

STATEVILLE SPEAKS

VOICES FROM THE INSIDE • FALL/WINTER 2014

CORRECTING CORRECTIONS

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM

By Alan Mills
November 2014

Mr. Chairman and Members of the Joint Committee, thank you for this opportunity to address this body this morning.

My name is Alan Mills. I am the Executive Director of the Uptown People's Law Center, where I have worked, either as a volunteer or as a staff attorney since 1979. I also teach a course on prisoner rights at Northwestern University's School of Law and a similar course at DePaul University's College of Law.

The Law Center is a small not-for-profit legal clinic located in the Uptown neighborhood on Chicago's Northside. We represent disabled people who have been wrongfully denied social security or other public benefits; we represent tenants being wrongfully evicted from their homes. We also represent prisoners in the Illinois prison system whose constitutional rights have been violated. It is from this work that we have gained an intimate knowledge of Illinois' prison system, and the changes to that system over the last 35 years.

Earlier this Fall, the Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Statistics released its annual survey of prisons. These are official population figures collected by the federal government, applying uniform methods of counting both prisoners and capacity across all fifty states. As of December 31, 2013, Illinois' prisons were operating at 172.6% of design capacity' (<http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/p13.pdf> [Appendix Table 1]). Alabama is the only system more crowded than ours. California, which for decades was the basket case of prison systems, after a decade plus of class action litigation, was ordered by the Supreme Court to reduce its prison population—and it has done so, and is now operating at 142% of capacity.

Illinois' prison population has increased by about ten percent over the last 7 years. During



that time, Illinois has not built a single new prison; has not built a single new building in an existing prison; and has not built a single new wing on any existing building. We have not increased the number of guards; we have not increased the number of civilian employees. Rather, while the prison system has grown, the Department of Corrections budget has decreased by over 10% in the last few years. As a result, our prison officials are asked to do the impossible: care for many more prisoners, with far fewer resources, and no additional space.

What does this mean? It means that every prison in Illinois is overcrowded. It means that virtually every prison cell in those prisons is now illegal—and I do not mean that it violates some amorphous "international human rights" standard or even that it violates the constitution (although I submit that many of them do). I mean that they violate the statutes passed by you, the Illinois legislature. In 1984, this Legislature passed P.A. 83-942, now codified as 730 ILCS 5/3-7-3 of the Unified Code of Corrections. Subsection (b) provides:

All new, remodeled and newly designated institutions or facilities shall provide at least 50 square feet of cell, room or dormitory floor space.

Note that the statute only applies to new or remodeled facilities, and there were at the time

many cells which were grandfathered in. For example, many of the segregation cells at Menard only measure 4 ½ X 10 feet. However, virtually every cell in the state has now been remodeled. Many have had the open bars which were used in virtually every cell in 1984 replaced with closed front solid steel doors. This dramatically reduces the amount of fresh air in these cells, and makes them feel claustrophobic. But Illinois did not stop there. The Department has also doubled up virtually every cell in the state to accommodate the thousands of new prisoners it must house. This means that the segregation cells at Menard which used to provide 45 square feet per person—slightly below the statutory minimum of 50 square feet—now only provide 45 square feet for two people, or less than half the statutory minimum. This remodeling was a direct violation of this legislature's mandate.

Vienna Correctional Center took an old condemned warehouse (known as "Building 19"), no longer in use because the windows were broken and the roof leaked, and converted it into "dormitories." There are now 400 men living in this warehouse. 200 of them live on the second floor, where there are no showers, and these 200 men have to share four (when they all work) toilets. To shower, guards must escort them to the third floor, where another 200 men

SEE CORRECTIONS PAGE 2

Hope...Redemption...Change

live, all sharing a dozen showers. The roof still leaks; the windows still need to be replaced. There is mold growing in the bathrooms; and raw sewage drips through the corroded pipes serving the third floor, directly into the bathrooms on the second floor.²

At Vandalia Correctional Center, men are living in basements, never designed for human habitation. Worse, these basements flood—raw sewage comes up through the floor drains after a hard rain. Men keep plastic baggies in their beds to put on in the morning, to avoid wading through sewage.

Logan Correctional Center—Illinois' main prison for women—had as many as 300 women living in the gym last year.

At the Reception Center at Stateville, earlier this year they could not use their infirmary for in-patients, because people were sleeping on the floor.

