

A Publication of The Pennsylvania Prison Society

GRATER FRIENDS

Promoting a humane, just and constructive correctional system and a rational approach to criminal justice since 1787

Special Report Transportation Updates

Pennsylvania Prison Society Staff

The Pennsylvania Prisons Society is proud to be able to provide affordable transportation services to Pennsylvania state correctional institutions via our bus services to about 2,300 people every year. We believe that having face-to-face connections with loved ones while incarcerated is crucial to maintaining important relationships and for successful reentry.

It is part of our mission to bring humanity behind bars. Part of that is making sure that incarcerated people do not feel disconnected from their families no matter how far away they may be. Phone calls and virtual visitations are great for maintaining that connection but nothing can replace the need we humans have for face-to-face interaction with those we care for.

While we are able to provide this transportation to so many people in the Philadelphia area, this unfortunately only really benefits those in southeastern PA. This is why we have reached out to Families Outside, an organization based in the Pittsburgh area which also provides families with affordable transportation to Pennsylvania state correctional institutions.

Below we discuss more information about Families Outside as well as some commonly asked questions about PPS's bus services.

BUSING OFFICE HOURS

As always, we have our bus services to most Pennsylvania state correctional

institutions which run either monthly or bimonthly. All buses leave from 30th and Market Streets by 30th Street Station. If you are buying tickets at the office, please note that the office hours for tickets are Monday, Wednesday, and Friday between 10:00 am and 4:30 pm. You can also buy tickets by phone and online.

BUSES FOR THE HANDICAPPED

If you require a handicap accessible bus from PPS, please be sure to request one at least five days before the bus departs, by calling the Prison Society office.

BUSES FROM PITTSBURGH

Starting with the January 2019 issue, we are providing information on bus services offered by Families Outside, a Pittsburgh-based organization which, in addition to other prison-related services, offers a busing service similar to that of PPS. We are delighted to be able to provide this information for our readers outside of the Philadelphia area so that more families may be able to visit their loved ones.

According to the Families Outside website: "The program coordinates monthly bus trips to correctional facilities in Pennsylvania and averages 150 to 160 riders a month. The program provides transportation to the following institutions: Albion, Cambridge Springs, Greene, Fayette, Houtzdale, Laurel Highlands, Somerset, Forest, Mercer, Rockview, Benner, Grat-

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erford, Frackville, Mahanoy, Muncy, Coal Township, Smithfield, Huntingdon, Camp Hill, Dallas, and Retreat."

Anybody with a loved one who is incarcerated may be eligible for a low cost ride, but first time riders are required to complete a free orientation session.

MORE INFORMATION

If you live in the Pittsburgh area and wish to visit someone at a Pennsylvania state correctional facility, contact Families Outside with the information on page 16 and see the bus schedule on page 18.

For all other information on the Prison Society bus services from Philadelphia, please see our transportation section on pages 16 and 17, call the Prison Society office at 215-564-4775, or visit our website at www.prisonsonline.org.

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Prison Society Members and Supporters:

It has been six months since the Department of Corrections issued new policies on personal mail, legal mail, access to books, and visiting. While there have been several changes and improvements, there continue to be negative repercussions. What follows is an update on recent changes.

The Society continues to monitor the impact of these policies. We are in regular contact with the Department of Corrections, bringing issues to their attention and getting frequent updates. If you are experiencing a problem as a result of these policies, let us know by writing or calling us.

LEGAL MAIL POLICY TO CHANGE BACK. NO MORE COPYING AND SCANNING

As the result of a legal challenge by the Abolitionist Law Center, the ACLU of Pennsylvania, the Amistad Law Project, and the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project, starting on April 6, legal mail will again go directly to incarcerated recipients.

NO CHANGE TO PERSONAL MAIL POLICY. DELAY CONTINUES. PRIVACY CONCERNS

Personal letters are still to be sent to Smart Communications, a copying facility in Florida, to be scanned and copied. The photocopy is then sent to the incarcerated mail recipient.

