

Prisoners Sue Parole Board

On September 16, 2005, a lawsuit was filed by Daniel Immel and Thomas Willsey, who are currently inmates at the Sterling Correctional Facility. They have asked that the lawsuit be certified as a class action which would affect a large number of inmates convicted for crimes committed between July 1985 and July 1993 and who are still serving a prison sentence. The plaintiffs contend that inmates' rights have been violated by inappropriate and negligent application of the July 1985 Discretionary Parole laws, that were superseded by the July 1993 Mandatory Parole laws.

The lawsuit alleges that the failure of the Dept of Corrections and the Board of Parole to implement the Discretionary Parole Guidelines in a reasonable, responsible, consistent and just manner has resulted in the retention in the Colorado prison system of huge numbers of inmates whose records and conduct clearly meet or exceed the statutory guidelines for parole under which they were convicted. For more information, please go to www.coloradopca.org for the full text and summary of the lawsuit.

You Can and Do Make a Difference!

CCJRC is a membership organization. The 'coalition' component is 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 1,000 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. To achieve all of the activities listed above and more, to effectively coordinate the many dozens of groups and individuals, to plan, purchase and distribute the flyers, yard signs and posters, to do the work big and small that will assure that we are heard and listened to requires all of our financial support.

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 tithe 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+

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 Please charge my credit card:
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- How do you prefer to be contacted (check only one):
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Please return this form to:
CCJRC, 1212 Mariposa St., #4, Denver, CO 80204

Update CSP II Litigation

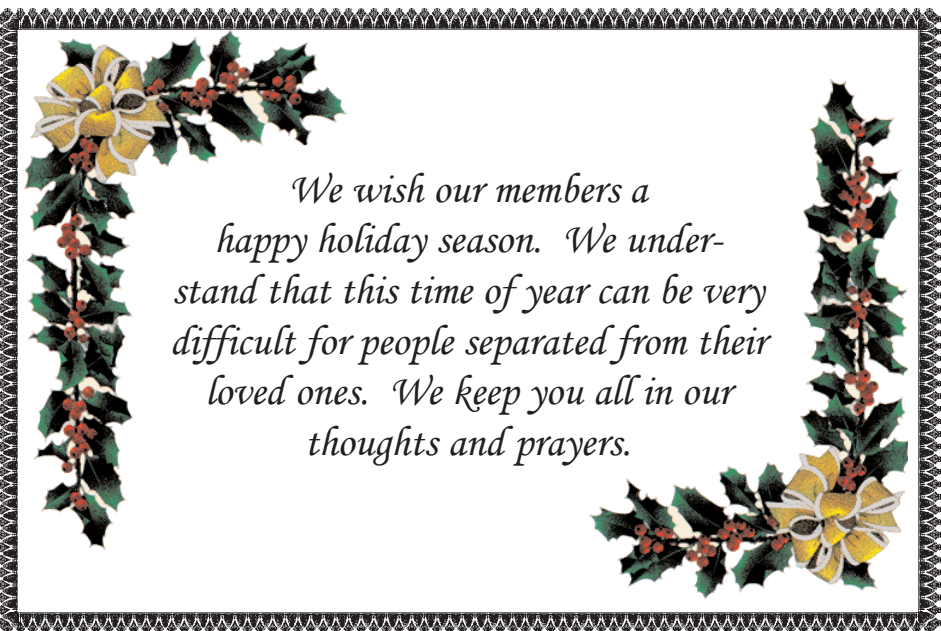
CCJRC is disappointed to announce that on October 17, 2005, the Colorado Supreme Court denied the Petition for Writ of Certiorari in our lawsuit to challenge the expansion of the Colorado State Penitentiary (CSP II). This ends the litigation and paves the way for the state to move forward with the construction of CSP II and additional academic buildings at the CU medical school.

To summarize, in 2003, the Colorado legislature passed a bill (House Bill 03-1256) that authorized the state to enter into lease-purchase agreements to finance two state construction projects, namely a \$100 million, 948 bed expansion of CSP II and \$200 million for new academic buildings at the University of Colorado Health Science Center at Fitzsimons. In HB 1256, the legislature approved the use of "Certificates of Participation" and lease-purchase agreements to finance the construction of both projects. Here's how it works. Certificates of Participation are structured and marketed much like government bonds except a private institution issues them. Investors buy these "certificates" which earn a specific interest rate over a specific period of time. Investor money is then used to pay for the construction of the projects and then the state "leases" the buildings until the "certificates" and interest have been paid back to investors. In this case, that would be 15 years on the prison and 25 years on the medical school projects. Once the investors are paid back, the state would own the properties. This is called a "lease-purchase" arrangement. During the legislative session, CCJRC vigorously opposed this bill but we were unable to defeat it.

