



The Summer Festivals Are Coming!!

Coalition partners CCJRC and the Colorado Progressive Coalition will be at several events in Denver this summer. Come by and meet staff and volunteers. We would love to see you!!!

Cinco de Mayo - Civic Center Park on May 3 and 4th

The People's Fair - Civic Center Park on June 7th and 8th

Pridefest - Civic Center Park on June 21st and 22nd

CCJRC MATCHING GRANT !!

GREAT NEWS!!! CCJRC was given a \$5000 Matching Grant from a very generous donor. All NEW members and ANYONE who signs up to be a Freedom Fighter, which is our monthly giving program will have their annual amount matched up to \$5000!!!! If you have ever thought about becoming a member of CCJRC, the time is NOW!!

CCJRC is a membership organization. The 'coalition' component are organizations which share a common belief around halting state prison expansion, abolishing Colorado's private prison industry, rallying around the rights of the imprisoned and demanding that, as a society, we remain accountable for our treatment of those who are accused, those who have been found guilty, and those who have paid their debt and look forward to rejoining society as contributing members. These are groups spread across Colorado that have a collective interest in these and other core values.

But are all the members of CCJRC organizations? Certainly not! There are over 5,000 individuals, like you, who are truly the backbone of CCJRC. Volunteers, activists and donors - you are, WE are, the driving force behind CCJRC. It is our combined work and support alongside a small but dedicated staff that moves us forward and helps us to achieve our mission and all our goals.

As CCJRC members, we look to each other to write the next letter to elected officials, to attend the next community meeting, to help organize the next action to bring about a realization of our mission ... and to make another donation of personal significance. All of these measures are vital to the continued success of CCJRC but your donation is very important.

Your gift of any amount, joined with those donations of all the rest of us, will further the efforts and outcomes of CCJRC. A monthly donation, an annual tithing to help balance the inequities we fight, a gift whenever you can afford to share your financial resource - everything you can do adds to everything the rest of us can do. There is a donation form and envelope in this newsletter, waiting for you to help support the work and our collective obligation to pursue justice. Please join us with your contribution.

You can and do make a difference!

YES! I want to join CCJRC and help stop perpetual prison expansion in Colorado. Enclosed is my tax-deductible annual membership or additional contribution:

Annual membership dues:

- Individual: \$35 Low income/student/senior: \$12
- Household: \$50 Prisoner: \$3 (or equivalent in postage stamps)
- Sustainer: \$100+

- My check is enclosed (made payable to CCJRC)
- Please charge my credit card:
 - Visa Mastercard Discover American Express
 - Once monthly quarterly

Name _____ Signature _____

Home Street Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ Phone _____

Email _____ FAX _____

Credit Card # _____ expires _____

I WANT TO BE A CCJRC FREEDOM FIGHTER!

Please charge my credit card monthly for \$ _____.

Please return this form to:
CCJRC, 1212 Mariposa St., #6, Denver, CO 80204

One in 100 Adults in Jail or Prison

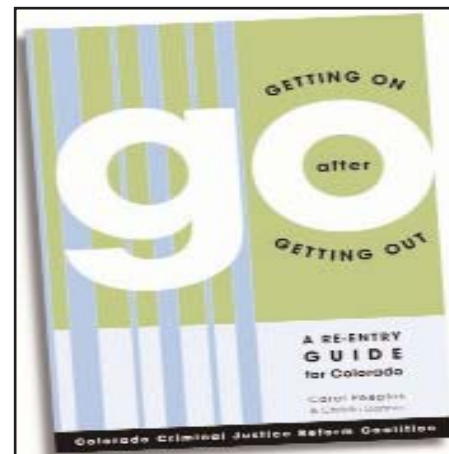
The Pew Center on the States recently released a report that gives some sobering information. The United States now incarcerates 1 out of 100 people in either prison or jail. The report points out that prison growth and higher incarceration rates do not mirror a parallel increase in crime or a huge population increase. The increase is correlated with extreme changes in policy which send more people to prison for longer periods of time.

