worried about becoming institutionalized. Put into words, one woman stated: When I wake up in the morning, sometimes I can't believe that I am still here. I wanna go crazy and just lay in my bed and die.

As measured by seven summed Liker-Type items from the Hopkins Symptom Checklist, current levels of depression such as these, resulted in an average score of 11.99 (range 0-26, higher scores indicating greater depression). Among the items, 32 percent of women reported feeling lonely or blue often, over 50 percent reported feeling hopeless about the future at least sometimes, and about 30 percent reported feeling low in energy or slowed down often. Similar measures of anxiety, interpersonal sensitivity, and somatization evidenced scores of 7.67 (range 0-19), 11.0 (range 0-25), and 12.8 (range 1-32), respectively.

Further evidence of mental health and abuse trauma, women also reported past experiences with suicide ideation (46 percent) and attempts (44 percent). These thoughts continued into prison for some of the women, and developed after incarceration for others. A little over 16 percent reported current suicide ideation "sometimes" while eight percent reported ideation "often" or "very often".

Other anxieties about death or dying in prison were also reported. Most women (79 percent) indicated they were afraid of getting deathly sick in prison and often thought about how short life really is (83 percent). Women were also worried about the possibility of family members dying. Many women faced life and death in prison, looking through a religious/spiritual lens. This may explain why a relatively small percentage (less than 20 percent) reported being afraid to die or troubled by the subject of life after death. In contrast, women who were extremely troubled by receiving a life sentence felt their lives were over and wanted to die.

In addition to indicators of mental health, and given the age/aging of women lifers, not surprisingly women reported a variety of physical health problems and needs. Seven percent rated their health as "poor" and 26 percent as "fair". On average women reported 2.5 chronic health conditions including diabetes, hypertension, heart conditions, and digestive disorders (e.g., ulcers). Eleven percent indicated they could not walk independently, and this was visually evidence upon visiting the women as many came to meet with us by wheelchairs or walkers.

In sum, although women sentenced to life in prison are viewed as "less than" and the worst of society, these women are arguably some of the most vulnerable of society and the least likely to utilize the revolving door of the jail/prison system in the U.S. The vast majority have no prior prison or criminal history, but have extensive experiences with physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, and mental health issues and suicide ideation.

To Be Continued...

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POSITION DETERMINES PERSPECTIVE

A Look at Prison Overcrowding from the Inside

David R. Fleenor

Analyzing the problem of prison overcrowding from the outside of corrections looking inward, led the Council of State Governments (CSG Justice Center) to presume that the enactment of Oklahoma's 85% law would cause dangerous levels of prison overcrowding as "[v]iolent offenders [would be] serving longer sentences in prison than ever before;"¹ this is simply not true.

Had the CSG Justice Center conducted in-person meetings with people currently inside corrections, they would have discovered that: 1) people convicted of crimes classified as violent, prior to the enactment of the 85% law, have and are currently serving the longest prison sentences in Oklahoma's history; and 2) the Pardon and Parole Board's unwillingness to pass applicants, who have served 25 consecutive calendar years or more in the Department of Corrections, to a stage-two parole and/or commutation hearing is significantly contributing to the problem of prison overcrowding.

To date, the longest consecutive term of incarceration served by a person convicted of a crime classified as violent under the 85% law² is twenty-one (21) years. The longest consecutive term of incarceration served by a person convicted of a crime classified as violent prior to the 85% law is fifty-three (53) years.³ It is an unfortunate truth, but in Oklahoma a person serving 21 consecutive calendar years of incarceration inside the Department of Corrections does not shock the conscience of anyone in this state--not even the incarcerated person, nor his family.

To better illustrate the point, this writer conducted a survey of the 40 men assigned to the living quarters on D-2 Right at the Joseph Harp Correctional Center on the evening of October 28, 2021. It was discovered that 18 of the 40 men assigned to the housing unit were

serving sentences for crimes classified as violent under Oklahoma's 85% law. Collectively, these 18 men had served a total of 229 years in the Department of Corrections at an approximate cost of \$3,893,000 to the Oklahoma taxpayer.

The remaining 22 men were serving sentences for crimes classified as violent, which were imposed prior to the enactment of the 85% law. Collectively, this group of 22 men had served a total of 708 years in the Department of Corrections at an approximate cost of \$12,036,000 to the Oklahoma taxpayer--with no mercy insight! Indeed, the actual cost of incarcerating these 22 men is much higher than estimated in this article as the majority of them are over 50, and older prisoners have double, if not triple, the health care cost when compared to their younger counterparts.