In October 2003, CCJRC and several of our members filed a lawsuit claiming that HB 1256 was unconstitutional for violating two separate provisions of the Colorado Constitution. CCJRC claimed that the bill violated the single subject requirement because it lumped a prison and a medical school project in one bill. The intention behind the single subject requirement is to ensure that legislators are able to evaluate the merits of each legislative proposal individually. CCJRC argued that lumping a medical school and a prison together in one bill prevented legislators from being able to evaluate the merits of each proposal, on its own. When CCJRC lobbied against HB 1256 during the 2003 legislative session, several legislators told us that they didn't support the prison but they supported the medical school and so they were voting for HB 1256. This is precisely the type of situation the single subject clause of the Colorado Constitution was intended to prevent. However, the Court of Appeals ruled that the single subject requirement was not violated because the unifying subject was the financing arrangement, i.e.: the lease-purchase agreements. In its decision, the Court of Appeals stated that CCJRC had not proven that some legislators who supported the medical facility would not have supported the prison and vice versa. However, the district court denied CCJRC the ability to present testimony when it denied our request for an evidentiary hearing!

Second, CCJRC claimed that HB 1256 required voter approval under TABOR because it constituted multi-year debt. It will take 15 years to pay off investors for the construction cost for the prison and 25 years for the medical school expansion. However, each year, the legislature has to approve the leases so that state argued that it wasn't multi-year debt - just consecutive, annual leases. This is a sham argument but the Court of Appeals agreed with the state. Because a private institution is issuing the Certificates of Participation (not the state) and because the lease only runs for one year and must be approved by successive legislatures, the Court of Appeals ruled that the financing arrangement didn't constitute multi-year debt which would require voter approval under TABOR.

Since the Colorado Supreme Court has decided not to hear the case, the ruling from the Colorado Court of Appeals stands.



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COLORADO JUSTICE REPORT

DECEMBER 2005

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE COLORADO CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM COALITION

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

Collateral Damage

Collateral damage refers to unintended damage amidst intended damage. It is sometimes used as a euphemism to signal death and destruction on a wide scale, as in deaths and property destruction during war. We define the term as: "inadvertent casualties and destruction inflicted on civilians in the course of military operations" i.e., the victims in the War on Drugs.

Despite whatever intentions began it, **the war on drugs** has, over time, become a vicious war against the poor. A war against people of color. A war against women. A war against children This war has left a trail of broken families, dreams, communities and individuals in its wake. The collateral damage that has been inflicted on the victims is incalculable. The damage incurred by the drug war cannot simply be measured fiscally (40 billion dollars was spent last year alone). There is a continuum of abuse that has been inflicted: emotionally, physically, mentally and morally. And the tally of victims grows exponentially, the longer we remain engaged in an un-winnable war.

Women in prison are often forgotten or overlooked while the female prison population has exploded in the past two decades. The Sentencing Project reports that number of women serving time in state prison facilities for drug-related offenses has increased 888 percent since 1986! The number of women incarcerated in prisons and jails in the USA is approximately 10 times more than the number of women incarcerated in Western European countries combined, even though Western Europe's combined female population is about the same size as that of the United States. There are currently 2,200 women serving time in Colorado state prisons. Over 85% of those are convicted of non-violent crimes with drug offenses leading the way. In 2004 alone there were 654 women incarcerated for non-violent crimes, 31% were for drug offenses. **Over 75% of those women are mothers** (national statistics indicate the **55% of men in prison are fathers** of children under the age of 18.) Yet when a mother is arrested, there is no significant public policy strategy to coordinate what happens to the children, even immediately after childbirth. In fact 6% women of women entering prison are pregnant when they enter prison, yet there is no coherent policy or plan for how to handle the care of their newborns. In Colorado pregnant inmates are routinely shackled while giving birth, and after delivery, mother and babies are separated within hours. The infant is then sent to live with a family member or is placed in the foster care system.

