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# STATEVILLE

## SPEAKS

VOICES FROM INSIDE...

AUGUST 2009

## Prison Reform Committee Gets Earful on I.D.O.C. Health Care

By Gayle D. Tulipano

On May 19, the House of Representative's Prison Reform Committee, chaired by Representative Eddie Washington (D-60<sup>TH</sup>), heard the poignant and painful stories and individual experiences resulting from inadequate medical care in prisons.

The hearing had to be moved to a larger room because of the substantial number of people in attendance. Many family and friends of William Buhrmester were present. According to those close to William, he died a terrible death as a result of alleged neglect at Menard Correctional Center. William's father, Terry Buhrmester, gave a very heartfelt account of what happened to his son, reading from his letters and presenting documentation that his son was not seen by a doctor during the month he was in Menard

Gloria Johnson-Ester, the mother

of inmate Montell Johnson, also spoke at the hearing. She described the senseless medical anguish that her son has endured in the past few years. Montell nearly died from lack of care after the bedsores he developed become infected. His life was saved only due to the perseverance of his mother and legal action. Jeff Hubbell was not so fortunate. Paralyzed from the waist down, he reportedly died this March of complications from bed sores. These were just some of the accounts discussed at the Committee meeting.

According to Ted Pearson, co-chair of the National Alliance Against Racist Political Repression-Chicago (NAARPR), there were many issues brought to the Committee. *Stateville Speaks* Bill Ryan read from a statement submitted by Gayle Willard, of Illinois Prison Talk that included 19 letters from family members. Ms. Willard said that many more family members would have presented but were fearful of retaliation. Tony LaRocca spoke on how his wife Christine's breast cancer went untreated

for months at Dwight C. C. Rick Tippie, a former correctional officer and one time prisoner spoke of how guard training emphasized that guards should ignore prisoner medical complaints and how he also suffered from medical neglect as an inmate. Shaena Fazal presented testimony from the John Howard Association recommending strict enforcement of the state contract with health care provider Wexford Health Sources and new medical grievance procedures. Duffie Clark presented a sampling of letters from prisoners received at Uptown People's Law Office regarding inadequate medical care. Attorney Jim Chapman of the Illinois Institute for Community Law made a proposal for a special task force of professionals to examine medical care in Illinois prisons.

Ted Pearson also presented an update of a study that the NAARPR is conducting on medical care in Illinois prisons.

*Continued on Page 10...*

*hope / change / redemption*

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# Coverage

WHEN YOU NEED IT

INMATES IN EACH DOC PRISON CAN SUBMIT ARTICLES TO  
STATEVILLE SPEAKS

## Northeastern Illinois University's Edition of Stateville Speaks



In this Photo: Manuel Perez, Gayle D. Tulipano, Tina Kounelas, Tim Bauer.

Welcome to Northeastern Illinois University's (NEIU) edition of *Stateville Speaks*. NEIU is a state university located on Chicago's north side. We are known for having a culturally diverse and non-traditional student body. While those of us who worked on this issue reflect our school's diversity, we also share a commonality of being enrolled in the Justice Studies program here at NEIU.

Although most of us had some prior experience with inmates or prisons, we used this opportunity to obtain a deeper understanding of the system and those that reside within it. We started this venture by reading seemingly countless inmate articles and letters. This led us to further research the conditions of Illinois prisons, including crucial issues such as health care, nutrition, living conditions and jobs skills or training programs being offered to inmates.

We also visited various prisons including Dwight, Dixon and Stateville and conducted inmate interviews. During one such visit to Dixon, an inmate (having served additionally at Menard, Pontiac and Stateville,) stressed that it was not just the actual conditions in the prisons that were of great concern, but the lack of educational and job training programs. What skills have

the inmates learned while incarcerated that will allow them to successfully reenter society? Upon returning to their communities, what opportunities, educational or employment possibilities will exist for them? It confirmed our beliefs as Justice Studies students that while the prison system needed an overhaul, it was simply a reflection of our society as a whole.

The concept of prison reform is a daunting one, so we decided to address one aspect of it and lobbied our state legislators in Springfield. We did this on behalf of HB2633, Tamm's reform and HB0045, the elder bill. There, we joined the likes of Laurie Joe Reynolds, Nadya Pittendrigh and Dr. Stephen F. Eisenman on behalf of Tamm's Year Ten, Ted Pearson of the National Alliance Against Racist & Political Repression (NAARPR), Fran Butler of Kairos Prison Ministries and Bill Ryan of *Stateville Speaks*. There were many other people that did not make the trip but worked equally as hard, including Jim Chapman of Illinois Institute for Community Law, Madeleine Ward of Citizens United to Rehabilitate Errant-Illinois (CURE-IL), Linda Goodman of Illinois Prison Talk (IPT) and Denise

Bartik. We also had the pleasure of meeting with the Illinois legislators that sponsored these reform bills, Julie Hamos (D-18TH) of HB2633 and Arthur Turner (D-9TH) of HB0045. Unfortunately, more work will be needed on HB0045, as it did not get the required votes to pass. At this time we do not yet know the outcome on HB2633, however; we at least know that many in Springfield are listening. This process was a monumental learning experience.

There are many people to thank for our inspiring and rousing experience. We would like most to thank Bill Ryan of *Stateville Speaks*. He is a truly amazing person with boundless energy and a relentless dedication to the idea that most people, given the chance, have the potential for rehabilitation and redemption. His sense of humanity is what we should all strive to obtain. We also appreciate the help given to us by Professor Laurie Jo Reynolds of Columbia College, who oversaw the previous *Stateville Speaks* Loyola edition and is the tenacious force behind Tamm's Year Ten.

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# “Funky” Unlawful New Policy



By Joseph Dole

Soap has been deemed by the courts to be one of life’s basic necessities which inmates have a protected interest in, guaranteed by the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. Long ago the Illinois legislature enacted 730 ILCS 5/3-7-2(d) to guarantee that prisoners are provided with soap as well as other basic necessities.

“All institutions and facilities of the Department shall provide every committed person with a wholesome and nutritional diet at regularly scheduled hours, drinking water, clothing adequate for the season, bedding, soap and towels, and medical and dental care.”

Not only is soap one of life’s basic necessities, but without it, inmates are subject to punishment for failure to follow general rules regarding hygiene. A violation of either of the following general rules, both of which require soap to comply with, will result in 1 month in disciplinary segregation as well as numerous other punishments:

- 1) Failure to clean cell or maintain it in an orderly fashion.
- 2) Poor personal hygiene.

It’s the state’s responsibility to provide for the basic necessities of prisoners. “Once a state legitimately deprives a person of his liberty, it is required to shoulder the economic burden necessary to preserve the constitutional rights retained by the person within the walls of the jail or prison.” See Dawson v. Kendrick, 527 F. Supp. 1252 (1981 (citing numerous cases). Now, though, the I.D.O.C.

appears to be trying to shift this burden to the families of inmates as much as possible.

