

# IOWA CITIZENS UNITED FOR THE REHABILITATION OF ERRANTS

SUMMER 2021

## IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS REINSTATES VISITING ON A RESTRICTED BASIS

After over a year of waiting the IDOC has announced that in person visits will return on a limited basis.

Please check on the department's website for updates, announcements, availability, and if you are qualified to sign up for a visit.



Hello CURE Members,

We hope that you are surviving the crazy weather that Mother Nature has sent. If Mother Nature is kind one of these days, she will stop sending the hail! As you would expect Mother Nature to send unpredictable weather conditions, it is also expected that you get your summer Iowa CURE newsletter. So here it is.

There have been a lot of changes in 2021 with the Iowa Department of Corrections. Some of the changes were as a result of the tragic murders at Anamosa State Penitentiary in March and others were in response to the nationwide issue of drugs being smuggled into prisons. These changes have impacted staff, families, and inmates emotionally and physically.

Change is defined as the act or instance of making or becoming different. Everyone responds to change differently. There are no written rules on how each individual should respond to change or how long it will take to adjust to change. Every day we at CURE are notified of some new change or policy that was implemented. It has been overwhelming for all of us to keep up. For our members and for all those incarcerated individuals, we think about you all the time and understand that this cannot be easy to deal with on a daily basis. For all of our members, we are here for you and with you. Stay strong. We will get through this.

Maya Angelou once said "If you don't like something, change it. If you can't change it, change your attitude."

Wendy Wittrock

President of Iowa CURE

# SAVE THE DATE

## Iowa Justice Action Network Hybrid Conference

September 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021  
Valley United Methodist Church  
4201 Ashworth Road  
West Des Moines, IA  
The meeting will also be on Zoom

Keynote Speaker: District Attorney Satana Deberry, from Durham County  
North Carolina

Please check the website for updates and to sign up for the conference  
[www.iowajusticeactionnetwork.com](http://www.iowajusticeactionnetwork.com).

If you have any questions please contact Al Hays at [allen.hays@uni.edu](mailto:allen.hays@uni.edu).

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## Midwest Coalition – Raise the Age Initiative

A Coalition of Midwestern states is being developed with the help of the Sentencing Project. Sue Hutchins, our vice president, is the Iowa representative for this group and she is requesting all those who are interested in helping ending life without parole and lengthy sentences. Sue can be contacted at [hutchins\\_sue@yahoo.com](mailto:hutchins_sue@yahoo.com) or via cell at 575-343-0202. Legislation to address these issues of mass incarceration will be drafted for the 2022 session and contacting legislators will be necessary.



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## Iowa Board of Parole

Effective July 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2021 Helen Miller has left the board of parole.

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## Publication Alert

*Bleak Walls Broken Hearts* will be released this Fall. This book follows *Bleak Walls Bright Minds* which was published and released in November 2020.

## KOLBE HOSPITALITY HOUSE OF HOPE

After months of waiting, Kolbe Hospitality House of Hope is now a 501(c)3!!!

Slowly but surely some of the needed repairs have been completed. At the current moment the new underlayment has been placed in the living room and dining room. This new underlayment will ensure the floor feels more level when the new flooring is finally placed. The new LVP flooring has been purchased and is ready to be installed.

The house still needs new water lines. This comes at a cost of approximately \$4,000. Because of the location of the kitchen, and the limited space underneath, a portion of the kitchen floor needs to be cut out to be able to run the new lines.

The kitchen is still needing everything a kitchen needs. Currently only the original plaster walls have been sheet rocked and the electrical has been updated. However, there are still no cabinets, countertops, sink, stove, or refrigerator. The cost to complete the kitchen is unavailable at this time. We are still optimistic that we can open the home to families this year.

If you would like to make a donation to the cause you can mail a check to 403 North High Street, Anamosa Iowa 52205 or via paypal on our website at [www.KolbeHospitality.com](http://www.KolbeHospitality.com).

If you have questions, want to make a reservation, or volunteer the email is [kolbehospitality@gmail.com](mailto:kolbehospitality@gmail.com).