Even though states are increasing their budgets to spend more on corrections, our recidivism rates haven't changed. According to the report, 36 states and the Federal Bureau of Prisons had an increase in prison populations.

Those states that are experiencing a downward trend in their populations have been more proactive in developing practices that focus on community-based programs, sentencing alternatives and intermediate sanctions for those who are failing in community.

Colorado is spending 8.8% of our general fund dollars on corrections. That was over \$600 million last year. For every dollar we spend on higher education we spend 77 cents on corrections.

What's The Buzz About The Book?



"...after thirteen years in prison, without any outside help, I believe this book will help me to succeed."

"Thank you for helping those incarcerated that are truly changed and just want a chance to prove themselves."

"This book's contents is worth so much more than even you realize, it's very helpful information."

"...I'd like to say thank you for your care and your concern."

"...could I possibly receive a book because I am paroling homeless?"

"Very well done, extremely informative...I will definitely use this information for my betterment and transition to my future..."

"Gave excellent advice on pretty much everything I needed to know for my release. Helped relieve some of the stress about getting back on my feet."

"Thank you for all of the information we appreciate the effort and research that it took to comprise..."

"I would like a copy of your "GO" Guide. I read part of one and would like to get one for myself. I don't want to be one of the "returned to prison" statistics..."

Copies of the re-entry guide are available for \$10 (plus \$2.50 s/h). You can order through the website, by mail or by phone give us a call at 303-825-0122

**CCJRC is a member of Community Shares!
Ask your employer about work-place giving!**

COLORADO JUSTICE REPORT

March 2008

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM COALITION

1212 Mariposa St., #6, Denver, CO 80204
303-825-0122 phone, 303-825-0304 fax
www.CCJRC.org info@ccjrc.org

Founded in 1999, CCJRC is a network of organizations, faith communities and individuals working to reverse the trend of mass incarceration in Colorado.

Harm Reduction:

A Realistic Approach To Public Health And Addiction-Related Disease

A smallish unremarkable house on the west side of Denver bustles with activity as people who have unique problems related to their addictions come in for coffee, a place to rest, relate and regroup. This house is home to the Harm Reduction Project.

The Harm Reduction Project opened the Denver drop-in center in June of 2002. It is funded by the Colorado Department of Health and Environment to provide HIV prevention and education to injection drug users. They also distribute harm reduction tools to program participants and community-based organizations, both locally and nationally. These tools include: condoms and other safer sex materials, vitamins, hygiene kits, clothing and food, safer injection kits, literature on decreasing high-risk activities, and syringe disposal. The other services they offer are around group level intervention, peer driven intervention, motivational interviewing, risk reduction counseling, rapid HIV counseling and testing, hepatitis testing, referrals, art therapy, acupuncture, health education and outreach, and community gardening.

Harm reduction itself is a public health philosophy that is intended to be an alternative to the prohibitionist model in addressing high-risk lifestyles choices. One of the fallouts from the drug war is the unintended consequence of the spread of communicable disease. The principal theme behind harm reduction is that some people have and always will participate in high-risk behaviors that are associated with illicit drug use.

According to *Harm Reduction: Pragmatic Strategies for Managing High-Risk Behaviors*,

News From Under The Gold Dome: 2008 Legislative Session Update

News from Under the Gold Dome: 2008 Legislative Session Update
Unexpectedly, this legislative session has been much more active around criminal justice issues than anticipated. We were under the impression that the creation of the state Commission on Criminal & Juvenile Justice would likely have a chilling effect on the introduction of many criminal justice bills this year.