Prisoners are the poorest group of people in the state. The state pay of \$10 per month has been the same for four decades. A prisoner’s main source of funds is usually friends and family who, more often than not, come from the poorest neighborhoods in the state. The money they send is intended to provide a means to purchase sufficient stationery to keep in contact with loved ones; purchase adequate clothing and to purchase food to supplement the inadequate diet. Often money is used to pay for educational correspondence courses due to the fact that the department ahs so severely reduced educational opportunities in its’ prisons.

Dawson v. Kendrick further stated that the denial of adequate bedding and hygiene supplies has a “resulting danger to the prisoners [which] is manifest in the parasitic skin conditions which often plague the prisoners.” With the increase of MRSA, HIV, Hepatitis, etc, the hygiene of prisoners should be a top priority. Unfortunately and probably because of budget constraints it is not. A year ago an inmate was provided with two bars of soap per week and could purchase additional soap from the commissary. Now only indigent inmates are provided with soap, and only 1 bar per week at that.

In some prisons, Tamms for instance, there are different behavioral levels and each level dictates when and how you

*Continued on page 6...*

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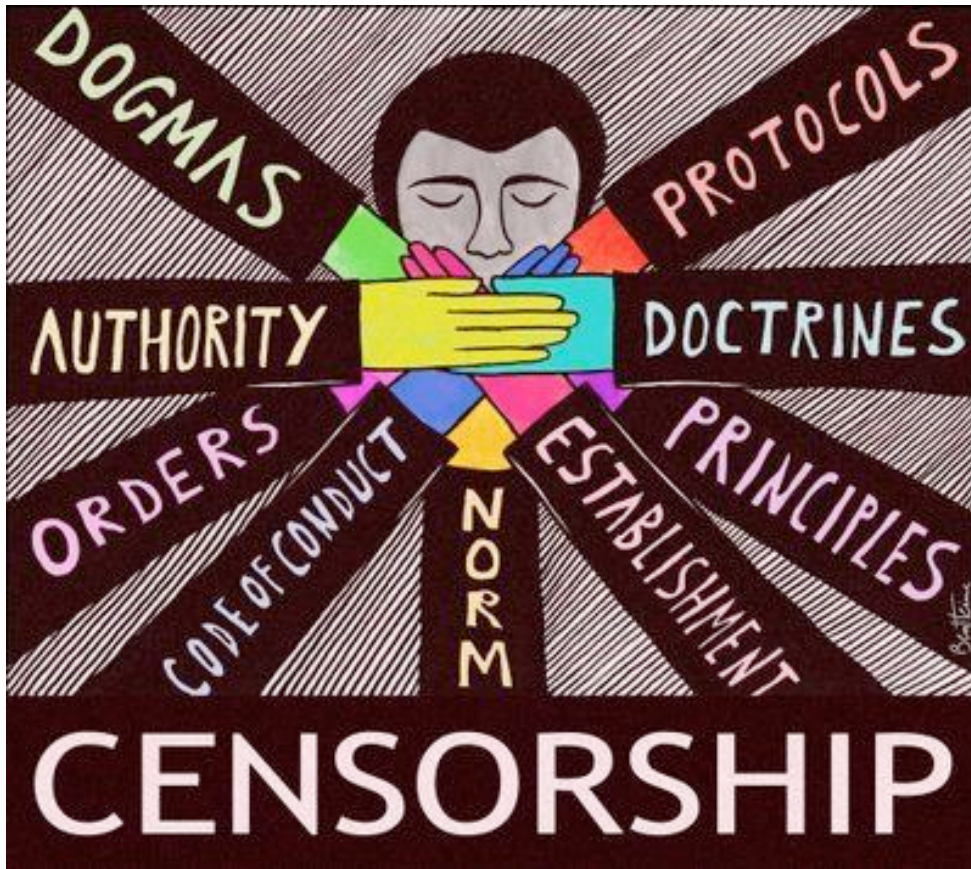
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# Newspaper Censored, Corrections Ignores Law



future when a publication was not delivered to prisoners, the IDOC would provide notification within 30 days of receiving the publication. To this date, no notification has been received by either the publisher, Cynthia Kobel or the editor, Bill Ryan.

Ryan says, "It is unfortunate, but once again the Federal Courts will be asked to resolve this issue. It is clear the IDOC for whatever reason, did not deliver the April 2008 issue and it is very clear the notification as required by lawsuit has not been received. Once again taxpayer will spend money to defend the actions of IDOC that are indefensible."

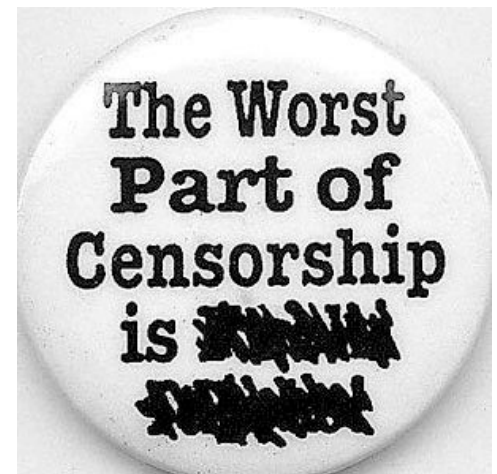
*Stateville Speaks* was founded in 2003 by Ryan and is supported by private donations. The purpose of *Stateville Speaks* is to provide an opportunity for prisoners to express themselves and to advocate for positive change in prison environment and criminal justice. ■

The Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) has censored *Stateville Speaks* and is ignoring a court settlement from a previous lawsuit. Attorneys Alan Mills of People's Uptown Law Office and Russell Ainsworth of Loevy and Loevy, have filed a complaint in Federal Court on behalf of Cynthia Kobel, publisher, and Bill Ryan, editor of *Stateville Speaks*.

In June 2008, *Stateville Speaks* mailed about 2,000 copies to Illinois prisoners and about 500 copies to people not in prison. The people that were not in prison received copies, prisoners did not.

Attempts by attorneys and Bill Ryan to contact IDOC officials for an explanation have failed. Ryan has received written documentation from inmates in seven different prisons stating the April 2008 issue was not delivered to them.

In 2003, the IDOC censored the first issue of *Stateville Speaks* and when no response was received from IDOC despite many attempts, Ryan sued Director Walker in Federal Court (see *Ryan v Walker*). This suit was settled by Ryan and the IDOC with both sides signing a settlement that in the



# Electronic Detention Program



In January of 1991, the Illinois Legislature passed and the Governor signed an Act authorizing electronic monitoring detention for non-violent offenders who had served a percentage of their sentence and demonstrated good behavior. Individuals could reach the eligibility quicker when a GED was earned. The legislature's intent was to return non-violent offenders to their homes with safe guards that increase the chances for rehabilitation and mete out punishment deemed appropriate by the court. During the last eighteen years this legislation has never been implemented as intended.