Dear Judge, I need my mom. Would you help my mom? I have no dad and my grandmom have cancer I dont have innynone to take care of me and my sisters and my niece and nephew and my birthdays coming up in October the 25 and I need my mom to be here on the 25 and for the rest of my life. I will cut your grass and wash your car everyday just don't send my mom off. Please Please Please don't!!!--Phillip (from Nell Bernstein's All Alone in the World)

In Colorado, on any given morning, nearly 16,000 children wake up with one or both of their parents in prison. The children of prisoners have no guaranteed rights. They have committed no crime but the penalty they are required to pay is steep. They lose too much, too often, too young: their homes, their safety, their primary source of com *Please See Collateral On Page 2*

Colorado Criminal Justice Reform Coalition
1212 Mariposa St., #4
Denver, CO 80204

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Change Services Requested

Cornell gets the boot Victory for Concerned Citizens of Lamar

One outcome of the recent November elections that you may not have heard much about was the **VICTORY by Concerned Citizens of Lamar** (CCL) in getting Amendment 2A passed in the Lamar city election. Passed by a vote of 1007 to 813, Amendment 2A changed the City Charter to require voter approval before the City can negotiate a contract to provide utility services to any private prison company.

This campaign was the culmination of a two year effort to stop Cornell Corrections, Inc, a private prison operator, from building a private prison in Lamar. Local elected officials and business leaders courted, endorsed and promoted this plan for a new prison as a form of economic development. Cornell was awarded a contract to build a 500-750 bed prison in November 2003. Shortly thereafter, local residents formed CCL because **they decided they didn't want Lamar to become the next prison town.**

For those of us that weren't actively involved in this campaign, we may not appreciate how much of a struggle this effort was, particularly in a small town where "ALL politics is personal."

- ◆ When CCL first formed and its members were repeatedly ridiculed in the local newspaper - they kept on going;
- ◆ When one of its members was suspended from his job at the utility company for his activism - he fought back, got his job back - and they kept on going;
- ◆ When the local newspaper, the Lamar Daily News, got a restraining order against members of CCL for daring to complain about the lack of balanced coverage on the issue - they fought back, got the restraining order lifted - and they kept on going;
- ◆ When the City Attorney filed a lawsuit against CCL to challenge the proposed language of Amendment 2A and keep it off the ballot - CCL and their lawyers fought back - won, gathered well more than enough signatures to get Amendment 2A on the ballot - and they kept on going;
- ◆ Just prior to the November election, when city leaders who opposed Amendment 2A distributed literature misleading the public that 2A would prevent ANY business from opening in Lamar without voter approval - they fought back, filed a complaint with the District Attorney for violations of campaign laws - and they kept on going until they **WON THE ELECTION.**

Word on the street is that Cornell is abandoning the idea of building a private prison in Lamar both because of the passage of Amendment 2A and internal financial problems. We are not sure whether Cornell will try and find another community to build the prison in. We'll keep you posted on anything we hear. Gary Warn, one of the founding members of CCL said, **"This should send a message to other cities they can do the same thing to keep these private prisons out of their communities!"** CCJRC is very proud of CCL and their allies who helped in this campaign, especially attorneys Steve Harris and Sunny Maynard, Stephen Raheer, and Frank Smith.

CCJRC JOINS ACLU LAWSUIT SUIT AIMS TO RESTORE VOTING RIGHTS TO PAROLEES

*"Without a vote, a voice, I am a ghost inhabiting a citizen's space... I want to walk calmly into a polling place with other citizens, to carry my placid ballot into the booth, check off my choices, then drop my conscience in the common box."
-- Joe Loya, disenfranchised ex-felon*

On November 17, 2005, the ACLU filed a **class-action lawsuit in federal district court** against Colorado Secretary of State Gigi Dennis challenging the constitutionality of a state law that forbids people on parole from voting or registering to vote in Colorado. The Plaintiffs bringing the lawsuit are Pastor Michael Danielson (a parolee), CCJRC and Colorado CURE.

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Collateral From Page 1

fort and affection, their public and private self-image. They lose so much and those grief issues are rarely if ever addressed. Often these children are poor, psychologically scarred, and prone to generational cycles of involvement in the criminal justice system. Many must rely on elderly grandmothers who are often in poor health and struggling financially. Shuttled between bureaucracies, many take to the streets. The cycle continues, as they struggle to survive the only way they know how.