Copy quality has improved since the start of this process in September. Still, many people complain it is taking 3 to 6 weeks

for mail to reach the recipient. We have raised this issue with the Department of Corrections. According to the Department, there are several points in the process where delay can occur. They are working on improving their own response time from when Smart Communications emails the scanned letter to the facility, to when facility staff print the letter and deliver it to the recipient.

Several of you have asked us about the ability of the DOC to read and search personal mail. According to the Department, the text of personal email scanned by Smart Communications cannot be searched. The scanned mail is retained for a matter of weeks, unless a grievance has been filed related to a particular piece of mail.

Currently 43 DOC staff, most of them mailroom workers, have "client access" to all inmate mail. No additional staff will have access. DOC states that "mailroom staff and security have the ability to search mail. All pictures are searched to ensure the content of the photo meets our policy; however, not all mail is read. Only Inmates who are flagged for security supervision will have their correspondence read."

BOOKS ARE BACK, BUT DELAYED

On November 1st, the DOC announced the end to the harmful restrictions on book, magazine, and newspaper purchasing and distribution they implemented in September. As of this date, incarcerated people, family and friends can resume ordering books, magazines and newspapers. Rather than sending these items to the facility where the recipient is incarcerated, all books, magazines and newspapers should be sent to the following address:

GRATERFRIENDS

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Graterfriends is a publication from the Pennsylvania Prison Society. The organization was founded in 1787 to promote humane prisons and a rational approach to criminal justice.

We reserve the right to edit submissions. Original submissions will not be returned. We will not print anonymous letters. Allegations of misconduct must be documented and statistics should be supported by sources. All submissions should be no more than 500 words, or two double-spaced pages. Letters more than 200 words, or one double-spaced page will not be published in their entirety and may be shortened for clarity and space.

To protect Graterfriends from copyright infringement, please attach a letter, or a note on your submission, stating that you are the original author of the work submitted for publication; date and sign the declaration.

If you have a question about Graterfriends, please contact our staff by mail, email, or phone.

Security Processing Center
Inmate name, Inmate number
268 Bricker Road
Bellefonte, PA 16823

We have received many letters, emails and calls, reporting that it is taking over a month for someone to receive a magazine or book sent to the Processing Center and that, in some cases, Amazon, Barnes and Nobles, or other vendors do not recognize the Processing Center's address and are returning books to the sender. The Department of Corrections states that the backlog for processing books was eliminated in February, and that all issues with the address have been resolved. According to the DOC, delay and returned books should not be a problem going forward.

VENDING RETURNING GRADUALLY

As of March 4th, vending had returned to the following State Correctional Institutions:

Albion
Cambridge Springs Camp Hill
Chester
Coal Township Fayette
Forest
Green
Houtzdale Huntingdon
Mercer
Pine Grove Retreat
Rockview Smithfield Somerset

Vending will return to SCIs Laurel Highlands and Waymart by the end of March.

GOING FORWARD

The Prison Society will continue to monitor the impact of these policies, bring them to the attention of the Department and the public, and continue to request that the Department justify its actions.

You can help. Please let us know if you experience a problem as a result of these new policies by filling out our survey on page 19. And thank you for your ongoing support in advocating for the humane treatment of people behind bars in Pennsylvania and their families.

Sincerely,
Claire Shubik-Richards, Executive Director

NOMINATIONS REQUESTED

We encourage all GF readers to submit nominations for the volunteer, incarcerated person, and correctional employee who will be honored this June in Philadelphia. Please submit your nominations with a brief description of how your nominee has demonstrated leadership and compassion.

Last year PPS honored the following individuals:

Danielle Miniarchick, Centre County Prison, Correctional Professional of the Year, for her outstanding commitment to helping people who are and have been incarcerated.

Rebecca Mitchell, volunteer at the state prisons of Houtzdale, Somerset, Huntingdon and Smithfield, Official Visitor of the Year, for her persistent Compassion and tireless work in the name of people who are incarcerated.