We are moving to an era of transparency. If the legislature created an Act that helps offenders return to their communities with reasonable safeguards, then there is an obligation to implement those programs with full measure. The specific legislation is 730 ILCS 5/5-8 A-1, 5/5-8A-2, 5/5-8A-3 and 5/5-8A-4. The law specifies the class felonies indicating that a "person serving a sentence for conviction of a Class 2, 3, or 4, which is not an excluded offense, may be placed on an electronic home detention program pursuant to the department administrative directives." The legislation further indicates that for a Class 2 felony the sentence shall be not less than three years and not more than seven; for Class 3 felony, the sentence shall not be less than two years and not more than five years, and for a Class 4 felony the sentence shall not be less than one year and not more than five years. There are additional provisions for good conduct and attainment of a GED which provide for reductions in time served. By definition, all Class 3 and 4 felons are eligible for electronic detention as are 50% of Class 2 felons. Some elderly prisoners are eligible for program during the last years of their

sentences. Sex offenders are not eligible.

Recently Illinois reported a nine billion dollar budget deficit. The state of Illinois needs to restore financial responsibility, minimize tax increases and to prioritize spending to invest in the future of Illinois citizens. Estimates show that complete implementation of the Electronic Detention Program could save the taxpayers approximately \$303 million dollars annually. Obviously there would have to be a phasing of the program so full savings would occur over several years. Supportive services would be required and additional monitoring devices purchased (estimated cost is less than \$10 for each one). Even given these additional costs, the saving to the state is huge. Of equal importance is this savings could result in additional money for preventive programs, education and maybe someday even some tax relief.

It is worth noting that some elderly prisoners (age 50 and above) could be released with electronic detention at a substantial savings to the state. Those who require medical attention can cost, on average, in excess of \$70,000 per year.

The Mission Statement of The Department of Correction's Annual Report for 2007 addresses creative and innovative programs for inmates to better prepare for reentry into society. In relation to those programs, Electronic Detention can enhance the Department's ability to utilize parole and community services. The costly maintenance of 14,000 non-violent offenders in prison severely curtails services that could reduce recidivism and re-admission to prison for a savings of \$303 million dollars

annually.

We have the opportunity to hold ourselves to a higher standard of care, to reduce the over representation of minorities in our prisons, to put more money into the community and to reduce reliance on institutions. We can do more to support fragile families and their children through the use of technology and begin to unwind the cycle of dependence. We can employ more community workers, police officers and parole agents that contribute to the community's safety and well being. ■

## State Representative Arthur L. Turner (D-9TH)

will soon be announcing his candidacy for Lt. Governor in the 2010 democratic primary. Representative Turner has been an outstanding legislator, a fighter for justice and fairness for 25 years in the Illinois legislature and will continue this advocacy as Lt. Governor. The Turner campaign will be a true grassroots effort and is encouraging everyone to get involved. Contact information:

**Citizens for Arthur L. Turner**  
Telephone 773.277.4702;  
Email [citizensforturner@yahoo.com](mailto:citizensforturner@yahoo.com);  
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## HB 2633 Tamms Bill Update

There was a continued push for the passage of HB 2633 in Springfield this legislative session. This bill, sponsored by Julie Hamos (D-18TH) and co-sponsored by an additional 27 legislators, would establish procedures and guidelines for inmates being sent to and released from Tamms. An inmate transfer into Tamms would only occur if the prisoner had attempted to escape, disrupt the prison, or cause injury to a corrections worker or another inmate under this provision. The bill further established that an inmate would remain at Tamms no longer than one year unless he is a danger to the staff or other inmates. Inmates with serious mental illness could not be sent to Tamms.

The original purpose of Tamms was to isolate inmates who have inflicted physical harm against staff or other inmates. It was to serve as shock treatment for a period of about one year. This original intent has not always been followed and some prisoners have been in Tamms for as long as ten years.

The House Prison Reform committee recommended approval of HB2633, but it has yet to be called to the full house. Amnesty International released a statement asking for the improvement of conditions at Tamms and Human Rights Watch urged passage of HB 2633 as a beginning to improve what Human Rights Watch called the "numerous deficiencies" in Tamms. ■

### *Funky New Policy, Continued...*

shop at the commissary. Inmates who are in disciplinary segregation or level 1 this means that there is only one day per month to shop. So if you receive a money order from your family the day after you shop, you have not only missed your chance to shop for the entire month, nor will you be provided with state soap for an entire month because the money you received denies you indigent status. How is that for a "catch 22?"

Maybe the state should rethink the outrageously long sentencing laws it keeps enacting if it can't afford to house prisoners in compliance with state laws and the U.S. Constitution. ■

## Stateville's Day of Achievement

By Anthony Spencer

On March 14, 2008, one hundred inmates graduated Life Skill programs. This has not happened since 1995 the fall of the rehabilitative era, with the ineligibility of state programs for inmates in IDOC. Positive programs have been sparse, if any. The infamous Richard Speck tape was the remaining hope until now. The inception of six new Life Skill classes reached their objective, producing one hundred proud graduates.

The diligent efforts of all the dedicated volunteers made it possible to congratulate the first large assembly in over twelve years. Awards were presented by Assistant Deputy Director Roberta Fuse with independent speeches from each class representative. It would have been great if retired Warden D. Battaglia was able to see her efforts come to fruition. It could not have been a greater day for Stateville. ■

*Welcome to Northeastern Illinois  
University's Edition, Continued...*

Thank you to Keith Atterberry, NEIU Justice Studies alum and A. Terita Smith, NEIU English grad student for their technical and editing skills. Indeed, we owe much gratitude to our own NEIU Professor Kingsley Clarke, who through his own work, spent decades in the struggles for human rights, especially with those that had none. He gave us a sensible, yet sympathetic understanding to this complex issue. Both his patience and convictions are indisputable and his oversight was critical for our success on this project. Finally, we give a big thanks to our Justice Studies Chairperson, Dr. Cris Toffolo, for bringing Stateville Speaks to NEIU and giving it a permanent home.

Thank you to all the inmates for letters, articles, and creative works; some due to space constraints were unable to be printed. We are most grateful for your candid and poignant interviews. We encourage you to write, send articles and other works and continue to grant us future interviews. Thank you for allowing *Stateville Speaks* to be your voice. Know that when you speak, you will be heard. ■

# Marshan T. Allen v. Roger E. Walker No. 06 MR1053

By Marshan T. Allen

Since 2006, litigation has been pending in the Will County Circuit Court seeking to compel the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) and all of its facilities to provide prisoners with adequate winter clothing.

For years, IDOC facilities have been violating State law, and their own rules, by failing to issue winter gloves, hats, boots, and thermal underwear to those entrusted to their custody care. The Unified Code of Corrections and the Illinois Administrative Code, respectively provides:

“Institutions of the facilities of the department of corrections shall provide every committed person... with clothing adequate for the reason...” (730 ILCS 5/3-7-2(d))

“Clothing issued to committed person, including shoes, shall be suitable for the season...” (20 Ill. Admin. Code, 502.210”.

These provisions are clear. The clothing and shoes issued to prisoners must be adequate for the cold winter season. However, this is not the case. The clothing provided by many facilities, like Stateville, consists of only an old, worn-out coat. No winter gloves or hats are provided. Also, Western Illinois Correctional Center and other facilities have stopped issuing basic clothing items, such as t-shirts. In addition, many facilities are only issuing slip-on canvass shoes.