If a child has been in foster care for more than 22 months and is over the age of 6, that parent can easily have their parental rights terminated. If the child under the age of 6, those rights may be terminated within 15 months of the child being placed with social services. Even if a parent spends as little as two years in prison, s/he may never see their child again. The average cost to house a prisoner for one year is \$28,000. The average cost to have a child in Social Services is \$25,000. The average cost for treatment for one year is \$6,000. If you multiply the number of women who were convicted of drug offenses in 2004 by the cost of their incarceration it comes to a whopping \$8.7 million dollars. For one year! For less than \$2 million we could have put them through a treatment program.

Most of these women are single, young women of color, who have few job skills and significant substance abuse problems. There are very few viable programs within our state correctional facilities that adequately teach job skills, provide substance abuse treatment or educate women so that they can succeed upon release. The programs that are available are generally under-funded and are only occasionally available. This is not how public safety is best served; this is not how we should treat the children or the women in our communities.

"When one is incarcerated with 1,200 other inmates, it is hard to be selfish ... So many of the women here ... will never have the joy and well-being that you and I experience. Many of them have been here for years -- devoid of care, devoid of love, devoid of family. I beseech you all to think about these women -- to encourage the American people to ask for reforms, both in sentencing guidelines, in length of incarceration for nonviolent first-time offenders, and for those involved in drug-taking. They would be much better served in a true rehabilitation center than in prison where there is no real help, no real programs to rehabilitate, no programs to educate, no way to be prepared for life "out there" where each person will ultimately find herself, many with no skills and no preparation for living." - An open letter from Martha Stewart upon her release from federal prison

Even Martha Stewart now has the conviction to say that "[w]omen and their children have for too long remained the unseen victims of the drug war."

"This country can no longer ignore the devastation of families and communities when record numbers of women and mothers are locked up for drug offenses," said Kirsten Levingston, Director of the Criminal Justice Program at the Brennan Center for Justice. "It's time to promote drug policies that work, to stop wasting money and to use our social systems to help women, not hurt them."

Yes, the drug war is a war. The victims are overlooked and ignored. Intentionally not finding and funding effective alternatives to incarceration and public health strategies is the true crime. How dare we even consider building another prison in this state when we are taking money from schools. We have any opportunity to stop the madness and recreate criminal justice policy, stop punishing the unintended victims and start healing the damage that has been done.

A Child's Voice: In Her Own Words

Ashleigh's mom, arrested on a drug charge while Ashleigh was at school, was sent to prison. Ashleigh is now 15 and shares her story with us:

I was sitting in my 2nd grade Music class when the school principle showed up in the doorway to take me out of class. As I got up to leave, my friends did the whole "ooh, you're going to get in trouble", type of thing that normal 2nd graders do. I remember turning to them and telling them to "shut-up", but if I knew that was the last time I would see any of them, I probably would have said something more intelligent. As I walked down the hallway to her office, the principle kept saying things like "never give up, no matter what" and "you can do anything you set your mind to". I just kind of looked at her and nodded my head every once in awhile.

Waiting in the principle's office was a Larimer County Social Worker. When we came into the office, she stood up and simply said, "Hi Ashleigh, I am here to take you across town to pick up your brother and then we're going to go for a little ride." Just like that my whole life changed into something from a scary movie. Only now I couldn't push the "STOP" or "PAUSE" button.

The first foster home that my brother and I went to was in Estes Park, Colorado. For the first few days it wasn't that bad, it was like a sleepover to us, but then we both didn't want to have a sleepover anymore, we wanted to go home. Three months after we settled into our new home, we were moved to Loveland and were told that neither my brother nor I were going to be able to call our mom anymore. I guess that's where I started not to trust the world, and when I decided I hated everyone who came with 10 feet of me, my brother or our family. A year or so later my mom's parental rights were terminated and I and my brother were up for adoption. I was 9 years old.

I am 15 now, and in the past eight years I have been placed in 23 different foster homes.

They weren't all exactly what you would call healthy. In one of my foster homes cold water was poured over my head when I would cry and when I complained about that, scorching water was poured on my head. I heard recently heard that that particular home had been closed down.