At Pinckneyville Correctional Center, the Department built some cells specifically designed to be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act for people in wheelchairs. But those cells too have been doubled, and there is no longer room for wheelchairs.

System-wide, Illinois has abandoned all thought of preparing prisoners for reentry. At the maximum security prisons, there are no vocational classes, and even GED and Adult Basic Education (literacy) classes are few and far between. The last figures I saw were that for the 3,000 men at Stateville, there was one teacher; only 30 people got their GED. College classes have virtually disappeared—of all Illinois prisons, only one (Danville) still offers college classes. While minimum and medium security prisons do offer some classes, including some vocational training, there are long waiting lists. In the end, we are releasing thousands of people from our prisons every year, who cannot read—and we have done nothing to help them learn. This is a tragedy.

We lock up far too many people in segregation. Several years ago, the Department contracted with the Vera Institute, a nationally recognized think tank on criminal justice to evaluate our use of segregation. Vera concluded that we lock up too many people in segregation, for too long, with no evidence that it does anything to improve their behavior. The Department has never released the results of the Vera study, but a copy is available on the web (<http://www.courthousenews.com/2013/03/13/55690.htm>). The newspaper which reported the study headlined its article, "Scathing Study on Solitary Buried by Politics."

Illinois now has approximately 8,000 peo-



*Alan Mills, Executive Director,
Uptown People's Law Center*

ple who are locked in their cells 22-24 hours a day virtually every day. And many of them have done nothing wrong—because even general population prisoners at prisons like Menard and Stateville spend 22 hours a day sitting in their cells, doing nothing more productive than staring at a television screen. This is shameful.

Illinois is 50th among all 50 states in the amount of money it spends per prisoner delivering medical care. And that number has decreased over the last seven years, while the cost of medical care (as you know from the ever increasing Medicaid budget) has gone up significantly during this same period. California—which the Supreme Court ordered to release thousands of prisoners because it provided such poor care, spends about 7 times what Illinois spends per prisoner. And California's system is still unconstitutional.³

What does this mean? It means that people die unnecessarily in prison—of heart disease, of cancer, diseases which could be treated if caught early enough. But the number of prisoners who die each year is small. What is not small is the number of prisoners released each year, whose health has been severely compromised. Diabetes is out of control; inadequately controlled asthma; and on and on. Many of these people are so badly damaged that they are permanently disabled—we at the Law Center know how damaged they are, because we successfully represent them in social security disability cases.

Mental health care is, if anything, worse. The default in the Department is "medicate and isolate." We have hundreds of seriously mentally ill people sitting in segregation units—some so mentally ill that they are involuntarily injected with Haldol (an anti-psychotic), yet are still disciplined when they act out. I have interviewed men and women who have segregation terms of

10, 20, and even 30 years still to do, despite being seriously mentally ill. What good does a 30 year segregation term do? As one psychiatrist put it, that is like telling your five year old he is grounded until he is 35. It is absolutely meaningless. All it does is ensure that their mental health will never improve.

Some prisoners are so mentally ill that they should be hospitalized. But Illinois has no hospital beds for its seriously mentally ill prisoners. What we have are hundreds of crisis cells. Crisis cells have a purpose: people who are rapidly decompensating benefit from being isolated to give mental health staff an opportunity to determine what is going on. Do they need to adjust their medicine, did they suffer some crisis, bad news from home? But crisis cells are just that—for crises. They should be located in the prison health care unit, where medical staff can closely observe the patient. Standard practice is a maximum stay of five days, with 10 days as the outside limit. But in Illinois, we have no where to put these people. So some people have been in crisis cells for months on end. And those cells are not located in the health care units. Up until a few months ago, many were in the segregation units—now many are in general population cell-houses.⁴

In sum, we are concerned that the Committee not limit itself to ideas which fiddle at the edges of the system. You have heard testimony about several very good innovative programs which serve a few dozen or sometimes a few hundred people. And those are great programs. But they need to be scaled up dramatically, and quickly. Because what does it mean that Illinois' prisons are operating at 172% of capacity? It means that we could release 1/3 of all prisoners in Illinois tomorrow, and the system would still be overcrowded. It means that we could build 10 new prisons the size of Pinckneyville and the system would still be almost at 100% of capacity.

As this Committee does its work, we urge you to deal with the system as it actually exists today, and to recognize the crisis we are facing. Illinois must fundamentally rethink the way it operates its prisons.

