



## Bob From Page 1

"Hey brother, you lookin' for a little sumpin sumpin to get you through the night?" says a tightly wound voice from a thin young man in the corner. I recognize the drug dealer language and reply, "Nah, I'm cool."

"Well, if you change your mind, I'm in room two-oh-three." He tips his head in my direction, and turns to watch out the window, his fingers fidgeting at his drug-war, battle-scarred face, waiting for the next would-be customer to come through the door. He would usually be on the street plying his wares, but it's just too damn cold out.

I haven't gone down that far; I know what getting high means for me. I just got out and I don't want to go back. I start to head up the stairs. "Hey, Bob, is that you?"

All my senses perk up and I feel my spine turn to Jell-O as I turn to look in the lobby. I don't want to be known. I recognize the face though no name comes to mind. It's a little dark in the lobby and the voice is slouched in a chair in the corner.

"It's me, Rick. Sterling, remember?" Suddenly I remember the man and the face. He was my celly for a short time while I was in the prison at Sterling a couple of years ago. I recover. "Hey Rick, how ya doing?"

The man stands and stretches out his hand. "Probably 'bout the same as you. I'm here, broke, ain't got nothin' goin on."

"This ain't fun. I'm fixin' to run outta cash here any minute and I can't get an I.D. to get to work, even if I could find a job," I reply.

"Is this your first time out on parole?" Rick asks.

"Yeah, it is,"

"Shoot pal, this is my third go-around, and since you're a pretty good guy, and I know a thing or two about a thing or two that might be able to help you out..." he starts to rattle off names and places where I might go to get some help.

"Let me get a piece of paper and see if this girl at the front desk has a pen. I need to write all this down."

("That's the only pen I have you better bring it back when you're done," snarls the not-so-lovely girl at the front desk.)

"Thanks man, this helps, I'll see you around." I shake Rick's hand and I head upstairs.

"MY PEN!" screeches the front desk girl and I turn around and walk back to return it. I glance outside and notice that it's dark. The neon light is on, and I can see the snow starting to flutter down. I climb the stairs and crawl into my room.

My alarm clock screams and rattles on the end table. It's 4 A.M. I look outside and sure enough, there's at least six inches of snow on the ground.

(Can't the weather guy be wrong in my favor, just once?)

I turn on the light and look at the paper I had written on last night. Rick told me I could go to the Day Labor place up on Colfax and they would take my DOC ID and let me work. There's a church that I can go to that helps with birth certificates and I.D.s, and the Department of Corrections has a place called the John Inman Work and Family Center that helps with folks coming back in. Damn, I am hungry. I gotta get some food if I am going to be able to work all day. I make a half-pot of coffee, shave quickly, wash my face in the sink, and put on the same clothes I've had on for three days. I quietly walk out, shut the door and lock it. I don't know if my little home will be my little home by the end of the day and I suddenly feel very lonely.

The girl downstairs tells me there's a convenience store up on Colfax, and a 7-11 on 17th and Pennsylvania. I'm just trying to put something hot in my stomach, and I walk outside to that good morning blast of frigid Colorado wind. Twenty minutes later I am at the 7-11. My ears, hands and feet are

frozen. I go in and buy a \$2.00 burrito and heat it in the microwave while I try to shake off the cold. Twenty-two dollars left. I need to make at least \$3.00 to keep my home for one more night.

The day labor joint is about eight blocks away. I peer through the darkness as I walk up Colfax and I see a line out the door. It's only 5:30 in the morning and 26 degrees outside. The place is tucked into a store-front that looks abandoned except for a few plastic chairs inside. I thought I'd be early, but apparently my version of early is different from the rest of the unemployed. I walk to end of the line, glancing at the faces of the men who are waiting for the doors to open. I realize I see myself in their faces. Cold, hungry, and desperate, we stand to keep out of the wind. The sky starts to lighten and my stomach grumbles again.

Apparently, you have to know someone at the day labor place in order to go to work. The man in front of me starts to get impatient and grouchy. "Dammit," he says under his breath. "I just need to work enough to eat today and these clowns always give the jobs to their regulars first." Every 15 minutes or so the man in charge of the day labor place comes out, points at a couple of guys, and they go off and get in a truck. "Bet there's a good heater in that Chevy," says the dammit-man, and he shivers.