In 2000, my brother was adopted by a family in Delta, Colorado and by 2003 I was unable to have any contact with him. I had been placed in two or three adoptive homes but refused to stay with any of them. "My mom will come and get me as soon as she can", is what I told myself and everyone else for those eight years, but no one believed me, and sometimes I didn't believe me.

The worst part of it all was living without knowing what had happened, thinking that it was my fault and just being alone and confused for years. For most of my life I had live with my friends asking me, "What's foster care like?" or "What do you call the people you live with? Mom and Dad?" I hated this and I hated going through all that. I feel sorry for any living person who is going through or has gone through something like that.

Then one day I started receiving letters from my mom and within months we started visits. These days I have lived with my mom for a little over a year, and I proved to everyone that they were wrong. Best of all I am finally home, and at least I can finally say "This is my mom." -**Ashleigh**

Editor's note: Ashleigh's mom fought for the right to communicate with her daughter after her release from prison even though her parental rights had been terminated. She stayed in communication with Social Services, went to therapy, and provided Social Services with progress reports from her parole officer, therapist and employer. Social Services decided to give them the opportunity to be together. She has not had contact with her son.

REACH For Kids

The REACH program from Big Brothers and Big Sisters mentors children with a parent in prison.

Being a Big Brother or Big Sister means being a special friend and role model to a child. Big Brothers and Big Sisters of Colorado recently started the REACH program to specifically focus on children who have a parent/guardian in prison. Children of prisoners are among the most vulnerable youth in our community. Nationwide statistics show these youth have a 70% chance of becoming incarcerated themselves. Big Brothers and Big Sisters (BBBS) can have an enormous impact in the lives of these youth. The REACH program serves children between the ages of 7-17, only.

Typically, the Big Brother/Big Sister meets with a child 2-4 times a month for a couple of hours at a time. An assortment of activity options and ideas are provided, along with training and the support of professional BBBS Program Specialists to facilitate a positive experience for both the child and volunteer. Volunteer mentors are carefully screened, specially trained, matched with a child and supervised by BBBS staff. BBBS views the parent/ guardian's role in the relationship is essential for success, and communication with the parent/guardian is important. Mentors are asked to be sensitive to the child's situation and be non-judgmental.

If you are interested in more information on how to apply for a Big Brother/Big Sister for your child or would like to volunteer as a Big Brother/Big Sister with the REACH program contact:

Big Brothers/Big Sisters
2420 W. 26th Ave., Suite 450-D, Denver, CO 80211
(303) 433-6002 (Metro Denver),
1-888-291-7148 (outside Denver),
bbbs@bbbscolo.org, www.bbbscolo.org

CCA Sued Over Riot at CCCF

Bill Trine, one of Colorado's leading trial attorneys, filed a lawsuit on behalf of 86 inmates injured as result of a riot at the Crowley County Correctional Facility on July 20, 2004. Trial Lawyers for Public Justice, a national public interest law firm, joined as co-counsel.

The inmates' lawsuit accuses Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), the nation's largest private prison operator, with negligence that sparked a riot on July 20, 2004. CCA is also accused of using excessive force during and after the riot, and indiscriminate and inhumane treatment of inmates not involved in the riot. None of the plaintiffs participated in the riot and all their injuries were sustained by CCA's employees and agents, not by other inmates.

The DOC prepared a scathing 179-page report concluding that CCA prison administrators should have known about the problems that led to the riot. Newly released documents from the State Inspector General's office support the plaintiffs' claims that CCA's employees and agents used excessive and unreasonable force on inmates who did not riot, evidencing a desire to punish everyone even after the actual riot had been contained. The widespread punishment of these bystanders, included forcing tightly bound inmates to urinate and defecate in their clothing, dragging handcuffed inmates from their cells by the ankles face down through glass shards and raw sewage, withholding drinking water and medications, denying shower privileges and clean clothes for more than a week, feeding inmates an inadequate diet for a month and forcing inmates to strip and shower in front of female guards.

Lead counsel, Bill Trine, said "CCA's desire to make a buck at the Crowley Facility resulted in understaffing and inadequate training of staff on the proper use of force. The pain compliance techniques used on innocent bystanders who were complying with orders were unnecessary, unreasonable. CCA has yet to correct the conditions that resulted in the riot. If anything, conditions at Crowley have worsened since the riot. This lawsuit offers the only mechanism for holding CCA accountable and preventing a future riot."