# IOWA DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS



Kristofer Karberg is now serving as Warden of the Anamosa State Penitentiary. Nicholas Lamb is now the Warden of the Fort Dodge Correctional facility. On July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2021 three new wardens were appointed. Shawn Howard as the Warden of the Newton Correctional Facility, Marcy Stroud as the Warden of the Mount Pleasant Correctional Facility, and Chris Tripp as the Warden of the Iowa State Penitentiary.

Karberg comes to Iowa from the South Dakota Department of Corrections. His prior position was the Deputy Warden of the Mike Durfee State Prison in Springfield. Prior to joining the South Dakota Department of Corrections, he worked for the State Department as Site Commander of Security at the US Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan. In total, he brings more than 28 years of security operations experience to his new role in leading the Anamosa State Penitentiary team.

Lamb comes to Iowa from the New Mexico Department of Corrections where he served as the Deputy Warden of Administration since November of 2020. Prior to joining the New Mexico Department of Corrections, he served in many positions throughout his 26-year-career in the Illinois Department of Corrections, where he most recently served as Assistant Warden of Operations at Statesville Correctional Center prior to his retirement from the Illinois Department of Corrections in 2020.

Howard, who will serve as Warden of the NCF, is the current Deputy Warden of the Clarinda Correctional Facility (CCF), where he has served in this position since August of 2019. Howard has had over 29 years of experience in the field of corrections. He has held such positions as Juvenile Court School Liaison Officer and Probation and Parole Officer in the 5th Judicial District Department of Correctional Services. He has worked at the CCF for the past 16 years in the positions of Treatment Director and Deputy Warden.

Stroud, who will serve as the Warden of the MPCF, is the current Deputy Warden of the MPCF. She has worked with the Department of Corrections since she started her career as a Correctional Officer in 1989. Over her career she has held many positions within the department to include Activities Specialist, Counselor, Treatment Director, Forensic Hospital Director and her current position of Deputy Warden.

Tripp has served as the Deputy Warden of the ISP since 2017, and has been serving as the interim Warden since April of this year. He started his career in Iowa Corrections at the ISP in 1990. Over the course of his career, he has held multiple positions including Correctional Officer, Correctional Supervisor, Food Service Coordinator, and Food Services Director.

Brian Foster has been hired as the security operations director. Foster has worked in corrections since 1985. His prior position was security chief with the Wisconsin Department of Corrections.

# Iowa Department of Corrections Policies and Procedures

Iowa Department of Corrections has implemented a new policy for the ordering of books and magazines. Family members and friends are no longer able to order books from a third party vendor in behalf of an inmate. This policy change was the result of the vast amounts of drugs being sent into the prisons in Iowa. Iowa CURE understands that this decision was made for the safety of staff and inmates. It is our understanding that this policy is temporary until the drug issues are addressed. Iowa CURE is actively monitoring any progress and changes to this policy. Iowa CURE cannot file a grievance to the Ombudsman or file suit on behalf of inmates. If you disagree with this policy an inmate will need to file remedies within their institution then file a complaint with the Ombudsman. If you feel that your civil liberties have been violated you will need to seek legal advice on your own. We will keep our members updated as more information comes available to us.

Like the books and magazines there was a drastic change to the mailing policy because of the drugs coming into the institutions. Correspondence is now limited to a white sheet of paper, written on one side, in black or blue ink, with no graphics, photos, or logos. At some institutions the correspondence is being photocopied and the original document is being destroyed. Iowa CURE is aware of this policy and procedure change. Throughout the nation drugs coming in the mail is a persistent problem. This is not isolated to Iowa alone and Iowa is not the only state in the nation taking these measures to eliminate the drugs getting into prisons. At the May Board of Corrections meeting it was noted that the mailing policy along with the book/magazine policy is temporary. Iowa CURE will be monitoring these policies and keep members updated as information is known. We respect the decisions of the Department of Corrections to keep the facilities safe and secure. It is unfortunate that the actions of a few have a physical and emotional toll for those that are not involved.