Moreover, the same thin blue uniforms issued to the prisoners during the summer months are also issued during the winter. Other than the worn-out coat, no modifications are made to the uniforms to accommodate for the cold weather. Consequently, prisoners are forced to go out in the cold with their heads, ears, hands, legs, and feet inadequately

protected from the winter weather.

It is important to note that some facilities (e.g. Western IL) have rules that prohibit prisoners from wearing additional clothing items under their prison issued clothing.

In an effort to stay warm during the winter, many prisoners risk receiving disciplinary reports and having their sweat pants confiscated for wearing them beneath their uniforms.

Prisoners are, however, allowed to wear thermal underwear beneath their uniforms, but the institution refuses to provide them.

In response to a grievance filed concerning the inadequate clothing, officials at Stateville stated, “You get a winter jacket from IDOC. Anything else you have to buy.” The problem with this rationale is that most prisoners can not afford to purchase additional winter items from the commissary. But even if they could, State law and the Illinois Department of Correction's own rules state that adequate clothing is to be provided as “issues” and not sold to prisoners. Why is IDOC allowed to get away with this?

Additional winter clothing is necessary because prisoners are required to venture outside in the cold on a daily basis. Every day, prisoners must travel to the dining room for meals (breakfast, lunch, religious services, barbershop, recreational facilities (yard and gym), and other locations within their individual facilities. The very fact that IDOC allows additional winter clothing to be sold in the commissary is a tacit admission that the clothing it issues is not adequate or suitable for the winter season.

*Continued on Next Page...*

*Wanna Help But Don't  
Know Where to Begin?*



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*Marshan T. Allen Continued...*

Furthermore, no one in their right mind would argue that hats and gloves are not necessary during the cold winter. However, this is precisely the position IDOC and the Attorney General's office has taken.

The Court is expected to rule on the petition in late February. If successful, IDOC and all of its facilities will be required to provide all prisoners with winter hats, gloves, boots, and thermal underwear. If not, and in the meantime, prisoners will just have to find a way to stay warm even if it means violating the rules. ■

## Governor Quinn Names New I.D.O.C. Director

Gayle D. Tulipano

On May 14, 2009 Governor Pat Quinn announced the appointment of Michael P. Randle as the new director of the Illinois Department of Corrections (I.D.O.C.), replacing Roger Walker Jr. in that position. Randle was currently working as the assistant director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitations and Corrections (O.D.R.C.), a position he has held since 2006.

Director Randle, born in Chicago, received his bachelor's degree from Ohio State University in 1990. He also earned a master's in business from Ashland University (OH) in 2007. He is 43 years old.

Randle began his career with O.D.R.C. as a Correctional Program Specialist at the Ohio Reformatory for Women in 1990. Shortly thereafter he was promoted to Correctional Specialist, before becoming the Mental Health Administrator. He also served as both Warden and Deputy Warden, before taking a position within the Department of Youth Services.

He returned to O.D.R.C. where he served as Assistant Deputy Director of the Office of



*Mike Randle*

Administration and in 2003, he became the Deputy Director of Administration, before becoming the Assistant Director.

According to O.D.R.C. Director Terry J. Collins, "Mike has been very instrumental in dealing with the daily operations of D.R.C." The corrections department in Ohio has 32 prisons with over 50,000 inmates, employs over 13,600 workers and has an annual budget of \$1.8 billion. In contrast with Ohio, Illinois has 28 adult facilities, incarcerating 45,550 adults and supervising 35,000 on parole. In addition, I.D.O.C. employs 11,000 workers and has an annual budget of \$1.32 billion.

In a statement Governor Quinn said, "Michael Randle possesses the professionalism and experience required to manage this important Illinois agency. He also brings a fresh perspective towards running the state's rehabilitation and correctional facilities."

Just how "fresh a perspective" he will bring is still unknown, although many that are working to correct deficiencies in the I.D.O.C. are willing to give him a chance.

State Representative Julie Hamos (D-18<sup>th</sup>) sponsor of HB2633 (Tamms Bill) agreed not to pursue a vote on the bill in this past spring's legislative session, instead giving the "director an opportunity to make the needed changes." State Representative Eddie Washington (D-60<sup>th</sup>) also stated that he would be discussing the deficiencies in medical care in Illinois prisons. Additionally, *Stateville Speak's* Bill Ryan is sending written testimony

presented to the Prison Reform Committee regarding the potential medical neglect of Illinois inmates (see Prison Reform Committee article) to Director Randle.

State Representative Art Turner (D-9<sup>th</sup>), who will be filing as a candidate for Lt. Governor said, "I wish Mike Randle the best and offer my support in bringing the much needed reform to the D.O.C." Additionally, Representative Constance A. Howard (D-34<sup>th</sup>) added, "I am eager to meet and discuss with Director Randle the necessity of developing re-entry programs, especially the utilization of the electronic monitoring program for non-violent offenders."

Randle was with O.R.D.C. during the time that a lawsuit was filed against the department by inmates at the Ohio State Penitentiary, Ohio's Supermax prison. The case focused on whether the inmate's Due Process Clause under the Fourteenth Amendment was not being considered when they were transferred into Supermax. This case was heard by the Supreme Court that ruled the inmates are granted adequate protection of their liberty under the procedure process of the Ohio prison system. However, it should be noted that unlike Illinois, Ohio has some criteria for being sentenced, held and released from the Supermax prison. Proponents of Tamm's reform are hopeful that such standards will ensue in Illinois under the new Director's tenure, without litigation.

Another reason for cautious optimism has been Randle's statement regarding the release of inmates when he said "The reality is, for the majority of people who come to prison, they're coming home someday... The key question is, how do you want these people coming back? Do you want those people coming back better prepared to be taxpayers rather than tax burdens?" There are many people waiting to see if the new Director Michael Randle brings the aspect of rehabilitation with him to Illinois. ■



# Third World Wages



By Janet Jackson

Some twenty years ago, when I entered the system, offenders (then called inmates) made \$15.00 a month in state pay, which was to supply their needs not covered by the state. The state fed the offenders three times a day, provided a bed, linen, clothing, shoes, a coat and a place to shower. The state did not provide soap, shampoo, toothpaste and a toothbrush, a comb or any other type of hygiene product, except on a limited basis and usually only during the intake process.

Twenty years later offenders are still getting the same \$15.00 a month state pay minus 3% (45 cents), while the prices at the commissary have risen astronomically. Televisions, that used to cost \$69.00 for a 13 inch, now cost \$189.00. Coffee, which used to cost \$2.00, has risen to \$6.00. I could go on and on, but instead, I'll tell you about Betty, the average offender.