Kiry Keller, SCI Dallas, Inmate of the Year, for his displayed integrity and encouragement to prison staff and inmates alike.

Nominations should be sent to Natalie Jenkins at 230 South Broad Street, Suite 605, Philadelphia PA 19102 or the newsletter editors at EditorGF@PrisonSociety.org by April 30, 2018. Thanks!

PUBLICATION SCHEDULE

Graterfriends is currently experiencing problems with low staffing as well as issues brought on by the ever-changing mail policies. We would like to assure our readers that we are still here and we will continue a regular publication schedule. Thank you for your understanding.

PHOTOCOPY ISSUES

We are aware of an issue with readability for some articles in the January issue where, due to being photocopied before delivery, some text became hard to read. We have made adjustments to color and font in hopes that photocopied editions from now on are readable. Thank you to our readers for informing us of this issue and thank you for subscribing to Graterfriends.

CORRECTION

In the September 2018 issue, Julius Dodson (GJ-9592, SCI Smithfield) reported that he filed legal action after a "false" grievance denial.

He wrote: "Once I reached the final level of appeal, that denial [was] falsely claimed because I failed to include various documents...I included a copy of all the documents they said I didn't...I will be filing my civil action because of the sensitive nature of my grievance."

We failed to include his request for readers to report similar problems. While we intended to shorten such reports to allow more to appear in each issue, we regret the omission and suggest that readers with similar stories mail them to Julius Dodson (GJ-9592, SCI Smithfield) or to the Editors of Graterfriends.

The following two articles provide information on the new Clean Slate Law. This landmark legislation allows individuals to request that certain criminal records be sealed so it will be easier for them to get a job. The first article is written by the authors of the legislation, Community Legal Services of Philadelphia. The second one is from Nicole Sloane, a criminal defense attorney.

REPORT FROM
**COMMUNITY LEGAL
SERVICES OF PHILADELPHIA**

Clean Slate Record Clearing: A Policy Tailored for the Digital Age

Clearing a criminal record can change the course of a person's life. Every year, one thousand low-income individuals come to Community Legal Services of Philadelphia (CLS) because they are facing barriers to employment caused by criminal records. Consider CLS client James, who struggled for years with under and unemployment and could not sufficiently provide for his family because of old and minor drug arrests. After getting his record cleared, he immediately got a job with UPS because his arrest records no longer showed up on his background check. James's story is one of many where clearing a record led directly to employment.

Research backs up the idea that record clearing increases both employment and earnings. And all around the country, hundreds of thousands of people seek out legal help to clear their records each year. That is why many states have looked to expand their record clearing laws, and why the Clean Slate campaign, which calls for the automated sealing of criminal records, has attracted so much positive attention. And yet there are those, like the author of a recent article on Slate.com, who claim record clearing is an ineffective remedy in the digital age. Here's why that's wrong.

Clean Slate was born out of the understanding that, in today's world, the sources of criminal record information are multiple and complex.

In fact, Clean Slate is a direct response to the increasing availability of records because of technology, and uses that very same technology to remove access to records. Clean Slate policies specifically target the electronic sources of records most likely to create barriers to employment, housing, and opportunity, and use fully automated computer queries to eliminate access to those records.

In Pennsylvania, records sealed under its new Clean Slate law require the various governmental agencies that maintain public-facing records, including the courts and law enforcement, to limit public access. In other words, once a case is sealed under Clean Slate, employers, landlords, licensing agencies, and the public cannot access these records through any governmental database.

But Clean Slate doesn't only address records maintained by the government. In Pennsylvania, commercial background screen-

ers generally obtain their data directly from the courts and are required to regularly update their databases with information provided by the courts to remove expunged and sealed cases. Clean Slate campaigns across the country include reforms to similarly ensure that private background check screeners do not report cases that have been sealed. Additionally, the federal Fair Credit Reporting Act (FCRA) requires commercial background screeners to report only accurate information, meaning they cannot legally report cases that have been expunged or sealed.