It's darn near 10 o'clock in the morning, I've been standing here for about 4 hours, and there are still 12 guys ahead of me waiting as well. I went in earlier and registered with the man at the front desk, told him what I could do and he told me to go wait in line. I'm starting to panic. What if I can't even get work at the day labor place?

"BOB!" my knees almost buckle.

I jog up. "Yes, boss."

"Bob, can you really weld?" asks the day labor boss.

"Sure I can" I say, "I've been welding since I was a little kid."

"Go ahead with Mr. Thompson here." I look over and see a slight man with a rat-face who tips his head towards the truck parked at the curb. I nod and make my way over to the old blue pick-up. I get in and Mr. Thompson slides into the driver's seat and heads on down Colfax.

"I only got about two hours worth of work for you," Mr. Thompson says.

"Oh, that's fine," I answer. "I'm just grateful to get work, sir."

Mr. Thompson's normal crew consisted of one guy whose wife decided to have a baby that day. There was a job that had to be done by that afternoon, which was why he came looking for help.

"Don't have any other work for you after today, sorry," says Mr. Thompson when he drops me back off at the day labor place.

It's three o'clock in the afternoon. I just added another \$15.00 to my bankroll, so at least I won't get kicked out tonight. I need to get down to the church and try to get some help with my ID and some bus tokens, but you have to be down there as early as you have to be at the day labor place. I might have to stay at the shelter if I have to choose between one and the other, and if I'm going to stand a chance at getting in the shelter, I have to go get a TB card from the hospital. My head aches from welding and the cold and being hungry. There isn't any medical unit out here to go ask a nurse for some aspirin. I turn towards the dying sun and head to the hotel, plan a stop at the 7-11 for another burrito.

There is a constant churning in my stomach now. I try to thaw out in the lobby of the hotel and I head for the community microwave that's in there to heat up my burrito. I start the oven and then I reach into my pocket and pull out the small package of Advil that I spent \$1.19 on and put the pills in my mouth and dry swallow them. My head pounds and I wait for the "ding" of the microwave to tell me that my dinner is ready.

## CCJRC Parole Revocation Survey

Thank you so much to our members in prison who participated in our Parole Revocation Survey. We received over 150 completed surveys and are in the process of analyzing the information to make sure CCJRC really understands the barriers and struggles faced by people on parole so that our reform campaigns and advocacy is on target. By sharing your experience and stories we are able to put a face to the overwhelming problems that people are having during their transition back to community. The response from you all was overwhelming and we want to say thank you very much. Your participation makes all the difference.

"Hey Bob, how are things?" I look over and Rick is lounging in his chair.

"Things are cold," I reply. I pull the burrito out and turn to head upstairs.

"I need to talk to you for a minute," he says, and follows me up the stairs.

I open the door of my room and Rick comes in after me. He quietly shuts the door and locks it. My senses are dulled but I know something doesn't feel right. He reaches into his coat pocket and pulls out a small rolled up paper bag.

"Check this out, Bob." He unrolls the bag, reaches inside and pulls out a plastic bag full of white powder. The adrenaline hits my head like a truck, and there is a ringing in my ears.

"What the ..." is all I can stammer out.

"A friend of mine dropped this off for me today," whispers Rick. "It's just a little something to help us get back on our feet. I can give you this for \$200 and you can pay me when you make the cash. There's about \$500 worth of dope here and that'll even give you a little something for yourself. We can make this a weekly thing, or more depending on how fast you can get rid of it."

I know my mouth is open in astonishment and the numbers and possibilities click in my head like an adding machine. I stand there in my wet dirty clothes, a 7-11 burrito rapidly cooling in my hand as Rick waits for me to jump at the chance he's offering me.

I take a deep breath. "Are you crazy?" I finally spit out. "I don't know how I'm going to make it out here, but I can't do the prison thing again, and I'm not ready to give up, You go ahead though and good luck." I go to the door and unlock it.

"You're the one who's crazy. There ain't nothing out here for us. It's 4 degrees outside and you ain't got nothin' except your birthday left and they'll figure out a way to take that too. See ya pal." He puts the plastic inside the bag, rolls it back up and shoves it in his pocket and puts his hand on the door knob. "Look, Bob. No hard feelings. When reality hits, you know where to find me." Rick walks out the door and I shut it behind him.