Betty has no money of her own, but she did just get her state pay of \$14.55. This is how she spent it, based on purchasing the cheapest items at the commissary on 11/07/08:

Fresh up deodorant	\$2.21
VO5 shampoo	\$1.55
VO5 conditioner	\$1.55
Soap, (2 Ivory)	\$1.52
Toothpaste (Cool Wave)	\$1.11

Dental Loops	\$2.02
Purex laundry soap	\$2.30
Tooth brush	\$1.11
Super maxipads	\$1.64
(1/2 bag every 2nd month)	

Hold it! Betty has already spent 46 cents more than she has and still has not purchased all she needs. She has no pen (52 cents), no paper (\$1.06), and envelopes (50 cents), to write home to her children. She has no lotion for her skin (\$2.09), no soap dish for her soap (68 cents), and no shower cap (12 cents). Her finger and toenails will have to grow, as she does not have 87 cents to spend on clippers. Of course, Betty will never be able to purchase any food or beverages for herself. She will have to drink the water at CDR and the occasional milk. But Betty cannot afford a cup at 55 cents, or a bowl at 68 cents. As for a fan (\$20.06) in 98-degree weather, well, Betty is going to have to sweat. She will also be very hairy, as a shaver at \$16.72 isn't going to happen.

Betty had better not think about getting sick either, cough drops are 72 cents a roll and a bottle of Tylenol is \$2.32. If Betty goes to sick call she will get her medication free but she will have the \$2.00 co-pay. Did I mention if Betty had long hair, a comb is 47 cents and ponytail holders are \$1.19?

Poor Betty, she is freezing – not only because it's cold inside and outside but because she has inadequate clothing. Betty is wearing her state short sleeved top, her state underwear, her thin twill pants, socks and state coat, hat and gloves. Betty has no long underwear because she wasn't here at Christmas when a church group gave offenders the long john bottoms. So Betty stands shivering and shaking in the line outside to walk to her assignment, to go to the CDR and everywhere else she is required to go. How is Betty surviving? She is dependent on her more fortunate inmates who are willing to share. This is

forbidden and by doing this Betty may receive a ticket and even go to segregation; but by this time, the cold, inadequate clothing, lack of food has gotten to Betty and she is desperate. Betty is like many, she has learned to survive in prison where the officials and the rules may be the most offensive of all. ■

## Democrats in Dupage Issue – Oriented

Since last year's election of Bob Peickert and the Operation Turn DuPage Blue Coalition to county party leadership, lots is happening in DuPage County. In November, after an unprecedented Get Out the Vote effort, three new Democratic faces won seats on the previously 100% Republican County Board. Additionally, the Dems helped coordinate a massive effort in the April elections to flip the leadership of the Trustee Board at the College of DuPage.

Now, the Democratic Party of DuPage is working in a coalition called

"ADVANCING DUPAGE" a multi-partisan effort concerned with the lack of voices heard in DuPage. Over the next few months, participants will go door-to-door conducting an issue canvass to get at the heart of what DuPage residents want from their elected officials in the upcoming 2010 race. We welcome all of those who would like to join us. Training is given. Contact Amy at 630-629-1125 or at [info@dupagedemocrats.com](mailto:info@dupagedemocrats.com).

Amy Tauchman  
Executive Director,  
Democratic Party of DuPage  
630-629-1125

# Essays, Letters and Insight

PROPOSALS AND PERSUASIVE EDITORIALS

## Late Mail

March 12, 2009

Dear Sir:

I'm writing this letter in regards to the mailroom personnel and mail correspondence delivered late; which affects the female inmates here in Dwight Correctional Center facility.

The mail has been extremely late in distribution for the past four months, and we no longer receive mail on Saturday, per Warden Sigler who has left. We did previously however, receive our mail 2 or 3 days after the facility received the mail from the post—date of the mail. Now, we (I) receive mail 2 to 3 weeks after the post—dated mail is received, especially if there is a money order enclosed with the correspondence.

I know sometimes things fall behind a little with Dwight being short on staff, however, that's no reason for us inmates to, not receive mail from our families and suffer the consequences of not receiving mail on Saturdays, and/or receive mail 2 to 3 weeks late (after the post—date on the envelope). Some of our families send money orders, but when the mail is behind, we are unable to purchase the things we need such as, personals, and toiletries which are not I.D.O.C. distribution items.

According to Dwight's Rules Handbook, DR 525b, 525.110 & 525.120, these indicate "Mail shall be delivered within 24 to 48 hours after received from the U.S. Postal Service." This includes (at one time prior to July), money orders legal mail; the mail process and handling.

Thank you for looking into this matter for me. I appreciate your response at your soonest convenience. Sincerely yours,

..... ■

Dear Mr. Ryan,

I hope that you are doing well. I'm writing you to ask for help. I've written several grievances to my counselor regarding postage. Incoming U.S. Postage is received ten to eighteen days after the post—date stamped on the envelope, after it has been issued to the Dwight Correctional Facility.

I've noticed some of the mail is two to three weeks late when I get it, and the stamped post—date could be December 5 and I receive my letter on January 30. This is longer than 55 days. It should not take that long to process a regular sized letter.

The Amendments to the Constitution, says in Amendment one, "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment...to petition the government for a redress of grievances." I've written to the John Howard Association and their response was "It is a grievable issue." I grieved this issue in September 2008 and it continues to be ignored.

I am really hoping that you get this letter to possibly give me a direction to go on with this matter. I will send you another copy of this letter through the mail just in case, maybe the other one will reach you first. I'm looking forward to your response.

I also need a copy of the "Stateville Speaks Newsletter" if possible. Thank you for your information and time, be blessed and have a great day,  
Sincerely Yours,  
Janene Clay. ■

Dear Bill,

I'm writing to you because I need your help. I'm currently house at Pontiac Correctional Center, in the Segregation Unit, West Cell House.

Some other inmates and I were moved out from the East Cell House to the West Cell House, where there is no heat and it's very cold in my cell. The temperature is so low in here that it feels like we are

actually outside. I'm sleeping in my clothing, coat, and jumpsuit, just to stay warm. It is warm in the East Cell House, but it is simply freezing here in the West Cell House.

They have denied me and my fellow inmates in my Cell House our Eight Amendment rights to be free from cruel and unusual punishment as guaranteed under the Fourteenth Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. All of the other Cell houses here have heat, but in our Cell house, it is in the low teens and everyone is sleeping in their clothing.

By law in Illinois, the Department of Corrections is supposed to turn on the heat by October 15. We need your help as soon as possible—it is so cold in our Cell house we can barely think—we need heat.

God bless you Bill and all the work you do,  
Kenneth. ■

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*Main Story: Prison Reform Committee, Continued...*

The main issues according to Mr. Pearson, "were the lack of accountability of the prison medical contractors to anyone in the I.D.O.C.; the absence of any independent grievance procedure available to prisoners regarding medical issues and the severe medical staff shortages throughout the system". Pearson discussed the terrible record the I.D.O.C. has in treating diabetes, pointing out that I.D.O.C.'s own records show only 53% of the inmates with diabetes are managed appropriately.

Most of the questions raised by the members of the Committee were directed primarily to the spokespeople for the I.D.O.C.