The Department of Corrections has requested a \$740 million operating budget for FY 08/09. DOC Director Zavaras has also outlined his massive 5-year, \$800 million plan to build more state prisons. Even though the prison population growth rate has slowed dramatically in the last two years, now growing by roughly 40 people a month, Director Zavaras is now concerned about the high reliance on private prisons. Over 23% of the people incarcerated in Colorado are in a private prison and of these 83% are incarcerated in a prison owned by Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). Given this practical monopoly, CCA has flexed its considerable muscle and threatened the legislature that if they don't receive a 4.25% per diem increase (the amount they are paid per day for housing each prisoner), CCA will kick Colorado prisoners out of Huerfano facility. The DOC budget for FY 08/09 included a 1.5% per diem increase for all private prison providers. Apparently, a "compromise" is being negotiated by some legislators to give CCA a 3% increase but Representative Alice Madden introduced HB 1363 to require that the per diem rate paid to the private prisons be capped at the 1.5% increase. If CCA is successful in negotiating a higher per diem rate, this will be the first time in Colorado that one private prison operator will receive a higher per diem rate than the others. It's likely that Cornell and CEC will be following behind in their demands for a 3% increase, too.

Heat is also being brought on the Parole Board by Republican members of the House and Senate Judiciary Committees. Led by Senator Josh Penry (R-Grand Junction) and fueled by a misleading article in The Denver Post that reported a "surge" in parole releases, these members recently requested that the state auditor conduct an audit of parole board release decisions. Although it is true that discretionary releases have increased since Dave Michaud became the chairman of the parole board, it is hardly a "surge" that warrants this much drama.

CCJRC Announcement

CCJRC is very proud and excited to announce that Carol Peeples has been hired as CCJRC's new re-entry coordinator. Carol is the author of *Getting On After Getting Out: A Re-entry Guide for Colorado*. Among many other things, Carol will be developing a training on the re-entry guide for people who work with people involved in the criminal justice system. If your organization or agency is interested in training on any of the topics raised in the re-entry guide, please contact Carol at carol@ccjrc.org.

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Colorado Criminal Justice Reform
Coalition
1212 Mariposa St., #6
Denver, CO 80204

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for our
Earth's
sake.

The following is a list of bills that CCJRC has prioritized. It does not include many other bills that have been introduced that would make changes to criminal justice issues/laws.

Record sealing: HB 1082 (CCJRC priority/support).

HB 1082 would allow people convicted of certain crimes eligible to petition the court to seal the criminal record after 10 years from successfully completing any sentence, including any term of parole. HB 1082 was passed by the House Judiciary Committee in February on a narrow 6-5 vote. The Governor has not yet indicated that he will support the bill and negotiations are ongoing. We anticipate that Governor Ritter, if he will support this bill at all, will want to see a much narrower range of crimes that are eligible for sealing. (This is similar to the bill that was passed last year by both the House and Senate but vetoed by Governor Ritter.)

Change to the escape law: HB 1022 (CCJRC priority/support)

Would repeal the mandatory consecutive sentence for escape convictions unless the escape is from a level III, IV or V security prison. This bill is likely to be amended to exclude people who escape from halfway houses who were convicted of any violent offense, although the specific details of the amendment are not known at this time. It is anticipated that HB 1022 will be heard in the House Judiciary Committee in late March.

Reducing racial disparity in criminal justice system: HB 1119 (CCJRC priority/support)

Requires the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice to study and make recommendations for the reduction of racial and ethnic disparity in the criminal and juvenile justice systems. HB 1119 was passed by both the House and Senate and was sent to the governor for action on 3/10/2008.

Cap on private prison provider rate: HB 1363 (CCJRC priority/support).

Allows the DOC to negotiate a contract rate for private prisons but prohibits a contract rate from exceeding the maximum rate provided in the annual general appropriations bill.

Truancy: HB 1004 - (CCJRC priority/oppose).

Would allow police to take kids into "temporary custody" if they think they are truant. HB 1004 died in the House Judiciary Committee in February.

Changes to juvenile criminal law regarding direct file: HB 1208 - (CCJRC support).