The statistics tend to support the conclusions of several long-term studies that have revealed that merely warehousing people until they die, despite the criminal offense, is not an effective strategy for ensuring public safety. These arbitrary sentencing practices not only significantly contribute to the problem of prison overcrowding; also they are responsible for the mental and physical deterioration of those who have had to endure a life time of hyper-vigilance and hopelessness.

One-hundred percent of the 22 men that were serving sentences imposed prior to the enactment of the 85% law, expressed feelings of hopelessness and despair because they believed they would die in prison without a meaningful opportunity to prove they no longer posed a threat to public safety. Those feeling stemmed from the Board's unwillingness to look past their commitment offense in deciding whether or not to pass them to stage two.

In Oklahoma, all ... (Cont. on p. 7)

THE MICHIGAN LEGISLATURE VERSUS THE MICHIGAN CONSTITUTION

Willis X. Harris

Article 4, Section 46 of Michigan Constitution, 1963, states "NO LAW SHALL BE ENACTED PROVIDING FOR THE PENALTY OF DEATH."

Michigan Compiled Laws (MCL) 750.316 runs contrary to Article 4, Sec. 46 by having a prisoner to spend the rest of his or her natural life in prison. As afore stated in a previous article, "A mandatory non-parolable life sentence is a sentence longer than a prisoner's life expectancy which has been illegally authorized by MCL 750.316. Such statute was enacted contrary to Michigan's Constitution of 1963, Article 4, Sec. 46.

The Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. has written to current legislators, Michigan Supreme Court, and Michigan Attorney General, who is the chief constitutional lawyer of the State of Michigan. We showed the discrepancy between the State Constitution, Art. 4, Sec. 46 concerning the death penalty and constitutional prohibition on enacting any law that carries the penalty of death. We clearly showed that MCL 750.316 was a challenge to the State Constitution because it carried a penalty of death by a parole-less incarceration. In short, it is Death-By-Incarceration (DBI).

We asked Dana Nessel, Attorney General, for an opinion regarding the constitutionality of a mandatory, non-parolable life sentence under Michigan's Penal Code, specifically, MCL 750.316.

My letter was referred by Attorney General Nessel to Joshua O. Booth, Division Chief, Opinions Division, for his opinion on the matter.

Booth stated: "By Statute, it is the duty of the Attorney General 'to give (her) opinion upon all questions of law submitted to (her) by the legislature or either branch thereof, or by the Governor ... or any other State Officer.' MCL 14.32. Unfortunately, because private citizens are not among those listed in the statute, this office is not author-

ized to give the opinion you have requested."

We asked Michigan Supreme Court the same question. The Court stated they only give legal opinions on cases before the Court and prohibited from giving legal opinions to private citizens.

We received no responses from Governor Gretchen Whitmer nor the Parole Board.

As we have previously stated, the imposition of a mandatory life sentence without the possibility of parole is not within the constitutional grant of authority to the Legislature under the Michigan Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46. The determinate sentence provision and the Constitution of 1850, Art. 4, Sec. 47; Constitution of 1908, Art. 5, Sec. 28; and the Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46 never authorized the legislature to enact any statute providing for a penalty of death like the mandatory, non-parolable life sentence which expires only after a prisoner's death.

Both the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. and the National Lifers of America, Inc. strongly assert that the first degree murder statute, i.e., MCL 750.316, under the penalty phase must be found to be unconstitutional because specific limitations, contained in the Constitution itself, restricts legislative power. We find such a limitation is clearly mandated by Michigan's "NEW" Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46, which prohibits enactment of any "statute" providing for the "penalty" of "death". The Constitution empowers the Legislature to enact laws "unless" it has been prohibited. The Michigan Supreme Court held: "In declaring a statute unconstitutional, a court must be able to (lay its finger) on the part of the Constitution violated, and the infraction should be clear, and free from a reasonable doubt. ... (Cont. on p. 8)

THE MDOC CONCEALS PRISONER DEATHS

Dwight Henley, M.B.A.

Prompted by a recent murder at Macomb Correctional Facility, MDOC spokesperson Chris Gautz gave a public statement on FOX 2 Detroit News. Mr. Gautz admitted a prisoner had been recently murdered by his cellmate, proceeded to the dining hall for breakfast, and stabbed a second prisoner while returning to his housing unit. Mr. Gautz went on to say this was the second murder at the Macomb prison in 2022. From these statements the public has no reason to question Mr. Gautz, but the facts suggest the public should question him.