Moreover, the policies proposed by the Clean Slate campaign make it even simpler to maintain up-to-date record information by removing the potential for human error inherent in manual data entry. In Pennsylvania—the first state in the nation to pass an automated Clean Slate law—the court system and the state police will use computer programs to run automated queries that identify and seal eligible cases. This process will not require judicial intervention, paperwork, or any other manual tasks. It also eliminates the need for individuals to navigate complex bureaucracies, often without the help of a lawyer.

The Clean Slate campaign does not turn a blind eye to the various ways that criminal record information is disseminated or glossed over the technological challenges at issue. By its very nature, Clean Slate policies require a deep understanding of the data environment in any given state, and a collaborative approach that brings in advocates, affected individuals, government agencies, and the experts who understand how record information is shared across various state and private databases. The Clean Slate campaign focuses on identifying states with centralized record systems that can be used to automatically limit access to each database where criminal record information appears.

Of course, record clearing tools like Clean Slate are not perfect, and it's possible that some records will continue to be made available by private sources. While mugshot websites are certainly problematic, advocates are already working in a variety of ways to challenge their practices. For example, advocates have argued that such websites should also be regulated under the FCRA and thus maintain accurate records. When records are expunged or sealed, record information should be removed from such websites free of charge. And Florida recently passed a law allowing individuals to sue mugshot websites who charge fees for the removal of records.

Moreover, while private entities publishing arrest record information online is troubling, it does not diminish the important impact that record clearing can have on access to opportunities like employment, education, and housing. Research shows that 96% of employers utilize background checks, not internet searches, to screen for and evaluate whether to hire someone based on a criminal record. When a record is cleared and no longer shows up on an official background check, it makes a huge difference. Especially in the current environment of worker shortages, employers are supportive of hiring people who have had their records cleared. As Tom Baldrige, the president of the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce, said in a recent article, "no one is looking for additional barriers to hire people." He also noted that Pennsylvania's Clean Slate law "gives some people who might have been hesitant

to fully enter the workforce because of some past indiscretions the confidence to come back, and that's a win-win."

Additionally, many record clearing laws include protections for those seeking jobs by making clear that once a record is expunged or sealed, it is like the record never occurred. The person can honestly not disclose it, and it would be unlawful for employers to consider it. The same is true in the education context where many colleges and universities explicitly state that records that have been expunged or sealed need not be disclosed on applications.

Research on record clearing and employment has found a positive impact. Preliminary findings of a study out of Michigan show that in the first year after record clearing, the probability of employment rose by 6.5% and wages rose by about 22%. A study in California, where some convictions can be expunged, found that participants who had their records expunged reported an average increase in yearly income of \$6,190. In addition, 93% of participants reported increased confidence in their future job prospects. As Clean Slate laws rapidly expand access to record clearing across the country, it is important to continue measuring their impact through research, rather than relying merely on anecdotes and speculation.

People with records face a multitude of challenges, and Clean Slate laws are only one piece of the solution. States must also continue to advance policies that directly remove barriers to employment, occupational licensing, education, housing, and more. But Clean Slate is an ambitious, innovative, and common-sense approach to a problem large in scope, and will provide life-changing benefits to the hundreds of thousands of people who qualify.

REPORT FROM

NICOLE SLOANE, ESQ.

CRIMINAL DEFENSE ATTORNEY

Why You May Need to Think Twice Before Denying that Expunged or Sealed Crime

There has been excitement across Pennsylvania about the benefits of the Clean Slate Law. Among its benefits, the law will give eligible individuals a way to petition the courts to ask that eligible criminal records be sealed.

While the focus on criminal justice reform that gives individuals convicted of crimes a second chance is applaudable, the law has unintended negative consequences that must be remedied for its true intent to be realized. The problem begins with just how available Pennsylvania's criminal records are online.

In Pennsylvania, we have a publicly available docketing system. Further, jails and prisons release photographs and other information about inmates. Once all of that information is available on the internet and private companies farm the data, the information remains available even though the official records may subsequently be sealed or even expunged.

