



# Iowa Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

Newsletter Summer 2022

*"Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter." - MLK*



## From Your President

Happy Summer Cure Members! I hope this newsletter finds you well. There are some changes happening in the DOC. The new mailing policy is actively being reviewed by CURE. We are researching how to get you your newsletters in the future. Rest assured we will get the answers we need soon. For now you are getting the summer newsletter in the required format. I hope that you find the information beneficial.

Wendy Wittrock – President of Iowa CURE

## Visitation Update

In order to schedule an in-person visit or video call, all visitors must use the Ameelio Connect app. All visitors 13 years and older will need to create an Ameelio Connect account after being approved by the DOC to visit.

- Ameelio Connect is only available on iPhones, iPads, and Android Phones.
- Ameelio Connect is not currently available on computers or laptops.

If you cannot download the Ameelio Connect app and wish to schedule an in-person visit please contact the facility where the individual is incarcerated and request that DOC staff manually schedule a visit.

# Iowa Cure Needs Your Help

## Public Attendance Needed at Iowa Dept of Correction Meetings

This is a call for help to anyone who has: A loved one in the legal system, Is in the legal system, wants to make changes to how prisoners are treated today in the Iowa Prison System? We need you to help make these changes.

You may be wondering how you can. What CURE is suggesting is if you are not on our mailing list to receive this newsletter – subscribe. Annual Membership fees are Prisoner - \$2, Individual - \$10, to receive a copy of each newsletter. It is a way of keeping up with what CURE is currently trying to accomplish and has accomplished.

Here are only a few of many Issues that need to be addressed, but the IDOC needs to be aware of them if change will ever take place:

- Air Conditioning in some of the prisons. Not all prisons in Iowa have comfortable living conditions such as air conditioning – temperatures that are constantly over 90 in the cell blocks in the Summer are not uncommon which results in black mold on the walls.
- Proper winter clothing – for all inmates
- Better/longer visiting hours, supplies (such as games, crayons/coloring books) so children can enjoy being part of the family visit.
- Better bedding – most ‘state issued mattresses are less than 1 inch thick and warm blankets.
- Accurately prescribed medications not just what is readily available.
- Mental Health care and counseling.
- AND THIS list goes on.

An example of a change last November, that was accomplished, is allowing inmates to receive annual colonoscopy tests for any inmate age 45 and older. It took attending the DOC meetings and making certain individuals aware that this was needed. NOW an inmate just needs to submit a kite to receive the test.

# Iowa Cure Needs Your Help

The IDOC needs to 'hear' what we want changed. One way to do this is to attend and speak up at the monthly Iowa Department of Corrections Board meetings. I personally attend as many of these a year as I can when they are in a reasonable driving distance. We need more people to attend these meetings and let the Board know that keeping persons incarcerated for lesser crimes or for crimes they are innocent of needs to change. Most times there are only one or two persons who speak up at these meetings about needed changes. What type of message is this sending to the Board? If you are incarcerated then you need to encourage your loved ones to attend these monthly meetings if the distance is not too far. We need to speak out. **THEY ARE YOUR VOICE.**

- ▶ If each inmate had just one loved person attend ONE Board meeting a year there would be 703 inmate supporters at each IDOC meeting. WOW.
- ▶ The following is a list of upcoming Board meetings for the balance of 2022. Will we see you there?
  - ▶ Sept 9, 2022 – Iowa Correctional Institution for Women, 420 Mill Street SW, Mitchellville, IA
  - ▶ October 7, 2022 – Ft Dodge Correctional Facility, 1550 L Street, Ft Dodge, IA
  - ▶ November 4, 2022 – Iowa medical & Classification Center, 2700 Coral Ridge Ave, Coralville, IA
  - ▶ December 2022 – No Meeting

Contact C.U.R.E. (Citizen United for the Rehabilitations of Errants) at Iowa CURE, PO Box 41005, Des Moines, Iowa 50311, and subscribe to this newsletter. Have all your loved ones sign up – including those who are incarcerated.