Mr. Gautz significantly understated the problem. This year 9 prisoners have died at Macomb Correctional Facility. Contrary to what Mr. Gautz said, three prisoners had been murdered at the Macomb prison in 2022. Additionally, 2 or 3 other prisoners committed suicide and the remaining deaths came by way of drug overdose or medical care neglect. Per capita, Macomb prison has been the deadliest prison in Michigan history! Given these facts, why did Mr. Gautz choose to characterize the situation as he did?

Over the past year a couple of Macomb prison staff have been fired for smuggling drugs or cellphones into the facility. Correction Officer Priest was recently caught operating a mobile distribution center from the trunk of his car in the Macomb prison parking lot. Apparently, Mr. Priest would come inside the facility, take drug orders, go on break and fill the order from his trunk, and then return to work and make the delivery. Mr. Gautz doesn't want these facts tied in with the deaths because a closer investigation would reveal 2 of 3 murders were related to drugs and the numerous drug overdose deaths--drugs provided by staff!

To address these issues, MDOC Director Heidi Washington has removed Macomb Warden George Stephenson and transferred Deputy Warden Donald

Ricumstrict and Assistant Deputy Warden Allen Greason. The Director is implementing random searches for Macomb prison staff and she is contemplating installing a TSA scanner at the facility to address the drug problem. However, the removal of the Warden, Deputy Warden, and Assistant Deputy Warden, as well as Director Washington's other contemplated actions, are simply a deflection tactic. Since Warden Stephenson departed and staff searches began, prison staff have found more drugs, cellphones, and rumor has it, even some saw blades.

If Director Washington wants to get Macomb prison back in line, she may want to step down herself and take Mr. Gautz with her. Director Washington has knowingly turned a blind eye to Macomb until it became the deadliest prison in Michigan history, and Mr. Gautz continues to show he is more concerned with covering up the problem than being forthright with the public about it. Although Director Washington and Public Relations Director Gautz will most likely keep their jobs, the family and friends of the deceased prisoners, as well as the public, deserve greater accountability.

REMOVE THE "EXCEPTION CLAUSE" FROM THE 13TH AMENDMENT TO THE U.S. CONSTITUTION

Willis X. Harris

The ending of physical slavery in 1865, on paper, did not mean President Abraham "Honest Abe" Lincoln had any special compassion or love for the slaves exported from Africa to America in 1555 (not 1620). Lincoln's action was political with intent of preserving the Union and economic reasons.

Property/land owners in the North and South greatly benefited financially from slave labor which still exist today in all states, even ... (Cont. on p. 9)

(Ronald Mellen, Ph.D., from p. 2) ... raised Catholic and became an Episcopalian at the age of 28 years. There is a difference between love and dogma. To often religions move from a cornerstone of love, to love grounded in dogma, a serious error. In this case the dogma was a priest was required to be celibate (no sex, no marriage). For some deeply spiritual men that was the perfect path. Unfortunately, it also attracted men who were pedophiles, and the church did little to identify, expel, and report such priests. The Catholic Church is paying for its sins now.

Third, behind the emotion of anger is the hidden and true issue ... many times it is fear. Many rapists want power and part of the pathology is a poor sense of personal worth. Variances in targets may be explained via earlier life experiences.

Fourth, the patterns found at the individual level are also found in city, state, and federal levels. Sentences of 50+ years suggest, to me, fear. And these are being carried from population to the court level. The nations of Northern Europe, after WWII, are no longer guided by such philosophical and moral systems.

Fifth, I addressed this question in my response to question one and can't think of anything else to add at this time.

Sixth, my understanding is that many, if not most, child sex offenders were sexually abused as children. It is not uncommon for them to target children at the same age they were abused.

EDITOR'S NOTE: CURE Life-Long and National CURE would like to thank Dr. Richard Althouse and Dr. Ronald Mellen for their willingness to answer Willis X. Harris' questions regarding sexual deviancy for this two-part article.

(Position Determines, from p. 4) ... applicants convicted of crimes classified as violent are reviewed for parole and/or commutation in two-stages. During the initial review, or first-stage, the Parole Board considers only the applicant's commitment offense, or nature of

the crime, as the relevant factor in making the decision of whether or not to pass him or her to stage two. Despite the overwhelming evidence showing that commitment offense alone is an insufficient factor in determining suitability for clemency, Oklahoma appears to be on the path of excluding a particular category of inmates from back-end release mechanisms such as parole and/or commutation based on that very metric.