Thank you again for the opportunity to address the Committee.

NOTES:

1 Note that this is a very different number than the numbers you were provided on the first day of hearings by the Department. That is because the Department has a special definition of "capacity." In Illinois, "capacity" does not refer to the design capacity—which is the standard used

FROM THE EDITOR

WELCOME TO ANOTHER EDITION OF NORTHEASTERN ILLINOIS UNIVERSITY'S STATEVILLE SPEAKS. From the time we go to print to the time you are reading this, much will have happened. First, a new Governor, will be sworn into office, as well as search for a new Director of Corrections, as Godinez will step down. Another possible change may come with the Prisoner Review Board, as 5 of the current 14 (one position still remains vacant) members have terms about to expire in the middle of this January.

After many months of testimony from numerous experts and witnesses, regarding the current state of our Illinois justice system, the hearings of the Joint Criminal Justice Reform Committee have adjourned. While all those testifying agree the current system does not work, there is no word yet on what significant changes, if any, will come from them.

While HB3668 did not pass, no one has given up on 50/50 legislation, and it will be re-introduced in each session until elder relief has been achieved. This proves once more how slow, and therefore frustrating, the legislative process can be. While positive laws are necessary, they themselves do not guarantee significant changes, as we have seen with the enactment of SB 2621 and the slow release of prisoners and the continued practices of IDOC, despite being in violation of the law. (See page 1).

Still, it remains crucial for you to keep positive and retain hope even in the seemingly hopeless circumstances you find yourselves in, an almost impossible task, I am sure. Equally important are the collective efforts of family, friends and prisoner advocates continuing to

by the federal government and most states. Instead, the Department of Corrections has defined "capacity" to include anywhere they have a bed. So if there is one empty bed on the floor of the infirmary, we are under capacity. That definition is buried in a footnote to a footnote on the Department's website. Each prison on the website reports that it is under capacity, with a footnote: "As of 5/31/2013. Reflects bed space capacity analysis as outlined in the July 1, 2013 Quarterly Report to the Legislature." If you go to that Quarterly Report (http://www2.illinois.gov/idoc/reportsandstatistics/Documents/IDOC_Quarterly%20Report_Jul_%202013.pdf) Footnote 1 to Table 4 in that report reads: "Operational Capacity/Bed space is the maximum number of inmates a facility can hold."



Painting by Irving Ramey

educate the public and chip away at the systemic injustices.

In an effort to cover more topics in a timely manner our goal is to shift to a more frequent paper, albeit it may need to be smaller to defray the costs. And while we will not always hit the mark it should address the problem of irregularity of the paper. And yes, you are talking and have a lot to say about the lack of consistency between prisons, in their rules and regulations, dangerous medical system, the questionable

Under this definition, as long as there is a bed, it is part of the "capacity." That is the definition used when the Department presented its report to you, concluding that the prisons were "crowded, but not overcrowded."

2 Conditions at Vienna are the subject of a class action case pending in the United States District Court for the Southern District of Illinois, known as *Boyd v. Godinez*, No. 3:12CV704, the Honorable J. Phil Gilbert, judge presiding. The parties are currently engaged in settlement discussions.

3 The failure to provide minimal medical care to prisoners throughout the state is the subject of a class action lawsuit pending in the United States District Court for the Northern District of Illinois, known as *Lippert v. Godinez*, No. 10-

policies surrounding administrative detention (A.D.), the lack of education, programming and counseling, especially for sex-offenders. We also hear, loud and clear, your frustrations over the lack of resources and preparation for and after release. We hope to address these topics and more in upcoming issues.

On a positive note, we would like to thank those from Robinson, Hill, Pinckneyville, Taylorville and especially Menard for your efforts in delivering *Stateville Speaks* to our readers and letting us know who paroled/ transferred and where they went. It is appreciated and extremely thoughtful.

Finally, we are getting so many excellent pieces for publication, but are unable to print them because of the length. Please try and keep essays to no more than 500 words so we can publish without "over-editing" your voice. And once more, thank you for allowing us to be your voice. ■

LEGISLATIVE RELIEF?