Under current Colorado law, a district attorney has the power to charge a juvenile as young as 14 years old as an adult for certain crimes. This is known as "direct file." If convicted in adult court, the juvenile is sentenced as an adult and, if incarcerated, will serve time in adult prison. In the past, before a juvenile could be charged as an adult, the juvenile court would have to conduct a "transfer hearing" to determine whether it was appropriate to charge the juvenile as an adult. HB 1208 would raise the minimum age from 14 to 16 for direct filing on a juvenile in adult court. It would allow the adult court to conduct a "reverse transfer hearing" to determine whether the case should be transferred back to juvenile court. HB 1208 was passed out of the House and is awaiting its first hearing in the Senate.

Applying for benefits while in Division of Youth Corrections: HB 1046 - (CCJRC support).

Would require the Division of Youth Corrections to submit applications for public benefits for eligible juveniles at least 120 days prior to release from custody. HB 1046 was passed in the House and assigned to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Applying for benefits while in jail: SB 07 - (CCJRC support)

Requires county jails to submit applications for public benefits for those eligible at least 120 days prior to release from custody. SB 07 was passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

Allows Medicaid benefits to be suspended, rather than terminated, if someone is incarcerated: SB 06 - (CCJRC support).

Currently, Medicaid benefits are terminated if someone is incarcerated. Once released, people have to go through the whole application process again. SB 06 would allow benefits to be suspended, so that they could be reinstated (a much simpler process) after release. SB 06 was passed by the Senate Judiciary Committee and referred to the Senate Appropriations Committee.

CCJRC is also working on legislation that would, among other things, allow people on parole for a violent offense to be eligible for earned time while on parole. It would also allow people re-incarcerated for a parole violation to be eligible for earned time while incarcerated. This bill should be introduced in March.

the main objective of a harm reduction philosophy is to stave off the potential dangers and health risks associated with high risk behaviors. Some harm reduction strategies have been in place for years. Designated driver campaigns, seat belt laws, the use of condoms, methadone programs, and smoking cessation programs are widely accepted. Some more controversial programs are trying to gain a foothold here in America. There have been very effective AIDS reduction programs in Europe that have involved clean needle exchange programs, clean injection sites and the legalization of certain drugs.

The Harm Reduction Project is working to get policies changed in Colorado, like getting the needle exchange ban lifted. There is only one place in the state where one can exchange dirty needles for clean ones. During the rise of the AIDS epidemic in the 1980's, Boulder County usurped state and federal bans by invoking archaic public health emergency laws. Boulder continues to be the only place in Colorado where that program exists, but the project is shaky because it is always under the gun of interpretation by local law enforcement professionals.

Harm reduction is *not* anti-abstinence. Abstinence may well be the goal but the reality is that harm reduction allows there to be a continuum of care prior to the individual decision to abstain from high-risk behaviors. Harm-reductionists simply realize that the prohibition of drugs is discriminatory, ineffective and counter-productive.

The United States has historically operated from a moral model when trying to curb social problems. A Puritanical, abstinence-only solution obviously isn't one that has been highly successful. We have seen the frightening spread of HIV/AIDS and Hepatitis C by injection drug users over the last 25 years which may have been controlled through different policy choices.

"Nearly 30 percent of new AIDS cases in the United States can be traced to the sharing of syringes by injection drug users, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). But most states continue to restrict access to sterile syringes by enforcing "drug paraphernalia" laws against needle-exchange program participants and regulating the purchase and sale of syringes in pharmacies. "

This fact shows how there is a direct correlation between the spread of communicable diseases and the policies driving the way we deal with people who are afflicted with the disease of addiction.

According to a recent report issued by the PEW Institute, the increase in the numbers of those who have communicable disease and how their medical needs contribute greatly to the rising costs of our already overburdened prison system. This problem will only continue to get worse as time goes on.