Oklahoma only has a part-time Parole Board that meets twice a month on the call of the Chairperson. The purpose of the meeting, in part, is to initially review all scheduled applications for parole and/or commutation on behalf of the Governor. During said meetings, the members of the Board routinely deny, without explanation, approximately 300 applicants each morning before lunch; that is just over 60 seconds per application. It is the manifest indifference exhibited by the Board during the performance of a constitutionally prescribed duty that works to effectively repeal the Governor's power to grant clemency to all deemed worthy. Simply stated, it is unconstitutional for the Board to use an incarcerated person's commitment offense as the basis to forever exclude him or her from the privilege of executive clemency.

Moreover, the law requiring the Board's investigator to compile a report detailing the incarcerated life of the applicant, which is necessary to the "deemed worthy" metric, is not triggered unless the applicant is passed to stage two. Meaning that the vast majority of people, especially those sentenced prior to the enactment of the 85% law, will never be afforded a meaningful opportunity to demonstrate their worthiness of executive clemency because they cannot outlive their commitment offense.

From the outside of corrections looking inward, it would be easy to justify the Board's actions during the initial review process as a consequence of its part-time status; however, that perspective becomes distorted when the facts are made clear.

... (Cont. on p. 8)

(Position Determines, from p. 7) ...

A look at the initial review process from the inside of corrections will bring the Board's actions into sharper focus. From this perspective, you will clearly see that no one convicted in the past 21 years of a crime classified as violent, under the 85% law, has ever appeared on the parole docket of the Board for initial review. The reason is because everyone serving a term-of-year sentence under the 85% law accrues earned credits that are immediately applied to the remaining 15% of their sentence the day he or she reaches the 85% point.

This means two things: 1) every person serving a term-of-year sentence under the 85% law will discharge their sentence the day he or she reaches the 85% point; and 2) the only people placed on the regular parole docket of the Parole Board for "initial review" are those that were sentenced prior to the enactment of the 85% law.

Policy Recommendation

I believe that major reforms that go far beyond the scope of this article are needed at the Oklahoma Pardon and Parole Board; however, I will make two policy recommendations that I think would have the effect of undermining our State's misguided assumption that incarcerating people until they die, without a meaningful review, is the best strategy for ensuring public safety.

First, I would recommend a new administrative policy mandating a stage two parole and/or commutation hearing for every incarcerated person after they have served 25 years in the custody of the Oklahoma Department of Corrections. At a minimum, this would provide at least one meaningful opportunity for an applicant to demonstrate, in person, that they have done the necessary work to transform themselves into someone who could live within the confines of the law.

Second, I would recommend that the Pardon and Parole Board hire a formerly incarcerated person to work as a parole and/or commutation liaison assisting only those incarcerated applicants that have served 25 years or more in the Department

of Corrections. This would not only facilitate the process, it would also bring hope to the hopeless.

Endnotes

- 1 Justice Reinvestment in Oklahoma, The Council of State Governments, (January 2012), page 18.
- 2 In 1999 House Bill 1008 created two new sections of law, Title 21 O.S.1999 §§12.1 and 13.1, colloquially known as the 85% law.
- 3 Inmate Ronald T. Koonce #76423 has been incarcerated in the Oklahoma Department of Corrections since 1967

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(The Michigan Legislature, from p. 5) ... See, *Bowman v. Sheehan*, 242 Mich 95; 210 NW 69 (1929).

To conclude, in all matters of constitutional law, the "Supreme Law" is the Constitution, state or federal. See United States Constitution, Art 6, Sec. 2; Michigan Constitution of 1963, Art. 4, Sec. 46; and Michigan Constitution of 1963, Art 11, Sec. 1. Every clause in ever Constitution is held to express the "intention of the people" who ratified it. Be it known that the intention of the people is law and not the interpretation of the Legislature.

There is no statute enacted by the Michigan Legislature which specifically mandates a termination of a life sentence before a criminal defendant, i.e. "non-parolable lifer" dies in prison (Death-By-Incarceration). MCL 750.316 was enacted without any consideration of Sec. 46 by the Legislature because a life sentence under MCL 750.316 set no specific limit on the amount of time a criminal defendant (lifer) must serve, but left this very important sentencing aspect up to the executive branch of government (Governor).

The Legislature has determined under MCL 791.234(4) (now 791.234(6)) that a defendant who is convicted for first-degree murder does not come under the jurisdiction of the ... (Cont. on p. 9)

(The Michigan Legislature, from p. 8) ... Michigan Parole Board, but must serve a mandatory, non-parolable life sentence (Death-By-Incarceration).