The Iowa Department of Corrections has announced visiting will resume in July. Every institution will have information on the dates, times, and how to schedule an appointment. Please check with your individual institution on when you can visit your loved ones and how long you can visit. Iowa CURE has been monitoring visiting for the past few months. There is a consistent pattern of changes applied daily to the policy. We are unable to offer institutional updates in this newsletter as by the time that you receive this there will be another change. We strongly encourage inmates to know the current visitation policy. We encourage family and friends to check the department websites for scheduling and updates.



- Wendy Wittrock – President
- Sue Hutchins – Vice President
- Richard Nordin – Treasurer
- Mary Kay Dial – Secretary
- Eddie Bloomer
- Brian Carter
- Carla Dawson
- Heather Erwin
- Jackie Robinson
- Larry Smith
- Carolyn Walker
- Jean Basinger - Consultant

## Iowa CURE

### Response to Correspondence from Inmates

2021 has been a very busy year for the volunteers at Iowa CURE. We have received multiple letters on the policy changes to the books, magazines, mailings, and visitations. We understand the discouragement and frustration this is causing family members and inmates. We are actively monitoring all of these policies.

The letters that CURE has received in the past few months not only talked about the changes to the books, magazines and mailings. The letters we received noted the frustration of having no contact visits. After fifteen months the department is now allowing in person visits again.

As a general reminder, incarcerated individuals are to exhaust their administrative remedies in their individual institutions when they file a grievance. Without the proper administrative remedies exhausted the Ombudsman’s Office will not have a grievance to review to open a case.

July’s meeting was cancelled because the guest speaker was not available. To be consistent in 2021 meetings have been held on the third Sunday of the month. However, based on guest speaker availability and the availability of the church will be a factor if the meeting will take place. Iowa CURE members will be notified of the next membership via email and social media post. Members who do not have email you will receive a letter in the mail.

Once in person meetings resume, we will still have an online feature for people who live outside of the Des Moines metro to participate.




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### Trinity Las Americas United Methodist Church

**Physical address:**

1548 8<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, IA

**Mailing address:**

P.O. Box 41005, Des Moines IA 50311

**Email** - iowacure@gmail.com

**Website** - www.iowacure.com

**Annual Membership Fees**

- Prisoner - \$2
- Individual - \$10
- Family - \$20
- Sustaining - \$50
- Life - \$100



**Please note the following about Iowa CURE**

- Iowa CURE is not a legal aid service organization and cannot offer legal services or advice.
- We are a volunteer only organization therefore we have no paid staff and no legal staff.
- Do not send us your legal documents.
- We do not accept phone calls from prisoners.
- By contacting or joining CURE, you are **NOT** entering into a contract for services.

## Vera Institute of Justice - March 4, 2021

### Juan Martinez Hill and Ruth Delany

When Congress reinstated access to Pell Grants for incarcerated students this past December, it lifted a 26-year ban that put post-secondary education out of reach for millions of people incarcerated in the United States.

Incarcerated people earn pennies per hour for the work they do in prison, so Pell Grants, their primary source of need-based financial aid, had made it possible for students to access higher education. The 1994 crime bill stripped incarcerated students of Pell Grant eligibility, making a college education practically unattainable. In the following years, the number of prison education programs quickly shrank, from 772 programs in the early 1990s to only eight in 1997.

But now, the passage of the FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid) Simplification Act offers renewed hope—and an opportunity for hundreds of thousands of incarcerated people to develop the knowledge and skills they need to succeed once released. Having a college degree increases their chances to secure well-paying jobs, find stable housing, and provide for their families. People who participate in college-in-prison programs are 48 percent less likely to return to prison, and reduced recidivism rates could cut state prison spending across the country by as much as \$365.8 million annually.

The FAFSA Simplification Act is “sentence-blind”—meaning all incarcerated people, regardless of sentence length or conviction, can qualify—and includes people with certain drug-related convictions who could not previously apply for Pell Grants. It covers people in jails, prisons, and juvenile and civil commitment settings. When the Act takes effect—no later than July 1, 2023—up to 463,000 people who are currently incarcerated will be eligible for this financial aid.

The Act also outlines a number of provisions that will make it easier for all prospective students to apply for financial aid, including reducing the number of questions on the FAFSA form and allowing financial aid administrators to make adjustments on a case-by-case basis for students with special circumstances.