"The latest Hepatitis C treatments cost as much as much as \$30,000 per inmate annually. At one California prison, in Vacaville, the chief medical officer estimates that half of the 3,200 inmates have been infected with Hepatitis C. Other states put the imprisonment prevalence at between 25 and 40 percent."

By dealing with drug addiction from a criminal justice perspective instead of a public health issue we force an entire population of people who are sick to hide their illness from the world even as it spreads throughout our population. Ballooning budgets for medical care within the prison system are becoming more of a drain on state budgets every year as we continue to overuse incarceration. According to the PEW Center Report on The States the estimated lifetime cost of care for HIV/AIDS is \$195,000, and for Hepatitis C it is

\$100,000. Thousands are trapped in a cycle of release, relapse and recidivism. We lead the world in the incarceration of people, in part, because we treat drug addiction as a crime and not as a disease.

By embracing harm reduction in policy and practice policymakers would understand the importance of funding prevention, treatment and other harm reduction strategies. This would encourage a culture of health that realizes that people are human. We are given the opportunity to educate and treat people and deal with their frailties. We are not a one-size fits all society. There is no magic bullet or program that will save everyone from themselves.

The goal of harm reduction is to reduce the harm that people can do to themselves, their families and their communities. Creating a public health perspective about the disease of addiction shows the public and policymakers that by being practical and realistic about the human condition we can address these issues directly and honestly. In the end, this will allow proponents of harm reduction to take a social justice and be far more effective in reducing the spread of disease and other harms associated with high-risk behaviors.

The money that we spend on the criminalization of drug use would be better spent on education, health care and infrastructure. As a society we need a reality check. It's time that "politically correct" takes into account the health and well-being of some of our most vulnerable citizens. Policy makers, law enforcement and health professionals need to be able to work together to make us healthier instead of working at cross-purposes. In the long run, this will allow us to provide a holistic approach to solving the incarceration and health care crisis that affects us all.

To Contact the Harm Reduction Project in Denver
In early 2002, HRP opened an office in Denver, Colorado. There was a recognized need by Colorado advocates - both public and private - for an organization dedicated to advocating for and implementing harm reduction interventions among populations at risk for HIV, Hepatitis, and other maladies associated with drug using and sexual behaviors.

Harm Reduction Project
775 Lipan Street
Denver, CO 80204
Tel: 303 572 7800

The Colorado Criminal Defense Bar, The Colorado Trial Lawyers Association Coloradans Against the Death Penalty, The Colorado Progressive Coalition The Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center, The American Civil Liberties Union of Colorado and The Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition

Invite you to join us in honoring David Wymore* at a special fundraiser screening of The Life Penalty a feature length documentary film about the death penalty and the Colorado Method of jury selection which just had its world premiere at the Boulder International Film Festival.

How did a rebel public defender from Boulder, Colorado throw a monkey wrench into America's "death machine"? Slip into a juror's seat as David Wymore and other nationally recognized criminal defense attorneys bring their fight against the death penalty to the front line: the courtroom. Casting a revelatory and often uncomfortable light on our justice system, The Life Penalty shakes the ethical and moral foundations of capital punishment in the contemporary United States.

The film is for general audiences as well as attorneys, and for attorneys attending 2 CLE credits have been applied for. Proceeds will go to the David Wymore College of Criminal Defense and Jury Selection to help fund training and provide other resources to lawyers and law students.

Thursday, April 10, 2008 6:30PM Mayan Theatre 110 Broadway Denver, CO 80203	Wednesday, April 16, 2008 6:30PM Wolf Law Building 2450 Kittredge Loop Road Boulder, CO 80309
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Panel discussion following with David Wymore, Douglas Wilson - Colorado State Public Defender, and the filmmakers. Limited Seating - reservations strongly recommended. To see a preview and order your tickets on-line please visit: www.TheLifePenalty.com *David Wymore served as a public defender in Colorado for 28 years, and as Chief Trial Deputy had primary responsibility for defending capital cases. He has handled over 100 death penalty cases, 7 of which went to trial; none of his clients received the death penalty and some were acquitted. Along the way he and other attorneys developed the Colorado Method of Jury Selection, which helps to select a jury that is more likely to impose a life sentence. More recently, with co-counsel Maria Liu, he was successful in freeing Tim Masters, who served 10 years in prison after being wrongfully convicted of First Degree Murder in Fort Collins.