Last month, Slate.com featured an article by Sarah Esther Lageson titled "There's No Such Thing as Expunging a Criminal record Anymore." Web, January 7, 2019. The author is quick to correctly point out that even when a record is sealed, it may still be available on the internet.

Further, another less recognized (but nevertheless very real) issue is best described by an example. In this example, "Joe" successfully petitioned to get his non-violent, misdemeanor conviction sealed by following the instructions provided pursuant to Pennsylvania's Clean Slate Law. Joe relies on the fact that his record is sealed when he reports no criminal record on a job application. Joe is hired and is a model employee. One month after Joe starts his job, Joe is called into his supervisor's office. The supervisor tells Joe that a background check through a private company contracted for background checks reported Joe's misdemeanor conviction to Joe's employer. A subsequent Google search of Joe's name also returned Joe's online mug shot and a newspaper article describing Joe's arrest. The supervisor tells Joe that if Joe would have been honest about the conviction, he may have been hired but because Joe did not report the conviction on his application, Joe is terminated.

As Lageson writes in the Slate article, "Even if a record is officially wiped clean, it's legal for criminal justice agencies and other websites to keep criminal records online." It is not possible to "unring" a bell just like it not possible to wipe clean all of the websites that collected the data related to an arrest, conviction, mugshot or newspaper article. As Lageson asks, "what's the point in promising people the benefits of sealing their criminal records if anyone can still find them online?" Indeed.

Lageson suggests that for the new Clean Slate laws to succeed, there must be further reform. States must look at how records are disseminated in the first place. One idea is for states to direct criminal justice agencies to restrict pre-conviction records and classify them as "private" similar to juvenile records. Mug shots should be withheld from public access. Additional policies that regulate how private companies access criminal record data are also suggested.

The bottom line is that the intent of clean slate policies will not be realized until states dedicated to criminal justice reform (like Pennsylvania) regain control over their digital criminal records data to prevent dissemination on the internet. Until then, for those who want to take advantage of Pennsylvania's Clean Slate Law, your information including arrest records, mugshots and docket entries, is already on the internet, stored within the servers of for-profit companies. The sealing of your record or even an expungement is not going to change that.

Other people, including employers, are oftentimes more than willing to give those who have made mistakes a second chance, if they are honest about their mistakes. As a result, you must engage in a careful consideration as to how a question about a sealed or expunged crime is answered.

THINK ABOUT IT

Grief

Roger R. Reister, 1062727, Coffield Unit, TX

Thursday the 15th: The prison chaplain just informed me that my mother died. That's all I'm going to write today.

Friday the 16th: I held it together yesterday, despite the never-ending line of people coming by to say a few words. Whoever said that men avoid emotionally charged situations was an idiot. Each guy started with an "I'm sorry" or "I don't know what to say" followed by stammering and bumbling. All of them said the exact wrong thing! But is there ever a right thing to say at a time like this?

Saturday the 17th: I finally cried this morning. As usual, I woke up early to enjoy the only peace and quiet available in this place. But instead of enjoyment, I found the normally calming solitude choking, squeezing, stifling, pressing against me from all sides. I grabbed my headphones to immerse myself in the tunes on the radio. BIG MISTAKE! My love of music comes from my Mom. There was always an old record or cassette playing in the background of my childhood. Whenever one of her favorite songs came on (Percy Sledge, Patsy Cline, the Righteous Brothers, or Elvis), she'd grab one of us boys and begin dancing around the kitchen or living room or backyard or wherever we were. It was always embarrassing...and I loved it! Most of the time, my brothers and I would wiggle out of arms reach, but it never deterred Mom. She'd dance by herself, spinning around as she sang every word to whatever was playing. Enjoying the moment. Living. And now she's not. I miss her so much.

Sunday the 18th: I've come to the realization that my body must be just as confused by grief as my brain. Tears are the body's way of washing irritants from the eyes; a runny nose flushes germs and bacteria away, and shivering warms the body up when it's exposed to cold temps. None of these things is necessary when grieving but the body doesn't seem to care about that. All it knows is that it's hurting, and it is desperately trying to get that hurt out by any means possible. Somehow it all seems to help.