ACLU From Page 1

The lawsuit challenges the legality of Section 1-2-103(4) of the Colorado Revised Statutes that 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."

The lawsuit argues that this statute conflicts with Article VII, Section 10 of the Colorado Constitution says that, "no person while confined in any public prison shall be entitled to vote; but every such person who was a qualified elector prior to such imprisonment, and who is released there from by virtue of a pardon, or by virtue of having served out his full term of imprisonment, shall without further action, be invested with all the rights of citizenship, except as otherwise provided in this constitution."

So, when does a person complete "the full term of imprisonment? Colorado case law states that "once an offender is granted release to parole supervision by the state board of parole, he will be deemed to have discharged his sentence to imprisonment in the same manner as if he had been discharged pursuant to law." See, Martin v. People, 27 P.3d 846, 858 (Colo.2001).

"More than 6000 persons on parole are illegally denied the right to vote by a Colorado statute that the state legislature enacted in the early 1990s," said Norman Mueller, an ACLU volunteer attorney who is litigating the case. "We are asking the court to declare that this statute violates rights that are guaranteed by the Colorado Constitution."

According to the ACLU, the Colorado Constitution provides that offenders lose their right to vote only during the time they are incarcerated in prison. Their right to vote is restored automatically when they complete their sentence and are released on parole.

Michael Danielson, the lead plaintiff, has been on parole since 2003 after having served four years for a drug sentence. He said, "I'm out here paying taxes. I don't understand why I don't have a say in where my tax money goes. Voting is one of the fundamental rights of being a citizen."

According to the Sentencing Project, nationally more than **4.7 million Americans**

DOC Requires Electronic Funds Transfer

As of November 1, 2005, the Colorado Department of Corrections will no longer accept money orders for deposit into prisoners' accounts and will only accept funds received through electronic fund transfer (EFT) through two different companies, either JPay or Western Union. The DOC justifies this in terms of cost-savings and convenience for them but it imposes a huge increase in the cost of sending money to loved ones in prison.

While in prison, people are required to pay for their own toothpaste, shampoo, shaving supplies, soap, other toiletries, stamps, paper, envelopes and over the counter medications from the prison canteen. They are charged regular retail prices for these items. Inmates must also pay \$5 for a medical visit if they are sick or injured. A percentage of their money also goes to restitution and child support.

This is nearly impossible to do when the state caps their pay at 60 cents a DAY -- three bucks a week. Therefore, many people rely on their families to send them a few dollars a month. And for many families that is literally all they can afford. Previously, the DOC would accept paper money orders issued by the post office which only cost 90 cents to buy.

This new policy is included in Administrative Regulation 200-02 "Offender Debt Collection (Inmate Banking)." The DOC has made a deal with Jpay and Western Union so that inmates' families can pay in person at the store, or use credit/debit cards over the phone or the internet.

On paper that sounds very convenient, until you look at what they charge for their services. Rates vary based on the amount that is being sent and whether the transfer is initiated over the phone, through the Internet or at a walk-up counter. At JPAY (located at the Ace Express Stores), in order for Mom to send \$25 to her child she must pay a service fee of \$5.95 (if transaction done over the internet), \$6.95 (if transaction done over the phone) and \$5.00 if she does the transaction in person at the store. If she uses Western Union it's even higher. To send the same \$25, the service fee is \$7.95 if she walks up, \$9.95 online and \$11.95 over the phone. JPay and Western Union are not at fault here. This

are denied the right to vote as a result of laws that prohibit voting by felons or ex-felons. In 48 states and the District of Columbia prisoners cannot vote; in 35 states felons on probation or parole are disenfranchised, and in 13 states a felony conviction can result in a lifetime ban long after the completion of a sentence. Only Vermont and Maine have NO barriers to voting relating to a criminal conviction and allow people serving a prison sentence to vote. This fundamental obstacle to participation in democratic life is exacerbated by racial disparities in the criminal justice system, resulting in an estimated **13% of all black men unable to vote. In southern states, almost 1/3 of all black men are unable to vote.**

As a result of various changes in state laws, as well as extensive grassroots efforts, an increasing number of Americans with a felony conviction are regaining their voting rights. Public option clearly shows strong support for reform - 80% of the public supports restoration of voting rights for ex-felons who have completed their sentences, and 64% and 62% respectively support the right of probationers and parolees to vote.