A source close to *Stateville Speaks* has told us that Art Turner (D-9th) is preparing comprehensive legislation to address prison overcrowding, reduce costs, and increase security. Legislation is to include a pilot project for 100 elder prisoners; mechanism to earn good time, compassionate medical release and diverting non-violent first offenders from prison to community programs. Another bill modifies appointment of special prosecutor, in light of what happened in Ferguson. Tuner is expected to have a full public announcement in few weeks and is seeking bipartisan support. We will give you a full update as this becomes available. ■

CV-4603, the Honorable Amy St. Eve, judge presiding. The judge appointed a neutral team of experts to prepare a report on the entire system, which the parties anticipate will form the basis for a settlement.

4 Illinois' failure to provide adequate mental health treatment to prisoners with serious mental illnesses statewide is the subject of a class action lawsuit, pending in the United States District Court for the Central District of Illinois, known as *Rasho v. Godinez*, No. 1:07-CV-1298, the Honorable Michael Mihm, judge presiding. The case is in settlement discussions. ■

To Donate to, or sponsor an issue of, *Stateville Speaks*, contact Dr. Cris Toffolo, NEIU Justice Studies Chair, at 773-442-4761



A LOVE LETTER ESPECIALLY FOR YOU

By: Robert West

I welcome your visit once again. I love to see you suffer mentally, physically, spiritually, and socially. I want to make you restless so you can never relax. I want you jumpy, nervous and anxious. I want to make you agitated and irritable so everything and everybody makes you uncomfortable. I want you to be confused and depressed, so you can't think clearly or positively. I want to make you hate everything and everybody, especially yourself. I want you to feel guilty and remorseful for the things you have done in the past that you will never be able to let go of. I want to make you angry and hateful towards the world for the way it is and the way you are. I want you to feel sorry for yourself

and blame everything but me (your addiction) for the way things are. I want you to be deceitful and untrustworthy and to manipulate and con as many people as possible. I want to make you fearful and paranoid for no reason at all, and I want you to wake up at all hours of the night screaming for me. I'm even in your dreams. I'm better to you than any woman or man could possibly be. For I am your lover.

I want to be the first thing you wake up to in the morning and the last thing you touch before you black out. I would rather kill you, but I'll be happy enough to put you back in the hospital, another institution or jail. But you know I'll be waiting for you when you get out. I love to watch you go slowly insane. I love to see the disgust you

feel when you look at yourself in the mirror. I love to see the physical damage that I am causing you. I can't help but sneer and chuckle when you shiver and shake, when you freeze and sweat at the same time, and when you wake up with your sheets and blanket soaking wet.

It's amusing to watch you make love to the toilet bowl, heaving and retching and not being able to hold me down. It's amazing how much destruction I can do to your internal organs while at the same time, work on your brain destroying it bit by bit. I deeply appreciate how much you've sacrificed for me. The countless good jobs you've sacrificed, all the friends that you deeply cared for – you gave up for me. And what's more,

the ones you turned against yourself because of your inexcusable actions – I'm even more grateful. Especially your loved ones – your family, the most important people in the world to you – you threw them away for me. I cannot express in words the gratitude I have for the loyalty you have for me.

You sacrificed all these beautiful things in life, just to devote yourself completely to me. But do not despair my friend, for on me you can always depend. For after you have lost all these things, you can depend on me to keep you in a living hell, to keep your mind, body and soul – for I will not be satisfied my friend, until you are dead.

Love always,
Your Addiction ■

**Stateville Speaks is generously supported by
Cynthia Kobel
& the Kenneth and Harle Montgomery Foundation.**

RE-THINKING ILLINOIS' TRUTH-IN-SENTENCING LAW

By Joseph R. Dole

Illinois currently finds itself in a dire fiscal state. A main cause of this has been years of passing laws without any consideration of the resulting financial costs. An egregious example of this is the Truth-In-Sentencing (TIS) law. TIS require that nearly all violent offenders serve 85% to 100% of their sentences. Prior to enactment in 1998, offenders served on average 44% of their sentences.

For more than a decade, Illinois resisted enacting a TIS law while other states rushed to do so. Instead we increased sentencing ranges for violent crimes. The State didn't pass its TIS law until the federal government began offering monetary incentives to the states to do so. Although enacted in Illinois over 16 years ago, not a single comprehensive cost/benefit analysis has been undertaken to determine what monetary effect enactment has had on the state.