What is Hepatitis C?

Hepatitis C is a viral disease that attacks the liver. "Hepa" means liver, and "titis" means inflammation. Over time, hepatitis C causes scarring in the liver, which eventually causes the liver to not work properly. The amount of scarring from hepatitis C can be greatly increased by certain lifestyle choices, such as drinking alcohol, using drugs, and a poor diet. There is currently not vaccine to prevent hepatitis C.

How is Hepatitis C Transmitted?

Hepatitis C is only transmitted through blood. This means that a person's blood that is infected with hepatitis C has to directly get into your blood stream for you to become infected. Hepatitis C is not transmitted through casual contact such as hugging, kissing, sharing drinking or eating utensils, or going to the bathroom after somebody. Hepatitis C is not transmitted through sexual fluids (vaginal fluid, semen), but can be transmitted during sex if there are open sores and blood present.

Should I Be Tested for Hepatitis C?

Some of the main risk factors for contracting hepatitis C include:

- " Sharing needles or works while injecting drugs
- " Sharing needles or ink while tattooing or piercing
- " Having unprotected sex with someone who has hepatitis C
- " Snorting drugs
- " Having received a transfusion, organ donation, or blood by-products before July 1992

If you have any of these risk factors, you should be tested for hepatitis C.

How Do I Get Tested for Hepatitis C?

Hep C Connection can test you for free. Hep C Connection is an organization that works to educate people about hepatitis C and how to prevent the spread of the virus, support people that are infected with hepatitis C, and encourage people at risk to get tested for hepatitis C. Call our toll-free HelpLine for more information about getting tested for free. 1-800-522-HEPC (4372)

What Should I Do if I Have Hepatitis C?

It is important for you to have a doctor that specializes in hepatitis C. This type of doctor is usually called a gastroenterologist. Your doctor can give you a viral load test to determine how much of the hepatitis C virus you have in your system. Your doctor can also tell you other tests you may need to get and can talk to you about treatment options. There are treatment options available, but not everybody can tolerate the medications, and not everybody needs to take the medications. If you need information on getting a hepatitis C doctor or paying for medications, please contact Hep C Connection's HelpLine for more information. 1-800-522-HEPC (4372)

Hep C Connection
1325 South Colorado Boulevard, B-302
Denver, CO 80222
www.hepc-connection.org
1-800-522-HEPC (4372)
Tel: 303.572.7800 | Fax: 303.572.7800

Senate Passes Second Chance Act !!

President Expected to Sign into Law

The Second Chance Act was introduced by Senators Joseph Biden (D-DE), Sam Brownback (R-KS), Patrick Leahy (D-VT) and Arlen Specter (R-PA). The Act provides those resources designed to reduce recidivism and increase public safety. The legislation passed through the Senate by unanimous consent and now proceeds to the President's desk for signature.

The Second Chance Act includes key elements of President Bush's Prisoner Reentry Initiative, announced in the 2004 State of the Union address, which provides for community and faith-based organizations to deliver mentoring and transitional services. The bill will also help connect people released from prison and jail to mental health and substance abuse treatment, job training and placement services, as well as accessing transitional housing and case management services.

Nationally, the statistics show that an estimated 95 percent of all state prisoners will be released. Half of these individuals are expected to return to prison within three years for the commission of a new crime or violation of their conditions of release. We will keep you updated as we learn more.

SOURCE: The Council of State Governments Justice Center press release