#### **So what's next?**

With the reversal of the ban, the focus now shifts to ensuring the quality of the academic programs available to students in prison and that access to college education is equitable—that all students have the opportunity to access quality higher education, the support they need to complete their programs, and the ability to secure well-paying jobs when they leave prison. The FAFSA Simplification Act mandates that relevant state agencies or the Federal Bureau of Prisons select and authorize college programs based on whether they are operating in the best interest of students and provides suggested criteria for making this determination. The Act also mandates new reporting requirements, including the demographics of incarcerated students receiving Pell Grants, which will make it easier to monitor the success of prison education programs.

But many questions remain: How will departments of corrections determine the quality of a college-in-prison program, and how will these programs be evaluated? How will states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons ensure that all incarcerated people have access to education? How will they close racial equity gaps that disadvantage Black and brown communities? Research shows that, on college campuses, students of color are less likely to earn bachelor's degrees—and more likely to earn certificates—than white students, and there are stark differences in earning potential for the fields they pursue. For example, white students are more than twice as likely to pursue degrees in engineering, among the highest paid majors, than Black students.

To provide guidance on these fronts, Vera is launching a Corrections Education Leadership Academy this spring to support departments of corrections and education leaders in creating statewide education systems for incarcerated people. Institutions—state, federal, and educational alike—must ensure that the programs they provide are well-suited for the students they serve. We all stand to benefit.

## S. 79: EQUAL ACT

The ratio was 100:1 starting in 1986, then 18:1 starting in 2010. Should it be 1:1 now?

Cocaine is federally classified as a Schedule II drug, the category with the second-highest potential for dependence and abuse, alongside the likes of Vicodin, Adderall, and meth.

The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 created a 100:1 ratio for sentencing people who were caught with crack cocaine versus powder cocaine. According to the U.S. National Library of Medicine, black people are more likely to use crack cocaine, so the law had a disproportionate effect on nonwhites.

The law was partially crafted and advocated by then-Sen. Joe Biden, though he has subsequently walked back his support. “We were told by the experts that ‘crack, you never go back,’ that the two were somehow fundamentally different. It’s not,” Biden said in 2019. “But it’s trapped an entire generation.”

The Fair Sentencing Act of 2010 reduced the crack/powder sentencing disparity from 100:1 to 18:1. The EQUAL (Eliminating a Quantifiably Unjust Application of the Law) Act would eliminate the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine entirely.

The Senate version was introduced on January 28 as S. 79, by Sen. Cory Booker (D-NJ). The House version was introduced a month and a half later on March 9 as H.R. 1693, by Rep. Hakeem Jeffries (D-NY8).

Supporters argue that since the two types of cocaine are essentially the same except for texture, the sentencing requirements should not diverge so greatly — or at all.

“There is no justification for treating powder cocaine differently than crack cocaine offenses,” Rep. Jeffries said in a press release. “There is no pharmacological difference, no chemical difference and no physical difference between how the body processes crack cocaine and powder cocaine.”

“Crack cocaine has historically been used in inner-city communities and powder cocaine in affluent neighborhoods and the suburbs. Put simply, the dividing line is race and geography,” Rep. Jeffries continued. “That does not justify the wide disparity in sentencing.”

Opponents counter that the disparity was instituted for a reason: that the effects of crack versus powder cocaine are quite different in practice, in a way that arguably makes the sentencing actually a blessing in disguise for the black community.

“The statistics are quite clear concerning the effects of crack cocaine, and crime generally, on predominantly black communities,” Cristian M Stevens wrote in a 1997 *Missouri Law Review* article. “For example, in 1994, 74 percent of emergency room admissions for crack-related problems involved blacks. Furthermore, blacks compose 69 percent of admissions for treatment for crack abuse, whereas whites account for only 24 percent.”

“In light of such figures,” Stevens asked, “why are not increased sentences for crack looked upon as a benevolent measure designed to protect black communities from those who would distribute crack to the poor and the children of the community?”

The House bill has attracted 12 bipartisan cosponsors: eight Republicans and four Democrats. It awaits a potential vote in either the House Judiciary or Energy and Commerce Committee.