*Continued on Page 15...*



Greetings: Mr. Bill Ryan

Peace and blessings to you and your family during this holiday season. My intentions are not to spoil your mood, but I have to address this issue about the no heat/little heat that is below State and Federal standards that is also a violation of my 8<sup>th</sup> Amendment rights. I have addressed this situation two times and (the situation) is (that) over one hundred inmates housed in this abandoned building like conditions. They moved us from one building with heat on December 5, and we have been subjected to this Cruel and Unjust Punishment due to these conditions of no heat.

When we ask about the heat, they say that the heat is on, which is hard to believe. These conditions are very unhealthy, seeing that we only shower once a week; we are subjected to take care of our personal hygiene in our own cells. But seeing the no heat situation is so extreme, this is hard to do. We can't exercise to keep a warm body temperature because we have to stay in bed sleeping with coats on just to stay warm.

Before I end this letter, I want to thank you, respectfully, for extending your help and if you have any information on others. I can write to seek more results of my situation, please forward that to me. Thank you and God bless you,  
Darren Butler ■

## Editorial

By Bill Ryan

This legislative session, several bills were brought forth that needed attention by the Illinois prison system. Recommended was the abolition of the death penalty and a clearly defined standard for transfers in and out of Tamms, with time limits and protections for the mentally ill. Also recommended was a sentence adjustment for elderly and rehabilitated prisoners, the use of an electronic home monitoring program, implementation of the Horizons transitional program, and Impact of Crime on Victims Classes (ICVC).

As a member of the core advocacy group for prison reform, *Stateville Speaks*, I will continue to press for progressive changes. HB 45, the Elderly Prisoner Sentence Adjustment Act, sponsored by State Representative Art Turner (D9), was recommended for passage by committee but was defeated in a full House vote. (Please, see the roll call and Q and A regarding HB 45 in this issue.) Members supporting legislation should be contacted and thanked and those opposed, contacted to discuss the legislation. It is important to remember who supports social justice when election time rolls around next year.

The Tamms Bill (HB 2633), was sponsored by State Representative Julie Hamos (D18) and was recommended for passage by committee, but was not voted on by the full House. The same occurred with the Abolition Bill (HB 262), sponsored by State Representative Karen Yarborough.

Although votes were not taken on the latter two bills, it is reasonable to assume that the outcome would have been the same, as with HB 45. We find support for progressive change among Chicago Democrats, especially the Black Caucus, and very little support among Republicans or downstate legislators. Yet, our concerns

should not be partisan issues. They are rooted in basic notions of fairness and justice.

We have provided Governor Quinn's office and several legislators information about electronic home monitoring that should be available to nonviolent offenders convicted of class 1, 2, and 3 felonies. IDOC has not implemented this program. Also, we are urging implementation of Horizons, a transitional living program utilized effectively in several states, and ICVC, a highly successful restorative justice program used in Missouri. These programs can be provided at practically no cost to the state.

Our movement earned high grades for commitment and effort, but we need many more people and more effective communication. There is an old Kentucky saying, "This ain't no hill for a stepper." Getting progressive prison changes through legislation "ain't no hill" for Illinois steppers, so let's get to it.

Please, anyone reading this who wants to get involved, contact me at [nanatoad@comcast.net](mailto:nanatoad@comcast.net), 708.531.9923. Together we can make a difference. ■



*Stateville Speaks* would like to thank you for your readership and continued support. We encourage you to send us your comments, letters, articles and creative works for possible future publication. Submissions can be sent to:

***Stateville Speaks* • 2237 Sunnyside • Westchester IL 60154**



# Creative Corner

WHEN INSPIRATION HITS...POEMS WRITINGS CONNOTATIONS...



## The Magic of Written Words

By Lonnie Smith

Written words do many things;  
They can send you to the height of heaven,  
Or plunge you into the depths of hell,  
Make you laugh, cry, sign, or sing

They can teach and inspire,  
Help you walk with pride,  
Or creep along, like a beaten thing  
They can fill you with hate and start wars

Take you into adventures,  
In strange and foreign places,  
Make your burdens heavy or lighten them,  
Best of all they can fill you with love

All of this and more is yours,  
When you enter the major world  
Of the written words. ■

## The Father

By Margaret Halaska, OSF

The Father  
Knocks at my door  
Seeking a home for his son.  
Rent is cheap, I say.  
I don't want to rent, I want to buy, says God.  
I'm sure I want to sell,  
but you might come in to look around.  
I think I will, says God.  
I might let you have a room or two.  
I like it, says God. I'll take the two.  
You might decide to give me more someday.  
I can wait, says God.  
I'd like to give you more,  
but it's a bit difficult. I need some space for me.  
I know, says God, but I'll wait. I like what I see.  
I'd like to give you the whole house,  
but I'm not sure.  
Think on it, says God. I wouldn't put you out.  
Your house would be mine and my son would live in it.  
You'd have more space than you ever had before.  
I don't understand at all.  
I know, says God, but I can't tell you about that.  
You'll have to discover it for yourself.  
That can only happen if you let my son have the whole house.  
A bit risky, I say.  
Yes, says God, but try me.  
I'm not sure.  
I'll let you know.  
I can wait, says God. I like what I see. ■

## The Guise of Justice

By Lonnie Smith

Heart, prepare yourself for battle!  
Selfishness comes in the guise of justice  
To ravage  
He will scream your mistreatment  
And whine your rights  
Until you weaken and join him  
To scream your mistreatment and whine  
your right  
And beat against those who love you  
Until everyone is ravaged  
And just you are left in the dust of a  
shattered day  
While he departs, laughing and  
victorious

## Choices and VOICES

Life is filled with choices and every choice and you make has the potential to lead you down a different path, or change your life and other's in a variety of ways. Your voice has the same ability. Imagine being able to look at an injustice and use your voice to bring attention to it, to gather likeminded people to support the cause, and to make positive change.

Youth Advocate Programs, Inc. has an agency wide systems change initiative focused on uniting and empowering young people and families to raise their voices to bring about change in the systems that have separated families and locked away kids. YAP has engaged families and Alumni to join influential boards, speak at events, document their stories and actively work with their local and state government to change the system.

*Continued on next page...*

### Choices and Voices Continued...

We intend to bring awareness to pertinent social issues and to offer alternatives. These families and communities are demanding a change.

Residential facilities and prison systems are poised for abuse. Facilities are overcrowded and packed with anger and confusion. Staff members demanding respect continually confront these scared youth. They have to keep order and will do that at all costs.