# Mailing Update

The DOC is changing the way they allow mail to be sent to inmates effective July 21, 2022. After that point, all mail (except legal mail) will need to be sent to my name and number, Iowa State Penitentiary - 1110, PO Box 96777, Las Vegas, NV 89119. The company's name is Pigeonly, and they are going to screen and copy all mail and then forward it to the prisons for delivery. The rules are as follows:

1. All mail must have a return address.
2. Envelopes must be no larger than 4 in. x 9½ in.
3. Letters must be on paper that is no larger than 8½ in. x 11 in.
4. Greeting cards must be no larger than 5 in. x 7 in.
5. Postcards must be no larger than 5 in. x 7 in.
6. Photographs must be 4 in. x 6 in. (Limit of 10 photos per parcel.)
7. No official documents.
8. No bulk mail.

- ▶ All normal rules for what you can or cannot send to me apply as well.
- ▶ Another option that many of you may prefer is an online service provided by Pigeonly. You can set up a free account at [www.pigeonly.com](http://www.pigeonly.com) and the send mail for free from any cellphone, tablet, or computer. From this account, you can create and send letters, photos, greeting cards, postcards, and web articles. You will also receive mail delivery status and related notifications.
- ▶ You also still have Corlinks to send emails. Beyond the added hassle, it's probably not going to be too bad. The account and free mail thing might actually be better for most of you who still send mail. And greeting cards are allowed, which hasn't been the case for about a year now.
- ▶ The thing that is wrong and will need to be addressed is the envelope size which prohibits "bulk mail." If an inmate needed someone to research something for him/her from the internet, there is no way to send it to me if it's bigger than what would fit in a standard size envelope. That seems too restrictive to be legal, so we'll see how that ends up.

## National CURE

Dear Friends,

We must pass the Abolition Amendment (S.J.Res. 21 / H.J.Res. 53), which reads “Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude may be imposed as a punishment for a crime.”

This June 19, which is "Juneteenth," marks the one-year anniversary of the introduction of the Abolition Amendment by Senator Jeff Merkley (OR) and Representative Nikema Williams (GA-5). It is cosponsored by 12 Senators and 137 House members and includes two Republicans, Rep. Chris Stewart (R-UT-2) and Rep. John Katko (R-NY-24).

Juneteenth is celebrated as the true end of slavery, when troops arrived in Galveston, TX with the news of the Emancipation Proclamation two years after its signing.

However, due to the exception clause in the Thirteenth Amendment, slavery is still very much legal and practiced today in the criminal justice system. It's time, we pass the Abolition Amendment!

One of the first organizations to support the Abolition Amendment was the American Corrections Association (ACA). Five years ago they voted unanimously that "periods of incarceration should not be imposed as punishment for crime, but should be utilized to provide activities that enhance self-worth, community integration and economic status through work, education, vocational training, counseling, medical, mental health care and restorative justice program." The ACA is led by a former sheriff, and wardens and correctional officers are in its leadership. Now, what can you do? The answer is three phone calls. We ask that you call the office of your two U.S. Senators at 202-224-3121 and encourage whoever answers to ask that his or her "boss" cosponsor S. J. Res. 21.

Then, call your one U.S. Representative at 202-224-3121 and also urge co-sponsorship of H. J. Res. 53. Thank them if they are already cosponsors. If we can get a few other co-sponsors, especially Republicans, we can urge Congress to hold a hearing. Charlie Sullivan

# Equal Act

FAMM, the ACLU and Dream Corps JUSTICE are encouraging people across America to call their Senators in support of the EQUAL Act, which would eliminate the federal sentencing disparity between drug offenses involving crack cocaine and powder cocaine. “Since we started promoting the EQUAL Act, we’ve talked about the impact it would have on so many families across the country,” said FAMM President Kevin Ring. “Now, we’re calling on those family members to make their voices heard. They need to call their Senators to tell them to pass the EQUAL Act now. This bill has support from a broad coalition of Republicans, Democrats, law enforcement organizations, and civil rights groups. We hope legislators listen to these families and schedule a vote for this bill.” The EQUAL Act passed the House in September by an overwhelming, bipartisan vote of 361-66.. “Hundreds of Republicans and Democrats in the House have already worked together to pass the EQUAL Act, and now, with 11 Republican Senate cosponsors, this bill is ready to pass out of Congress and make it to President Biden’s desk, where he already said he would sign it,” said Dream Corps JUSTICE Policy Director Kandia Milton. “The fact is that the racist War on Drugs has kept thousands arrested for crack cocaine in prison for years longer than if they had been arrested with the same amount of powder cocaine. That is why today, advocates across the country are reaching out to their Senators to demand this popular, common sense, and necessary bill be brought up for a vote as soon as possible.”