The Senate version has attracted one Democratic cosponsor. It awaits a potential vote in the Senate Judiciary Committee.

# Iowa Legislative Update

**HF377 Lifer Review Bill and SF126 Class A Felony Accomplice Bill** - Last session a Lifer Review Team drafted HF377 to clarify the Commutation Interview process for those serving life without the possibility of parole (LWOP) in Iowa. The bill was championed by Representative Terry Baxter (R) and had bipartisan support. Sue Hutchins, the Vice President of Iowa CURE, was a member of the drafting team. She has learned over the last few months that there is interest in breaking HF377 into 3 separate, smaller bills; one bill to change the age for juveniles from 18 to 21 or 25; one bill specifying detailed criteria for the Commutation Interviews for Lifers, and a separate Compassionate Release bill. There are other legislators also considering drafting bills to address these efforts. Also, in the Senate last session Senator James Carlin (R) introduced SF126 to adjust the sentence of LWOP for an accomplice to a Class A Felony murder from LWOP to 25 years to life with parole (LWP). This bill is still alive and will be considered again in the 2022 session.

CURE recognizes and supports the nation-wide effort to reconsider lengthy sentences, life without parole, mandatory minimums, and second chances. We accept the data showing that people age out of crime and brain maturity does not occur until age 25. We accept the research prepared and published by the Sentencing Project and The Vera Institution that lengthy sentences do not improve public safety, are not a deterrent to crime and actually create financial, emotional and social burdens.

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## History and Meaning of Juneteenth

June 19<sup>th</sup> was the day to commemorate the announcement of the abolition of slavery in Texas in 1865 and is celebrated throughout the US to honor African-American freedom. Juneteenth marks out country's second Independence Day. Although it has long celebrated in the African American community, this monumental event remains largely unknown to most Americans. Juneteenth is the oldest nationally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the US. The holiday received its name by combining June and 19. It is also sometimes called "Juneteenth Independence Day," "Freedom Day" or "Emancipation Day".

There are many ways we can celebrate with others in regard to this celebration. We need to recognize the challenges those who fight injustice have always faced, but they shouldn't be marked only by the tragedy of enslavement. We can find empowerment in the jubilant celebrations of culture, activism and the humanity of all people. By celebrating the Juneteenth holiday, you are celebrating a holiday just as important as the Fourth of July and Memorial Day. For without the end of slavery, the great country now known as the United States of America would have been possible.

Juneteenth has grown into a heritage-centered event that focuses on family, community, education and achievement, but its origins are still very important. Each June we celebrate the end of slavery in 1865, across the country family and friends gather to celebrate and learn about the history and experiences of African American before and after slavery.

The Emancipation Proclamation was issued by President Abraham Lincoln on January 1, 1863, had established that all enslaved people in Confederate states in rebellion against the union "shall be then, thenceforward, and forever free". But in reality, the emancipation Proclamation didn't instantly free any enslaved people. The proclamation only applied to places under Confederate control and not to slave-holding border states or rebel areas already under Union control. However as Northern troops advanced into the Confederate South, many enslaved people fled behind union lines. The year following 1865, freedmen in Texas organized the first of what became the annual celebration of "Jubilee Day" on June 19. In the ensuing decades, Juneteenth commemorations featured music, barbecues, prayer services and other activities and as Black people migrated from Texas to other parts of the county the Juneteenth tradition spread.

In 1979 Texas became the first state to make Juneteenth an official holiday. Several other states followed suit over the years. In June 2021, Congress passed a resolution establishing Juneteenth as a national holiday, President Biden signed it into law on June 17, 2021. In the Des Moines area a Juneteenth celebration was held every day for a week, June 12 to June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 with a variety of events. A King and Queen is selected every year. This year King is Bishop Marion and Queen is Lady Sandra Eppright.

An article appeared in the Saturday June 19<sup>th</sup>, Des Moines Register opinion page commemorating Opal Lee referred to as "grandmother of Juneteenth". Opal Lee lives in Texas and her granddaughter who wrote the article is the senior vice president for student affairs at Iowa State University.