Other states that enacted TIS legislation adjusted for it by reducing sentences so the average imposed was about half the length before enactment. That way a prisoner ended up serving the same amount of time in prison and didn't cost the state additional money. Illinois on the other hand, failed to adjust. Instead judges here actu-

ally increased average sentences imposed or kept handing out similar sentences. With the sentencing ranges having already been increased, taxpayers are being hit twice as hard.

A couple of years ago, I compiled a preliminary report and found that even if one considers the meager funds received from the federal government from 1996-2004 (125 million), the additional costs incurred by the state for sentences imposed under TIS for 2002-2004 alone will be over \$750 million. My estimates were extremely conservative. I used a roughly \$25,000 per year per inmate cost of incarceration figure. According to the Vera Institute of Justice, the true cost is actually \$38,268.

Prior to TIS passage in Illinois, if a person received a 50-year sentence for murder at age 18, he or she would have had to serve around 44% of that sentence, or 22 years. Thus, the State would incur a cost of around \$841,896. After passage of TIS though, that same sentence means the offender must now serve the entire 50 years and won't be released until they are 68. Therefore, the first 32 years will cost the State \$1,224,576 and the last 18 years, when he or she is elderly, with increased healthcare needs, will cost



the State an additional \$242,000 (the IDOC considers prisoners elderly at age 50, and the CDC reports that elderly inmates cost \$69,000 per year). So before TIS, a 50-year murder sentence cost taxpayers \$841,896, but after TIS, that cost rose to \$2,466,576 (not counting investigation, prosecution and appeal costs). Thus, TIS nearly tripled the cost to taxpayers, adding \$1,624,680 to the tab for each murder sentence. Each year over 300 people in Illinois are sentenced for murder. Thousands more are sentenced for other violent crimes. All of these TIS sentences add up to the State incurring well over a quarter of a billion dollars per year in added liabilities. It is time to use some "common cents" in our criminal justice policies.

* The report, "Preliminary Findings Concerning the Financial Costs of Implementing Illinois' Truth-In-Sentencing Laws (2002-2004)" January 11, 2011, can be downloaded at www.realcostofprisons.org. ■



DEAR READERS

Listen to my story, as it slowly unfolds --to err is human, so I've been told.
Being drunk on alcohol, and high on drug --both were bad choices, but that wasn't enough.
No rhyme- no reason, to what took place --just chaos and devastation, which led to disgrace.
So much was lost, both sides of the fence -- an error been done, which made no sense.
Innocent life was taken, the burden was great -- and just being sorry, was a little too late.
The pain and grief, caused by such actions -- may never be forgotten, to that family's satisfaction.
Yet still one hopes, there'll come a time -- forgiveness will arrive between, that family and mine.
Over the passing years, repented what was done --to the heavenly father, as well as everyone.
And come judgment day, there up on high --will all be forsaken, who knows...Not I.
Made my inner peace, nothing else be said --my faith been restored, heart no longer dreads.
Remorse has been made, more ways than one --with all that spoken, this story is done.

-- By Jerry Doll ■

SWEET LITTLE LIES

By Ron Janssen

As a young teenager, I didn't see what the big deal was about lying. Everyone does it right? "Oh your new haircut isn't so bad", "Those jeans don't make your butt look fat", "It's not a big deal that you forgot my birthday", "No one is ever going to remember your embarrassing incident". Those are just a few of the many countless lies we tell or hear every day.

What I didn't realize back then and most of us don't realize until rehab/recovery or even much later on, is how corruptive, corrosive and destructive lies are. They are not only to our lives but also to

those around us. Lies are the ticket to the magical ride of self-destruction. They are the secret ingredient that makes our addictions and self-destruction possible. It all begins with lies.

Lies help us hide who we are and what we do even from people we know and love. We don't want people, even the ones we indulge with, to see what we are really like and what we are really doing. Lies help us manipulate people and help us avoid the ugly reality of what we are doing to ourselves as well as others. They help us by not having to deal with the consequences of our actions, by avoiding conflict and making it easy to continue our downward spiral without having to

stop and think about what we are doing. Lies sugarcoat the reality by making it seem like it's not a big deal or even a good thing.

We lie to everyone. Mostly we lie to ourselves. About what we are doing to ourselves, how bad it is or why we are doing it. The lies are everything from "I'm holding it for a friend", "It's not a big deal", "I don't have a problem" and of course "I can quit whenever I want". The lies start off small, occasionally become bigger and come constantly, until they consume your life and ultimately you. You end up not knowing what's real and what is a lie.