"There is a growing movement to reform many of the harsh state laws that disenfranchise offenders because of a past felony conviction," said Mark Silverstein, ACLU Legal Director. "These laws are particularly damaging to the voting strength of communities of color. Voters and public officials are questioning whether these harsh penalties are consistent with our country's commitment to equality, to democracy, and to the goals of rehabilitation and reintegration into society. In Colorado, the drafters of the state constitution addressed these questions. They decided that civil rights should be restored automatically when a prison sentence is completed. The lawsuit we filed today seeks to fulfill the original intent of the state constitution."

CCJRC thanks our co-plaintiffs, Mark Silverstein and Jennifer Lee from the ACLU, and attorneys Norman Mueller and Ty Gee from HADDON, MORGAN, MUELLER, JORDAN, MACKEY & FOREMAN for representing us in this important matter.

The Sentencing Project has extensive information on the efforts to reform felony disenfranchisement laws nationwide at www.sentencingproject.org.

ALLIES IN ACTION Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

In November members of CCJRC attended the Drug Policy Alliance's 2005 International Drug Policy Reform Conference in Long Beach, California which lived up to its theme of "building a movement". Nearly a thousand people gathered from all over the country and the world to energize, learn and connect with fellow drug policy reformers. The following is a profile of one organization you may not be familiar with: Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP). Here's what they have to say....

The national prohibition of alcohol (1920-33) -the "noble experiment"-was undertaken to reduce crime and corruption, solve social problems, reduce the tax burden created by prisons and poorhouses, and improve health and hygiene in the United States. We accept as a truism that this experiment was a miserable failure on all counts. Having learned that prohibition added to the problems it was intended to solve

is a service that they provide, they are a for-profit company. This is an abysmal failure by the Department to truly recognize the financial stress they are putting on families and their loved ones in prison. They are forcing families, regardless of their financial circumstances to use an unnecessary and expensive mechanism to help support their loved ones.

AR 200-02 does list one exception that has not been widely publicized. It says, "the only exception to the EFT policy is for those families that are located in remote or small towns and do not have access either Western Union or JPay services and cannot use a debit or credit card. Those families without access to EFT services can send a letter of explanation to the DOC Inmate Bank and may be allowed to send money orders purchased from the U.S. Postal Service if EFT services are not available."

So DOC will still accept money orders for that limited exception. We believe there is no reason to make EFT a mandatory policy. It should be an option for those who do want to use the EFT system but families should have a choice and the DOC should still accept money orders.

and supplanted other ways of addressing these problems, prohibition was repealed in 1933. Unfortunately, Americans have yet to understand that the Drug War is failing in precisely the same way and for all the same reasons.

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition (LEAP) is an organization founded by cops, judges and others working in or retired from working in the criminal justice system as well as concerned citizens who believe that drug prohibition is a calamitous public policy failure. LEAP's members advocate for some form of control and regulation over all drugs so that we may greatly reduce the incident of crime, violence, death and disease. LEAP's emergence on the national scene provides law enforcement professionals with an organization to support them so they can speak out against this crusade-like policy grounded in feel-good mentality instead of efficacy-based results.

LEAP grew from 5 members in 2002 to more than 4000 at the end of 2005. The 100+ member speakers' bureau makes a dozen presentations across the country each week...and this will grow. Imagine a year from now as LEAP grows to 10,000 members...with 3 exhibit booths, we'll be exhibiting at 50 conferences per year, not 20. We'll have media coordinators setting up interviews in every state. We will respond to every drug bust story in every paper. Instead of making a dozen presentations each week, we'll make 40. And we'll expand. We'll expand throughout the hemisphere and across Europe.

We are often asked when do we think the "War on Drugs" will end...10, 20, or 30 years? It will end in our lifetime. And everyday that we don't help to end it, don't help to book a speaker into an event, contact an editor about the problem, help to expand the awareness of the failure of this policy will make it go longer. So, when we are asked how long it will take, we respond: "if it all ends tomorrow, it will be one day too long." Join LEAP. It's free. Be a part of the change. [For more information, contact:](http://www.leap.cc) Mike Smithson, Law Enforcement Against Prohibition 131 Flint Path Syracuse, NY 13219-3403 315-243-5844, speakers@leap.cc, <http://www.leap.cc>