*References: Iowa Juneteenth 2021 Events, Des Moines Register June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2021 Opinion page The History and Meaning of Juneteenth, History What is Juneteenth? Elizabeth Nix.*





In person meetings will resume on August 17<sup>th</sup>, 2021.

Wesley United Methodist Church

800 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street, Des Moines, IA

6pm – 7pm

Meetings will be held on the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of every month.

Questions? Call Melissa at 515-229-2645

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## Iowa Coalition 4 Juvenile Justice

Iowa Coalition for Juvenile Justice has accomplished their goal of passing legislation that it is unconstitutional for an individual who is under 18 years old can be sentenced to life without the possibility of parole. The coalition has been monitoring paper interviews and hearings for juvenile lifers. Currently 20 juvenile lifers have been paroled and the recidivism rate is 0%. The coalition will be working with the Midwest Coalition to raise the age of juvenile culpability.

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## 13<sup>th</sup> Amendment

Please write, email, or call (202-224-3121) your U.S. Senators and U.S. House Representative urging them to cosponsor these two bills:

S.J.Res 21 & H.J Res 53 - A joint resolution proposing an amendment to the Constitution of the United States to prohibit the use of slavery and involuntary servitude as a punishment for a crime.

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*“Just when the Caterpillar thought the world was over it became a butterfly.” – Chinese proverb*

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## A School Teacher's Viewpoint!

The following opinion was written about group punishment

I taught my last seventeen years at an inner-city elementary school in Des Moines. During that time one of my former students got into trouble when he was 16 years old. They spent almost 8 years in an Iowa prison. I joined Iowa CURE, Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants, which is a group of family members and friends who advocate for prison reform in Iowa's prison system. For the last 8 years, I have been on the Board of Iowa CURE.

Recently I heard from another former student at Anamosa State Prison that things are miserable there! He said not only was the COVID 19 Pandemic awful as far as lockdowns, but lockdowns of 20-22 hours a day have prevailed since the murders of the two employees at Anamosa! **Why punish all the prisoners at Anamosa?**

Further Iowa CURE board members have heard from someone out at the Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville that everyday life has worsened! Everything from writing correspondence, to craft room restrictions, to job restrictions, to visitation restrictions have gotten worse and are really affecting the lives of the 700 women incarcerated there! She said it was a "crackdown" since the murder of the two employees at Anamosa! **Why punish all the prisoners at Mitchellville?**

From letter writing to an inmate at the Iowa State Penitentiary at Ft. Madison for over seven years, I have also heard that lockdown punishment for all prisoners for the bad choices of one or two prisoners is pretty common. **Why punish all the prisoners at Ft. Madison?**

As a former school teacher that learned it was "wrong" - "unfair" to punish the whole class with no recess because one or two students in my class made a poor choice, it is also "wrong" to punish a whole group of people for the poor choices of a couple of inmates at the state prisons!

This feels like "Group Punishment" and it is "unfair", "unjust" punishment for all!! The Iowa Department of Corrections needs to evaluate this procedure and aim for "fairness" and "justice for all"!!

- Carolyn, member of the board of Iowa CURE



## Connecticut becomes first state to make all prison phone calls free - The Associated Press

Connecticut has become the first state to make all prison phone calls free, addressing one of the biggest emotional and financial burdens faced by incarcerated men and women and their families as they try to stay in touch.

The state has a prison contract with phone vendor Securus Technologies, which charges up to \$5 for a 15-minute call. Those are some of the highest phone rates in the country.

The bill was signed into law by Gov. Ned Lamont last week and could go into effect as early as next month, supporters said Friday. It allows incarcerated men, women and juveniles a minimum of 90 minutes a day of free calls.

“We’re on the right side of history,” said Democratic Rep. Josh Elliott, one of the supporters of the legislation. “Corporations can no longer be allowed to exploit the love between incarcerated people and their families – not in our state, not on our watch.”

*“I never told a victim story about my imprisonment. Instead, I told a transformation story – about how prison changed my outlook, about how I saw that communication, truth, and trust are at the heart of power.” – Fernando Flores*

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### IOWA CURE

P.O. Box 41005

Des Moines, Iowa 50311