Despite 11 Republican co-sponsors, no vote has been set for the EQUAL Act. “For 36 years, the sentencing disparity between crack and powder cocaine, which lacks scientific justification, has resulted in higher sentences that are disproportionately borne by Black families,” said Aamra Ahmad, American Civil Liberties Union senior policy counsel. “There is strong bipartisan support for ending this disparity. We urge the Senate to pass the EQUAL Act, which will finally end that disparity, including for thousands of people still serving sentences under this unjust law. It is time for Congress to finally end this racially discriminatory policy.” For more than three decades, FAMM has united the voices of affected families, the formerly incarcerated, and a range of stakeholders and advocates to fight for a more fair and effective justice system. FAMM has led the fight to reform extreme mandatory sentencing laws and to promote rehabilitation and dignity for all people in prison, 94 percent of whom will return to our neighborhoods one day.

## Reform Alliance

[HSB607](#): While our bill did not move out of the Public Safety Committee before the first funnel deadline, we have continued to push for amendment language that would enact the educational credits and discharge credits contained in HSB607. Together, these provisions will allow individuals to earn time off their probation term for maintaining compliance on probation and pursuing new skill sets for employment, such as education and vocational training

We continue to push for educational credit provisions of the bill and there continues to be growing support for this credit agenda. Right now, Senator Dawson has been identified as a key legislator we need to reach out to. Dawson has said that he has reviewed the language but is getting additional opinions before making his decision. We encourage members of the coalition who may have a relationship with Senator Dawson to write a short letter of support for the educational credits and gently urge him to support an amendment in order to make gains this session. Please CC Tom Cope at [tomwcope@lobbyiowa.com](mailto:tomwcope@lobbyiowa.com) so that he can reference it or use it as a leave behind with Sen. Dawson. We will also be in contact with specific members of the coalition regarding some more targeted outreach.



# Reform Alliance

Here are some short talking points:

- ▶ Iowa is facing a workforce crisis, with roughly 50k of the 113k job openings in Iowa unfilled in October 2021 and roughly 32% of businesses reporting that they have current vacancies.
- ▶ By encouraging people on probation to get the education and training they need to obtain and maintain meaningful employment, Iowa can address its workforce issues, increase public safety, and ensure individuals on probation are able to provide for their families rather than relying on public support.
- ▶ Other states that have adopted similar approaches, such as Missouri and Louisiana, have seen the benefits of this approach. Probation officers have smaller caseloads as a result, and are better able to focus their time and efforts on their probation clients who need the most supervision and present a real risk of returning to crime.
- ▶ It is important to note that only those people on probation who are in compliance with terms of their probation and/or get additional education and training (while also being in compliance with their probation terms) benefit from the credits featured in our language.
- ▶ While most people on probation have been convicted of a nonviolent offense and anyone with a forcible felony is automatically excluded from being placed on probation, we have added language further excluding people charged with a violent crime from being eligible to earn discharge credits. This is a good example of how this legislation is narrowly tailored to support those who are on the right track.

**IOWA JUSTICE ACTION NETWORK FALL CONFERENCE**

**\$25 Registration fee**

**SAVE THE DATE**  
**ADVOCATING FOR CHANGE:**  
**STEMMING 50 YEARS OF MASS INCARCERATIONS**

**Keynote Speaker: Ms. Alexandra Bailey**  
**The Sentencing Project, Washington, DC**

**8:00AM-4:30PM**  
**THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 29TH**

**@ VALLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH IN DES MOINES**  
**OR JOIN US VIA ZOOM**

For more information email: [Allen.hays@uni.edu](mailto:Allen.hays@uni.edu)

Laws passed in the early 1970s began a 50-year upward spike in mass incarceration which continues to this day, in both Iowa and the nation. At this conference we will learn more about the factors contributing to mass incarceration and discuss concrete proposals and actions that we can advocate for. Please join us!