I turn off the light and crawl into the bed and curl my body into a ball. I feel like there is a doomsday clock ticking in the world and I have to hurry. There's just the overall feeling of always being chased. There is something behind me all the time and I constantly feel the need to look over my shoulder to make the feeling stop. I watch the snow fall and hug my knees and feel absolutely paralyzed with fear.

At three o'clock the alarm goes off. I jump up, get dressed and race out of the hotel. I know that I have to get to the church as soon as I can. I have to get an I.D. and then I am going to the DOC place that can help. I can't be afraid to ask, and I can't keep doing this hour by hour life stuff anymore.

## Voting Laws: From the Constitution to Colorado

By Carol Peeples

### First, a Little Background

Contrary to popular belief, when the Founding Fathers wrote our country's Constitution, they did not include any language intended to guarantee the right to vote. That discussion would come much later, primarily through the Fourteenth, Fifteenth, Nineteenth, and Twenty-sixth Amendments to the Constitution.

As Alexander Keyssar, historian and author of *The Right to Vote: The Contested History of Democracy in the United States* explains, "for pragmatic political reasons of their own" the Founding Fathers "left to the states the power to determine the contours of the franchise."

In early English usage, the word franchise refers to a privilege that a state grants, and indeed, that is how voting was regarded early on. For if states were to acknowledge that voting was a natural right, then where did one draw the line? There would "be no end of it," John Adams wrote in a letter.

Over the following years, the federal government gradually unpacked what Keyssar calls the Pandora's box of universal suffrage, first by class (except they didn't call it that), then by race, then by gender, and finally by age. Meanwhile, the legislatures of each state argued the details of election laws and as long as the states didn't violate federal principles, they got to decide who got to vote in their state.

### Oh, the Devil of the Details!

With a couple of centuries to develop these "contours of the franchise," it's not surprising that some state legislatures went to town on felony disfranchisement.

That's why today an incarcerated person can vote in Vermont and Maine, while a person convicted of certain felonies in Alabama and Mississippi is disfranchised for life. In Tennessee, whether or not a person is disfranchised depends upon the year s/he was convicted. Thirty-one states disfranchise people on probation; thirty-six states disfranchise their parolees.

### What's the Law in Colorado?

Take a quick true/false quiz about voting laws in Colorado. What do you know?

1. People on probation can vote.
2. People in jail serving time for a misdemeanor conviction can vote.
3. People with a felony conviction can vote after they have served their sentence and parole.
4. People who are in jail as pretrial detainees can vote.

The answer to all of the questions is TRUE. In Colorado, individuals who have been convicted of a felony have the right to vote after serving the sentence of confinement or detention, including parole. This right is automatically restored. The day a person is released from parole supervision is the day they become eligible to vote.

Unfortunately, too many people don't know this. Election clerks. Parole officers. Department of Corrections case managers. Judges. Attorneys. Too many of the people most likely to inform (or misinform) an individual of their voting rights in Colorado are confused themselves.

Alec Ewald, author of "A Crazy-Quilt of Tiny Pieces: State and Local Administration of American Criminal Disenfranchisement Law," reports that many eligible voters incorrectly believe they can not vote or fail to register to vote because they've been misinformed by election officials.

Important Dates in 2006	
<b>July 10</b>	Last day to register to vote for Primary Election
<b>Aug. 8</b>	Primary Election
<b>Oct. 10</b>	Last day to register to vote for General Election
<b>Nov. 7</b>	General Election

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**Will I get an official letter telling me when I'm eligible to vote?**

No. No one will officially tell you when you're eligible to vote. The parole office will not notify you. The Department of Corrections won't notify you. The Secretary of State's office won't notify you.

**Do I have to prove that I have served my sentence and parole?**

No. When you sign the Voter Registration Application, you are signing an oath that means you understand you are eligible. This is called a self-affirmation. There is a warning above the self-affirmation stating, "It is a crime to swear or affirm falsely as to your qualifications to register to vote." It is not a crime to register to vote if you have completed both your sentence and parole.