It's a lot easier to admit to others that you have been lying to them than it is to admit you have been lying to yourself. Sometimes

you really want to tell yourself a lie – "just this one last time, then I'll quit". Sometimes you really want others to lie to you to keep you from having to deal with reality. Either way, it's the same.

Part of the recovery process and stopping your thinking errors is to stop lying, not only to others but to yourself as well. Become aware of how your lies affect others and yourself. Be honest and face the world with truth. It's not always easy but better than the world of deception. When you live in a world of truth it's harder to fall back into addiction or self-destruction.

So embrace the truth. Free yourself of the toxic poison of lies. It is a so much easier and a simpler way to live. ■

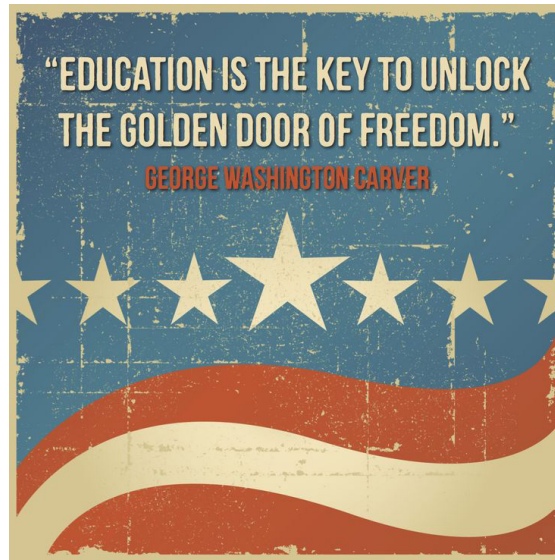
DEAR STATEVILLE SPEAKS,

Thank you so much for all of your tireless efforts on our behalf. Your continued organizing and agitating has given a voice to the voiceless. For this we are truly grateful. However, despite recent organizing on important issues such as shamefully inadequate healthcare, blatant greed of high commissary/phone prices and the IDOC's never-ending program against human rights, it appears that we (and you) are still all missing the point. If we as a society want to reduce violence, reduce the prison population and heal our communities, then we need to be honest with ourselves and put our efforts, time and resources where they will do the most good. Where is that you ask? The answer is education and transitional re-entry programs.

Numerous studies including one sponsored by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (excerpt in a previous issue of Stateville Speaks), have proven conclusively that the higher the level of education a prisoner gets, the lower the rates of recidivism. Education combined with practical, dynamic and comprehensive re-entry programs to assist soon-to-be released prisoners and ex-prisoners would lower recidivism rates down even further to the low single digits.

The current level of recidivism in Illinois is almost 60% within 3 years of release. Think about it. 60%! Imagine for a moment what it would be like if the prison population in Illinois dropped by 60%*. In simple terms this means that every year a massive amount of the prisoners entering IDOC are actually re-offenders, not first time offenders.

For years we've fought for lower commissary prices. We fought for lower phone rates. We fought for better healthcare. We're fighting so many honorable battles and yet we could win every single one of them



and still lose the war. To understand that education is the key to our restoration and our liberation and to still NOT pour all of our energy into obtaining it, that is the real crime. Make no mistake, the enemy knows this truth. Which is why they have worked so very hard to keep the tools of emancipation out of our hands.

We need to wake-up. All of us, and realize that if we want to change tomorrow then we have to take action today. By understanding that the skills a prisoner learns (or doesn't learn) in prison they will take back with them to their communities, you'll begin to see the big picture. The connection between how improving prisoner education can in turn lead directly to uplifting their communities upon release.

This is the single most important battle in the war for liberation. Our enemy is devious and has many faces (corrupt correctional officers unions, greedy corporations and spineless politicians who have forgotten they're supposed to represent all the people). If you want to make real and lasting change, if you're serious about prison reform you must fight for bringing education (college degrees, trade skills, computer training, etc...) back into the prisons. Otherwise, no matter how many smaller battles are won, we will still lose the war. They choice is ours. We can either choose to fight for a better tomorrow or just accept more of the same.

Respectfully submitted,
William Carlson

* - **EDITOR'S NOTE:** Though 60% of parolees may return to prison, they do not necessarily make up 60% of the population, as there are many that only serve months, but the writer's point is still well taken. ■

FOOL'S PARADISE

Just got life plus and still wondering if they like us.