For Constitution Day on September 17, Worth Rises will be hosting an exciting activation event in Philadelphia to highlight the issue and bring public awareness to the *End The Exception Campaign*. The event will be located at Independence National Historical Park, and the coalition is creating a large wall of portraits of incarcerated people that will be arranged to spell out the word “EXCEPT” – depicting that the 13th Amendment abolished slavery *except for me*.

If you would like to send a photo the contact information is below.

85 Delancey St, 2nd Floor  
 New York, NY 10002  
[info@worthrises.org](mailto:info@worthrises.org)



# Community Oriented Correctional Health Services August 16<sup>th</sup>, 2022

## ***Federal Judge Holds Illinois Prison System in Contempt for Inadequate Medical Care***

A federal judge has held the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) in contempt for failing to abide by a court order to improve medical care for incarcerated people. The August 5 contempt order came after a court monitor's report, released in June, found the IDOC had failed to fully comply with nearly every measure in a 2019 plan to provide adequate health and dental care to incarcerated people.

## ***Federal Monitor Blasts Illinois Prison Healthcare System***

A federal monitor's report released this week has condemned the Illinois Department of Corrections' (IDOC) failure to provide adequate health care for the roughly 29,000 prisoners in its system, citing shortcomings that ranged from the mistreatment of elderly inmates to a severe shortage of doctors and nurses and poor record keeping. The report is the fifth of its kind since IDOC fell under a federally mandated consent decree in 2019.

## **Iowa CURE. An Effort to Reduce Crime through Criminal Justice Reform. Together we can contribute to criminal rehabilitation in Iowa.**

### **Our Board**

Wendy Wittrock – President

Richard Nordin – Treasurer

Mary Kay Dial – Secretary

Eddie Bloomer

Brian Carter

Carla Dawson

Heather Erwin

Sue Hutchins

Jackie Robinson

Larry Smith

Carolyn Walker

Jean Basing – Consultant

Iowa CURE is part of an international organization with membership inside and outside prisons which seeks to bring together individuals concerned about the criminal justice system. We believe in a system based on humane treatment of prisoners and more reliance on alternatives to prisons. We work for reform of sentencing laws, quality legal aid for indigent criminal defendants, access to good medical and mental health treatment for prisoners and improvement in resources for integrating back into society.

- We are an organization solely of volunteers with members in and out of the prison system.
- We cannot offer legal services or accept phone calls from prisoners.
- Letters will be answered to the best of our ability.
- Do not send us your legal documents.
- In joining CURE, you are NOT entering into a contract for service.

## Become a Member

Learn more about our upcoming events, meetings, fundraisers, and more by becoming a CURE member.

Being a CURE member also gives you access to experienced staff, reputable research, political action, community organization, leadership and strategy development, as well as informative fact sheets, action alerts, legislative, and issue updates.

### Annual Membership Fees

Prisoner - \$2

Individual - \$10

Family - \$20

Sustaining - \$50

Life - \$100

If you would like to mail your payment our mailing address is:

Iowa CURE, P.O. Box 41005, Des Moines, IA 50311



### MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION DUES NOTICE

*Please remember to pay your Iowa CURE dues*

Fill out the application form below and mail it with your membership fee to the Iowa CURE office address below

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Annual Membership Fees

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

**IOWA CURE**  
P. O. BOX 41005  
Des Moines, IA  
50311

Please remove me from this mailing list

### Why should I join CURE?

Being a CURE member gives you access to experienced staff, reputable research, political action, community organizing, leadership and strategy development as well as informative fact sheets, action alerts, legislative and issue updates. **Please feel free to photocopy this newsletter/application to pass along to interested friends, family, associates or loved ones in prison.**