**What if I was convicted for a crime in another state?** The laws about disfranchisement (denial of the right to vote) vary from state to state. That's one of the reasons why the issue is so confusing. However, your right to vote is determined by the state in which you live. If you are a Colorado resident and you've completely served your sentence for a felony conviction, including parole, you can vote.

**If I was convicted of a federal crime, do I have the right to vote in a federal election?**

It does not matter if you were convicted in a state or federal court. Once you are eligible to vote in Colorado, you are eligible to vote in both state and federal elections.

**Does someone incarcerated for a felony have the right to vote?**

No. The Colorado statute reads, "No person while serving a sentence of detention or confinement in a correctional facility, jail, or other location for a felony conviction or while serving a sentence of parole shall be eligible to register to vote or to vote in any election..."

**If I am on parole, do I have the right to vote?**

No. In Colorado, individuals who are serving a sentence of parole may not register to vote or vote in any election. Once the term of parole is successfully completed, the right to vote is automatically restored. The individual must then register (or re-register) to vote.

**If I am on probation, do I have the right to vote?**

Yes. People on probation may register to vote and vote in any election.

**Do I have the right to vote if I am in jail serving a sentence for a misdemeanor conviction?**

Yes. An individual in jail serving a misdemeanor sentence has the right to register to vote and vote in any election. You will need to register to vote before the deadline and request a mail-in ballot.

**Do I have the right to vote if I am in jail awaiting trial?**

Yes. Pretrial detainees are eligible to vote. The statute says, "a confined prisoner who is awaiting trial but has not been tried shall be certified by the institutional administrator and shall be permitted to register to vote by mail registration pursuant to part 5 of this article."

**Do I have the right to vote if I am on bond and the criminal case is pending?**

Yes. You are eligible to vote if you are on bond as long as you are not convicted and serving a sentence in jail or prison for a felony at the time of the election or on parole.

**I was registered to vote before I was incarcerated. Do I need to register again?**

Yes. If you were registered to vote prior to your incarceration, there is a good chance that your name was removed from the secretary of state's list of registered voters. You must re-register to vote.

**PLEASE REGISTER AND VOTE! If you think you are eligible but told you may not register to vote, contact us at CCJRC.**

## Denver's Crime Prevention & Control Commission Finalizes Funding Recommendations

As you may remember, Denver's Crime Prevention & Control Commission (CPCC) was created by city ordinance in 2005 and consists of 32 members representing various government agencies, criminal justice agencies, elected officials, and community members. One of their roles is to make funding recommendations for the Crime Prevention & Control Fund (\$1.2 million in 2006). In late May, the CPCC finalized their recommendations which must be approved by the Mayor and City Council before funds can be allocated.

CCJRC is very excited that funding for a community based re-entry center to assist people leaving jail made the list of recommendations. Many thanks to the chair of the Community sub-committee, Lisa Calderon, who worked closely with community and faith based groups to collaboratively develop the concept for this project.

Unfortunately, the biggest ticket item is the refunding of Drug Court, particularly since the expenditures would cover system staff costs for district attorneys, DA investigators, public defenders, a judge, and a Drug Court Coordinator but not expand funding available to improve the

CPCC Approved Recommendations	2006 Cost (Aug-Dec)	2007 Cost (Full Year)
Denver's Drug Court-staff costs (DAs, PDs, judge, Coordinator, etc.)	\$ 452,885	\$1,218,313
Pre-Sentence Investigation Report writer	\$ 32,007	\$ 54,868
Additional pre-trial service staff	\$ 57,131	\$ 112,084
Jail Case Managers to do assessment and re-entry planning	\$ 57,202	\$ 134,000
Community, "One-Stop" Re-Entry Center	\$ 102,385	\$ 272,900
Community mental health services for people upon release from jail	\$ 179,000	\$ 205,605
Technical Assistance to develop strategic mental health plan	\$ 15,000	\$ 0
Map juvenile justice system	\$ 30,000	\$ 0
PACE program serving youth in Green Valley/Montbello	\$ 33,791	\$ 76,828
Special municipal court services for youth with mental health needs	\$ 28,583	\$ 49,000
Administrative Overhead	\$ 142,963	\$ 176,402
New Initiative (TBD)	\$ 69,053	\$ 0
<b>Total Amount Allotted</b>	<b>\$1,200,000</b>	<b>\$2,300,000</b>