This misinterpretation had denied persons convicted of felony murder Parole Board jurisdiction.

(Remove The Exception, from p. 6) ... at the federal level, in our correctional and prison systems. To avert further division among the states, Congress and President Lincoln left the "Exception Clause" in the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. This was no oversight nor mistake. Convicted felons, mostly freed black male slaves, were/are used today to perform free labor to compensate for their "crimes". Who benefits? States, politicians, public officials, corporations, farm owners, and private prisons.

Has anyone ever asked: Why do police officers concentrate their efforts in black communities when crime of all natures are committed in all communities nationwide? If there a race factor considered for incarceration of people? No one wants to answer these questions for fear of political retaliation or more severe responses.

When I was incarcerated in 1956 at the State Prison of Southern Michigan, 4000 Cooper Street, Jackson, Michigan, the Vietnam War was in progress. As prisoners, depending on your IQ and educational level, we were paid ranging from five cents per day to one dollar per day depending on assignment. Production workers made more than general laborers. Clerks, teacher aides, nurse aides, and technical skills workers made or earned top wages. We made federal and state flags, uniforms for prison guards, prisoners, state police, National Guard, tables, chairs, shoes, blankets, desks, lockers, mattresses, license plates for state and public buyers, generating hundreds of thousands of dollars for the state, counties, cities, corporations, and public businesses.

As years passed, slave wages increased, but still 98% less than the

minimum wage today in Michigan. No prisoner in Michigan nor nay other state earn the national minimum wage. In a few states, prisoners work from sunrise to sunset without pay!

In 2022, prisoners are still enslaved and used as though they were machines. As we see today, nationwide, private corporations are trying to cash-in on the profits by contracting with states to privatize some of their prisons and save states millions of dollars while making millions of dollars themselves.

One reason many federal lawmakers oppose removing the "Exception Clause" from the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is because they receive financial "kick backs" and other benefits by helping their own families, friends, and other well-connected and powerful people.

For all proactive people desiring the removal of the "Exception Clause" from the 13th Amendment to the U.S. Constitution must initiate a national referendum to present to the United States Congress to achieve this much needed removal.

Interested parties who desire more information about this important undertaking should contact Charlie Sullivan, President and Founder of National CURE, P.O. Box 2310, Washington, D.C. 20013-2310, (202) 789-2126.

OPEN LETTER TO ALL PAROLE BOARDS NATIONWIDE REGARDING LIFERS AND VIRTUAL LIFERS

Dear Parole Board Members:

We fully recognize and understand that criminal offenders must be punished for offenses committed against the dignity and safety of society. However, there comes a time in a prisoner's period of incarceration when punishment must end and the rehabilitation of the prisoner begins, regardless of his or her offense or the nature of the offense(s).

You know the excessive punishment has never accomplished anything, but has been a tremendous ... (Cont. on p. 10)

(Open Letter, from p. 9) ... financial burden on taxpayers and the public treasury, money that could be used for public services and community corrections.

You also are aware that we incarcerate too many offenders far too long with no relief or benefits to society, public safety, nor law enforcement. We hold men, women and some teenagers in our prison system up to, and passing, 30, 40, 50, and 60 years and can provide no logical explanation nor empirical data to justify it, except to say the time-worn and trite verbiage that "time for crime", "life means life", "no interest", and "no merit" which is a baseless explanation or excuse.

Taxpayers spend billions of dollars for all of you to have interest in all prisoners and to encourage offenders to rehabilitate and by providing the means necessary to implement and facilitate the above objective. Instead, corrections discriminate against lifers and long-term offenders in favor of short-term offenders by denying them access to meaningful academic, vocational, and therapeutic programming. This action borders on the violation of the Eight Amendment of the U.S. Constitution on cruel and unusual treatment/punishment.

Parole Board Members must have periodic face-to-face interviews with offenders who are nearing parole release or commutation consideration and not solely relying on file reviews. Personal interviews are the best ways to learn of an offender's honesty, truthfulness, sincerity, empathy, and remorse. Did you know that prisoners as well as civilians have three signs on themselves that will tell you what they are and the state of their minds: their eyes, hands, and what comes out of their mouths in words. If you know how to read these signs, you will know if the prisoner is "ad-lipping" or speaking from the heart. Ask pointed questions to detect equivocation.