Waiting on their direct appeal, I hear the same old spiel.

In the between time it's chill, watch T.V. and eat burritos.

Talk on the phone, go on a visit and kick it. Content with this very simple state of existence.

Time just wasted in between appeals not preparing for the next step.

Direct appeal shot down, what to do now? Scramble and scam trying to cram all the legal knowledge they can or pay some legal man. Then it's back to the tele and commissary food, laughing like something is funny, boy, they sure look like dummies.

Grasping at straws, deluding themselves, holding on to false hope, getting high on dope. Refusing to face the fact that they aren't getting back.

Afraid to go to war, not realizing they're already in one.

Trapped behind enemy lines doing time, but still laughing like everything is fine. Every man must draw the line at some point in time.

When enough is enough I propose its time to get tough and fight with all our soul. You're supposed to be trained to go. Otherwise you'll just grow old and alone with no one to call on the phone. So stop living in that fool's paradise where everything is nice and fight for your rights. ■

- Jonathon Meskauskas

DOES ANYONE HAVE AN ANSWER?

By Milton Jones

Why is taxpayer money used when state correctional officials are sued? And should correctional officers be held responsible for their personal actions? Although most public servants do their jobs well, there are individuals that abuse their power. The single most important type of lawsuit for violating an inmate's constitutional right is an action under § 1983 of the Civil Rights Act. Prisoners must sue state officials in their individual capacities only.

The Civil Rights Actions under U.S.C. § 1983 provides that every person who, under color of law, subjects any citizen to the deprivation of any right, privilege or immunity secured by the U.S. Constitution, shall be liable to the injured party.

If a prison correctional officer commits a crime in his individual capacity, the taxpayer money is being used when the state attorney general's office represents the officer and when the jury awards money to pay the damage awarded on account of their actions. ■

Thanks to Illinois Prison Talk (IPT) for support and further dissemination of Stateville Speaks and your tireless reform efforts. Visit www.illinoisprisontalk.com to learn more.

STATEVILLE SPEAKS STAFF • FALL/WINTER 2014

Publisher: Cynthia Kobel

Editor: Gayle Tulipano
Assistant Editor: Dawn Larsen
Consulting Editor: Bill Ryan

Editors

Donald McDonald, Aldwin McNeal & Anaviel B. Rakemeyahu

Assistant Editors

Stanley Howard, Jeanene Clay, Vincent Galloway, Renaldo Hudson, Tom Odle, Mychal Thompson, Ronnie Carrasquillo, Theresa Heater, Margaret Majos & Ron Kliner

Women's Issues

Millie Lee & Janet Jackson

Cartoonist:

Arkee Sal Barry

Send letters & submissions to:

Stateville Speaks
c/o Justice Studies
LWH 4062
Northeastern IL University
5500 N. St. Louis Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625-4699

Please do **not** send originals.
Please limit essays to around 500 words.

SUBSCRIBE TO STATEVILLE SPEAKS

Stateville Speaks is free to inmates that cannot afford it. The \$10.00 subscription fee is appreciated and accepted from those that can help defray our publishing costs. Stateville Speaks can only continue toward positive reform with your support.

I WANT TO SUBSCRIBE TO STATEVILLE SPEAKS

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

CITY _____ STATE: _____ ZIP: _____

E-MAIL (for e-mail subscription) _____

Mail this coupon along with check or money order for \$10, to:

Stateville Speaks Subscription, c/o Justice Studies, LWH 4062,
Northeastern IL University, 5500 N. St. Louis Ave., Chicago, IL 60625-4699

POLITICAL 'TOON

BY ARKEE



MOST PRISONERS TIME IS SPENT LOCKED IN THEIR CELL IN MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISONS THROUGHOUT ILLINOIS.



THEY ARE ALLOWED TO GO TO THE YARD TWICE A WEEK, FOR RECREATION.



THERE'S NO SUCH THING AS HIGHER LEARNING PROGRAMS, OR WORKABLE TRADES IN MAXIMUM SECURITY PRISONS.



A MIND IS A TERRIBLE THING TO WASTE. BY ARKEE ©

Stateville Speaks
c/o Justice Studies
LWH 4062
Northeastern IL University
5500 N. St. Louis Ave.
Chicago, IL 60625-4699