Monday the 19th: I just came to the conclusion that everyone handles the loss of a loved one differently and they each believe that their method is best. That's why the guys are sharing their stories with me. They want to help. They want my pain to go away. They want me to smile again, and I want that too. If I were experiencing physical pain, I would know exactly how to relieve my discomfort. The guys around me would eagerly give me their treatment advice and we'd share a moment of male bonding, but when it comes to helping a fellow man through his emotional pain, we men are clueless.

Wednesday the 21st: The past couple of days, I've done all of my normal daily activities but there was something off, something different. Of course, something is different. I'm different and I'll

never be the same again. Right now, I'm hurting and that emotional wound may never completely heal but I'll get better. I love you, Mom.

Note: Prison is a difficult environment to live in, and you never know what someone else is going through, so be mindful of this as you go through your daily activities. Always try to be the kind of friend that you would want in a time of need.

Reentry Success

Felicia Carhart, former inmate at SCI Muncy

My name is Felicia Carhart and I was incarcerated at SCI Muncy from 2014 until June 28, 2018. At first, my transition was overwhelming and I didn't know where to begin with my new journey to freedom. I had a great support system from the start, however, things like going to the grocery store were uncomfortable to me and I started to close myself off from society. Finding employment with my felonies proved to be difficult as well. I never gave up though and started making baby steps. Almost five months later, my hard work paid off. I am now a paralegal (a degree I obtained in 2008) at a law firm that fights for prisoners' rights. I could not be happier that I was given a second chance and that I can wake up every morning and go to work knowing I am living up to my full potential and pursuing my passion.

I met a lot of beautiful women during my stay at SCI Muncy and I will continue supporting them by signing bills such as SB 135 (formerly SB 942). Success is possible and dreams can come true.

Change is a Must

Earl Smith, GS-3221, SCI Huntingdon

Change is a must when you come to jail. Those who think you come to jail, do your time and that's it are just setting themselves up for failure. If you're happy with being locked up, repeating the same things that got you locked up, this may be the place for you. But those of us that see clearly now understand what living is truly about - building yourself up and learning from your mistakes.

I believe that the time we spend locked up should be used to find ourselves. I understand the words "do the time, don't let the time do you." It's so easy to get caught up in here, talking about "what if" and "what I almost did." Next thing you know, years go past and you're thinking, "damn, thirteen years sure went by fast."

I told myself, "No more. I have to do something." Even if it's just writing in my journal, that's the least I can do. There's much more I can do with my life. I want my life to be an example for those who are lost and need to be found. At the end of the day, those of us that are caught up in the streets are losing. It's not easy, but I must be able to pick myself up when I fall because I know that being trapped in here is not where I belong. Try to remind yourself daily where you want to be and who you are doing it for. I'm tired of hurting my family. They're the motivation for me to stay strong and focused. I'm done with my old life. I'm no longer straddling the fence. I'm on the right side and I'm not worried about the looks I get from people. Trust and believe they want to be where I'm at. They just need the right push and the right example.

ADVOCATES

The Case Against Censorship of Educational Materials

Andrew Markwood, SID-18076177, SRCI Snake River

This brief is about a serious civil rights abuse that is greatly harming prisoners and the public at large. It demands immediate intervention.

The Oregon Department of Corrections has banned all computer/technology related textbooks and materials, regardless of clear educational value. Censorship by any governmental agency immediately creates a violation of the First Amendment. Censorship of educational materials for prisoners also inhibits rehabilitation, endangers the public and is antithetical to the alleged "correctional mission". In today's highly technical society, ODOC is using taxpayer funding to ban materials that would prepare inmates to handle modern technologies. In stark contrast, states like California and Washington have greatly successful programs teaching inmates how to use computers and write programming codes. Instead, ODOC is promoting ignorance and recidivism.