CURE Life-Long, Inc. and the Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. beseech you to realistically evaluate your current practices and get to know lifers

on a personal level and adhere to the three signs previously mentioned when you are determining the readiness to give them a second chance at freedom via commutation or sentence, enabling them to return to society as redeemed individuals and ready to be productive, law-abiding, and contributing to the good or betterment of society.

We welcome your comments or feedback.

Respectfully,

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SUGGESTED WRITING TOPICS FOR CIVILIANS AND PRISONERS

FOR CIVILIANS

- 1) Does our criminal justice system offer you individually, any degree of public safety? If so, what safety are you convinced you have? Based on what?
- 2) Do you believe excessive incarceration has any benefit for public safety and law enforcement? Are you satisfied with the financial burden it places on you as a taxpayer?
- 3) If your brother, sister, wife, husband, mother, or father were sent to prison for five or more years, what negative impact--mentally, morally, socially, personally, economically--will it have on your children?
- 4) What suggestions do you have to decrease mass incarceration, excessive incarceration, and chronic recidivism?
- 5) In your opinion, what is rehabilitation? Do you believe corrections is fulfilling its mission statement of correcting social deviants? Explain.

FOR PRISONERS

- 1) Knowing the offense(s) you were convicted of and sent ... (Cont. on p. 11)

(Suggested Writing, from p. 10) ... to prison, in what way has imprisonment benefited you?

2) If you are one of the "rare" prisoners who defy reformation or rehabilitation and are a chronic recidivist, what, in your opinion, qualifies you for release consideration?

3) If you are a LWOP prisoner with several prior violent convictions, what, in your mind, would be a justification to apply for commutation of your sentence?

4) If you aided and abetted in the commission of an offense(s), and the offense(s) was/were murder, robbery, felony assault, or arson, do you believe you should get a lesser sentence than the principal? It is possible the offense(s) never would have occurred without your active participation? Explain.

5) Aside from saying how many years you have served, if the parole board asked you why are you requesting parole or a commutation consideration, what would be your response?

Send your reply to any of the questions to either CURE Life-Long, Inc. or Michigan Lifers Association, Inc. at 4417 Second Ave., Suite 211, Detroit, MI 48201-1214 in care of Willis X. Harris.

Please limit your responses to 600 words per question. Include your full name (and number if incarcerated) and address (including facility name if a prisoner).

NOTICE

TO: All Subscribers
RE: CURE LifeLong Newsletter and Michigan Lifers Report Newsletter

We had 10 Michigan Lifers Report Newsletters and 6 CURE LifeLong Newsletters returned to us because correctional facilities have changed mailing addresses and prisoner are transferring to different facilities and are not notifying us of their news address or location.

Please notify us of any address change.

Also, mail is late because of staff shortages, sickness, and vacations at the U.S. Postal Services. It is taking up to 10 days to get mail we normally get in three days. Mail arrives as late as 9:00 pm Monday through Saturday. Some sent mail never arrives.

Willis X. Harris

NOTICE

TO: Subscribers of CURE LifeLong Newsletter

RE: Subscription Rate Increase

Effective January 1, 2023, by virtue of the constant rate increase by the U.S. Postal Serves, we will raise CURE LifeLong Newsletter subscription rate from \$7.00 to \$10.00 annually for prisoners. See the Subscription Form for other changes.

Also, the printing cost has risen. We have been blessed to receive unsolicited donations to offset these increases in the past.

Willis X. Harris, Director
CURE Life-Long, Inc.

We at CURE Life-Long, Inc., Michigan Lifers Association, Inc., and National Lifers of American, Inc. would like to wish everyone Happy Holidays.

HAPPY VETERANS DAY!

HAPPY THANKSGIVING!

MERRY CHRISTMAS!

HAPPY HANUKKAH!

HAPPY KWANZAA!

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

HAPPY MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY!

As the new Editor, I would like to personally wish you the best during the Holiday Season. This time of year is difficult for many of us living on the inside.

Jamie Meade, Editor

Cure Life-Long Newsletter Subscription Form

Cure Life-Long Newsletter is quarterly published under the auspices of National Cure Headquartered in Washington, D. C.

The expressed mission of our newsletter - to be specific - is to bring the plight and concerns of all lifers and all virtual lifers with minimum sentences of 50 years or more to attention of the lifer population across the USA, the general public, and our unjust criminal justice system, inclusive of our courts, prosecutors, attorneys, correctional personnel, parole boards, governors, and our lawmakers.

To subscribe to our quarterly newsletter, complete the form below:

Full name _____ Prison ID Number _____

Full name of prison _____

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