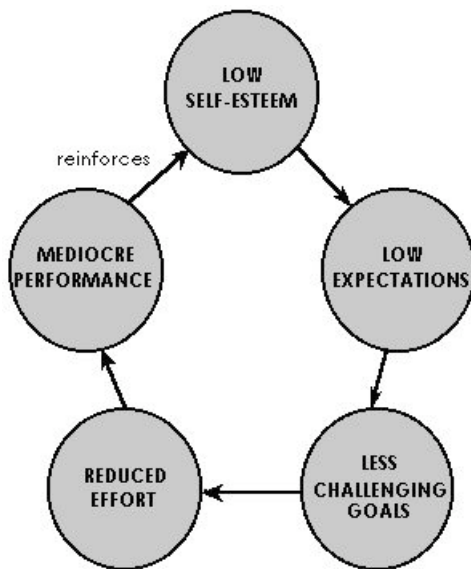
Jackie, now 17, describes his introduction into the system when he was only 14 years old. "Within 2 hours of walking into the facility, I was restrained 3 times, shoved, swore at, and called names. I didn't know any of the rules or what I was supposed to do. This was my orientation".

There is a vicious cycle of inadequate community based supports. Parents need help raising their children. The kids wind up in the system either through Child Protective Services or through the Juvenile Justice system. The youth then need community supports to begin to make good choices. Instead they are shuffled off to facilities where they are expected to make changes that will help them survive when returning to their communities and their families who still haven't received those same basic supports. VOICE representative and YAP alumni, George, described placement as a "safe haven" from the abuse suffered at home. After being in placement from ages 8 to 14, George's parents hadn't changed too much. It took community based supports to assist George and his parents in reuniting safely.

Repeatedly kids filter through the same systems. They get discharged without structure, or supports. This lack of follow through perpetuates recidivism rates across the nation. Will, another VOICE member has experienced every aspect of the system.

When one placement discharged him, he was right into another within a month. Will feels his after care services were "a joke". "They are only there to catch you making wrong decisions, they don't care about all the good stuff you have accomplished. If the aftercare I had was there to help me, it was only to help me right back into placement." states Will.

We need to raise awareness about YAP VOICE movement. We don't want any more kids to be lost to the system, we don't want any more



kids to suffer in the very system that is supposed to help them and we don't want any more kids to be torn from their homes and communities. Raise your voice and make the choice to stand up for the cause. For more information about YAP and the VOICE initiative, contact our home office at (717)232-7580.

In the poem, I WALK ALONE, one youth chooses to stand up for causes through his poetry. ■

## I Walk Alone

By George M. Oliver

I walk down the same path  
Same soul and heart  
Just a new tainted laugh  
I didn't have at the start

Some bumps are long covered  
But the cracks are still shown  
Like scars from ex lovers  
Unnoticed but known

This path has not changed  
In 21 years  
It's all quite the same  
But still unclear

This path has been walked on  
By many ungrown  
But those memories are gone  
Now I walk alone

Wisdom is pain  
While pain is love  
Love leaves stains  
That wisdom cleans up

Love is the part  
That keeps on talking  
Wisdom stays smart  
It just keeps walking

Walking through cracks  
Puddles and bends  
Wisdom never looks back  
It remembers the trends

This path has been walked on  
By many ungrown  
But those memories are gone  
Now I walk alone ■

# If You Do What You Did You'll Get What You Got.

By Rich Dyches

I'd like to start off this little piece by putting on the record that I have been known to be as thick headed as anyone. It takes me several touches of the stove sometimes before I figure out it is hot. My ears are closed and my brain is switched to off, on occasion. With that said, I think I qualify as an expert on stubbornness. What I can't fathom is how after a few burns from the heat, some folks still don't get it.

Now I'd like to put forth a proposition I ask you to look at objectively. If your job was to create the meanness junkyard dog then how would you get the job done? I say you take the biggest and baddest looking mastiff, put him in a cage, and then poke him with a sharp stick until he attacks anyone (or anything) that comes near him. The thing with this vicious mastiff is that he will be placed on a chain and only be able to reach those that trespass upon his territory. Where am I going with all this? Let me elaborate.

The Illinois prison system has been producing bull mastiffs without chains for decades now. They place men and women in a cage and poke them until their anger boils with venom. Then they release these men and women upon society and endanger an unsuspecting populace. No chains. No muzzles. Mayhem waiting to happen. Seventeen years of regression introduced prisoners to "the joys of breaking rocks," as one former governor moaned, but what it really did was set public safety back in a counter-productive cycle that will continue probably for as many years into the future unless we grab the bull by the horns as soon as possible. How do we saddle this bull? Certainly not with

dehumanizing retributive punishment.

The solution to public safety dilemma lies in a real step-down system of incarceration that allows men and women the chance to put in place employment, housing, counseling, and support system components prior to their release. A merit-based system of classification must be employed. When a man or woman enters the system they must be made aware of the chance for step-down security moves that will be adhered to if the man or woman does what is expected of them. Deal breaking on either side will not be in the plan. The process of true rehabilitation will begin as soon as the prisoner enters the door. Non-violent offenders will move to lower security quicker. Violent offenders will be required to complete certain proven violence reduction programs. All will be afforded education. Diplomas and degrees will be made available through viable educational sources both in-house and via the internet. Men who succeed in educational pursuits are far less likely to come back to prison. If your crime is drug related in any way, there will be a mandate to attend twelve step programs. Support system building will be the main focus. This responsibility/education/application phase will be the initial focus during the beginning of incarceration.

The next step of the process is to move the offender to the lower security settings that allow more personal responsibility. At minimum security he or she will be continuing what they started at the previous step-down level, but will be able to work for their needs and have more contact with an outside support system. At this stage,

plans for post-release housing and permanent employment will be activated. Outside twelve step group schedules and support systems will be furthered. Once an offender is afforded pre-release status he/she will be given ample opportunity to get all of their individual needs set. The longest segment of prisoners' sentences needs to be spent in these lower security settings so that they can obtain what they need, to assimilate back to society. All the world's successful systems employ this strategy. It has a proven success record.

If the true focus of corrections is to protect public safety and not just to act as a jobs program for DOC employees, then we need to put into place a real, effective and proven system. New blood needs to be brought in. When you instill hope into men and women then you afford them the best chance of success. Once you believe in the installation of hope, you have to back it up with proper mechanisms. To get it done you need to build proper facilities, staff them with the proper people, and oversee them with officials that have a background and education in progressive corrections. The bonus here is that these types of facilities require less staff (a huge savings), have lower operating costs, and afford more bang for the buck as far as public safety is concerned. The time has come for Illinois to move forward and get its act together.

A good friend of mine used to say, "If you do what you did you'll get what you got!" The meaning being if you keep repeating the same actions then you get the same results. If the results are negative then you need to try some new actions. If Illinois and other states do not radically change the system we will continue to get what we have gotten - higher crime rates, soaring recidivism rates, higher poverty rates, social decline, and most alarming, diminished public safety. It's time for a change.

Please contact your state representative, senator, and public safety department officials. Demand change. Support progressive agencies. Do what it takes. Change comes hard, but it will come if we fight for it. If you do what you did you'll get what you got! ■



## Dear Mr. Ryan:

Hello Sir, how are you?

I just recently read the January 09 edition of *Stateville Speaks*, the Loyola University special edition that another prisoner allowed me the pleasure of reading and I was moved by some of the articles written in it.

I first heard about *Stateville Speaks* back in October 08 when a different prisoner allowed me the pleasure of reading his. This same prisoner sent me a letter written to him by a professor and a student at Loyola University informing him that they were conducting a project with *Stateville Speaks* concerning the Criminal Justice System in Illinois and that they would like to hear more from him and from other prisoners. I immediately wrote the professor Ms. Laurie Jo Reynolds expressing some of my concerns and thoughts about the system. Ms. Reynolds sent me a post card stating that she read my letter to her students and they learned a lot and she expressed her gratitude.

I would like to say that it is not me who needs to be thanked. It is individuals like yourself and Professor Laurie Jo Reynolds and the many other prison support groups and organizations that should be thanked. So thank you all for all of your dedicated work that you have done in helping create change for the better for prisoners within and outside of the system. Thank you and your entire staff for your long hours of research, investigations and time put forth in getting the word out to people and thank you for believing in our cause and not giving up on us.

There are many prisoners who want to change not only to better themselves but to be better to others around them. There are many prisoners who came in here as irresponsible immature males who are beginning to

grow into mature men and wanting to create a positive environment for themselves and others inside and outside of these prison walls. This is a new ground breaker for many prisoners. Most lack the self-discipline, motivation and determination it takes to stay on this positive path and because there is no place within Illinois prisoners to channel many of these positive thoughts, ideals and talents, most prisoners will relapse and fall back into the abyss of negativity influenced by the few prisoners who do not want to change, do not care to change and have nothing to gain from positive change.

Monday through Friday there is between one and six prisoners being released from this prison every day and not one of them has been seriously educated and given the tools needed to increase their chances of staying free. We need programs within these prisons to help prisoner's rehabilitate themselves, stay on a positive path and increase our chances of staying free. If we are not given these programs the recidivism rate will continue to stay between two to three out of every four prisoners being released. Most programs needed do not cost much and can be taught by some of the prisoners who qualify. All we are asking is that the I.D.O.C. gives us the opportunity to show that some of us are and can be positive and can contribute to the system and society. We ask that I.D.O.C. stop holding most of us responsible for the actions and conduct of those who were here before us and give us a chance to grow.

I have written another letter concerning juvenile life without parole. I sent a copy of this letter to the Family and Children Justice System, Congresswoman Annazette Collins, Congressman Arthur Turner and the National Organization for Victims of Juvenile Lifers.

Valdez Jorden

*Main Story: Prison Reform Committee, Continued...*

Of those queried were Roberta Fewes, deputy director of the Office of Programs and Support Services, Cindy Hobrock, head of the Office of Health Services and Jim Ryan, I.D.O.C. Chief of Staff, responded along with I.D.O.C. Chief Counsel, Ed Huntley. Mr. Pearson felt the answers provided by the I.D.O.C. representatives "did not satisfy the Committee members" and consisted mostly of citing procedures, staff shortages and in some instances saying investigations had to be conducted. Representative Art Turner (D-9<sup>TH</sup>) compared the monitoring of Wexford to the "fox watching the henhouse." Representative Constance A. Howard (D-34<sup>TH</sup>) raised questions of the protocol and handling of William Buhrmester.

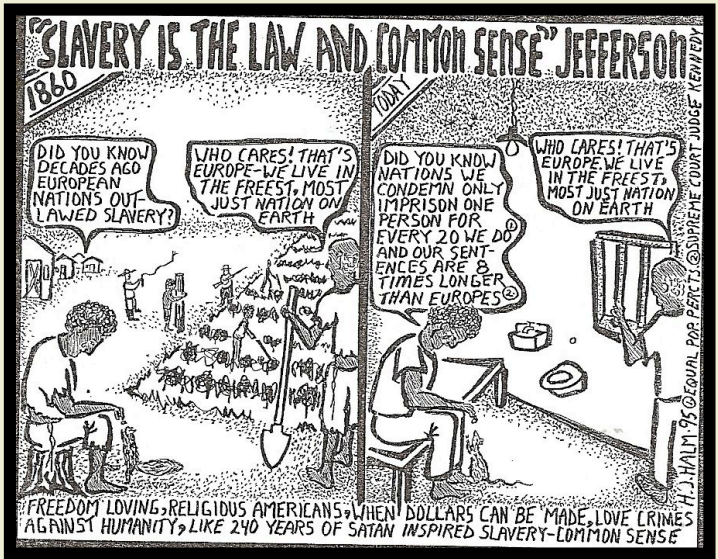
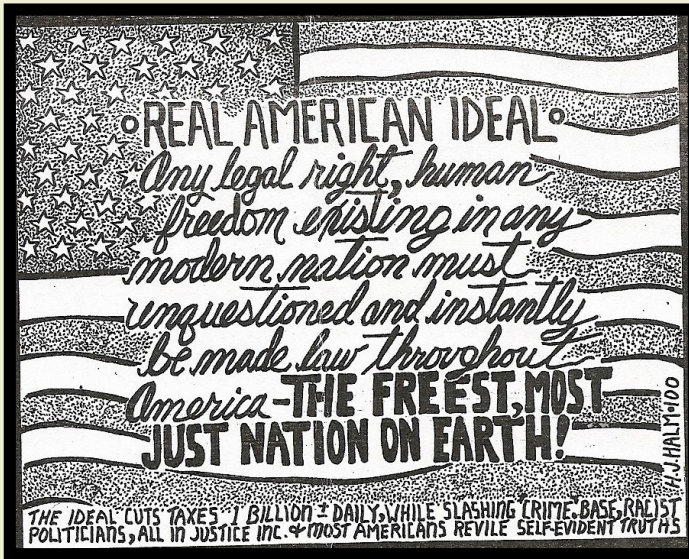
Chairman Rep. Eddie Washington said he would present the issues raised during the hearing to the newly appointed I.D.O.C. Director Michael Randle, former Assistant Director of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. Written testimony presented to the Prison Reform Committee will also be sent to Director Randle by Bill Ryan. Mr. Ryan maintains that the testimony presented to the committee "demonstrates widespread, systematic medical neglect by the I.D.O.C. and Wexford." ■

### **In Memory...**

The entire staff at *Stateville Speaks* offer their condolences to the family and friends of William Buhrmester. William, formally of Robinson, died at Menard on April 2, 2009. He was 36 years old.

We at *Stateville Speaks* offer condolences of the passing of Jeff L. Hubbell, who died on March 7, 2009 at Dixon Correctional Center. He was 54 years old.

# Political Toons



There is a new Illinois CURE chapter started by Madeline Ward. Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants is a membership-based grassroots organization that believes that prisoners should be given the resources to turn their lives around. Join and help Illinois prisoners tap into this strong voice, already recognized by the United Nations.

Electronic Home Detention is the law, 730ILCS5-5/8/1. Please apply for it, and then contact or have a family member contact Illinois CURE at 312-590-6129 or 4904 S. Drexel Blvd, Chicago, IL 60615 or madeoday@gmail.com.

**Join CURE and unite for prisoner rehabilitation!**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

CITY: \_\_\_\_\_ STATE: \_\_\_\_\_ ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

Cost is \$2 for prisoners or \$10 for individuals

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