After two years of investigation, no administrative official had been able to articulate a logical reason behind this. When challenging the ban, officials will shut down the conversation and refuse to elaborate by citing some non-specific security threat. Bizarrely, officials have even claimed that these books create a danger of violence and physical harm. I have collected evidence showing that this is being endorsed at the highest levels.

In conclusion, ODOC is doing irreparable harm to the public and engaging in unconstitutional censorship. They need to be held accountable to the taxpayers who fund them and immediately stop this practice. This must be achieved by public outcry, media coverage, and outside legal action by some brave advocate for prison reform. An injustice anywhere is an injustice everywhere. Censorship cannot be tolerated.

Yearly Cost to House an Inmate

Michael Miner, CZ-8944, SCI Fayette

Please encourage every one of your relatives and friends to send the following letter to Governor Wolf, the four Chairs of the Judiciary Committees and every other member of the PA House and Senate:

As a taxpayer, I am appalled that the average yearly cost to house a prisoner in PA is \$47,300 (\$186 per taxpayer), with the cost exceeding \$100,000 for geriatric prisoners!

Pennsylvania already faces a projected budget deficit for the upcoming fiscal year of at least \$1.7 billion. A cost-saving measure to subvert the escalating prisoner cost is presently in the House and Senate: I ask for your support for SB 135 (formerly SB 942) which would eliminate life imprisonment without parole in Pennsylvania. If enacted, the law would authorize the Board of Pardons to

carefully review cases and release qualifying prisoners to parole from their life sentences.

Currently there are at least 5,300 prisoners serving life sentences in this state, with 40% of them over the age of 50. If qualifying prisoners were released, this would result in a substantial savings for taxpayers and would even increase the pool of taxpayers.

Thank you for your time and consideration for these bills that will benefit all taxpaying PA.

Virtual Visitation Resistance Movement

Patrick Middleton, AK-3703, SCI Albion

Recently, I was telling a group of prisoners what prisons were really like back when there were no such things as double celling or standing for count or tucking in your shirttail unless you wanted to. Back when you could buy a real pair of shoes, your own personal street clothes, sneakers, televisions and radios from a variety of commercial outlets. And there were family church socials and banquets to attend throughout the year, and organizations to join like the "Jaycees", "N.A.A.C.P.", "Vocational Skills" and you could kiss your girl or wife more than at the initial hello and goodbye on a visit. We worked long and hard for these amenities, and we cherished every one of them.

Then came the crack epidemic of the 80's and a new era of slick-talking politicians with a grand plan to build lots of new prisons across the land and strip us of just about every amenity we have ever had. And they did and we let them. We let them take and take and take. And guess what, friends? They're not finished taking! I have been told by two staff members (who are rightly known to many of us prisoners as advocates) that this week's announcement of the arrival of the DOC's new remote Video Visitation program is a premonition of things to come, namely the death of contact visits! WAKE UP PEOPLE!

"They can't do that!" "They'd never do that!"

Oh, no? Guess what? That's just what we said right before they forced double celling on us and took away all of our amenities, and our choice to buy the kinds of items we wanted to buy, and every other amenity that prisoners worked so hard to obtain over the years."

But don't take my word for it! Just think for yourself. The DOC has just installed thousands of dollars' worth of monitors and screens for non-contact virtual visits in every prison across the state. They've installed this equipment - where else! In the visiting rooms, and now they're on an aggressive advertising campaign.

"So, what can we do to stop them?" you ask.

"Don't ask me, ask your local Peaceful Resistance Movement."

"But there is none!"

And therein lies the problem.

OUR VOICES

Some Things to Consider

James Jones, CK-8648, SCI Retreat

Earlier this year, PA DOC experienced a data breach in which it had to notify inmates that had been affected. Data breaches highlight the importance of protecting your privacy. What guarantees do your loved ones have that Smart Communications & PA DOC will not do the same with their personal information and images? You may not know that you are a victim until you experience financial and/or personal consequences from actions of thieves, scammers and/or corporations. When its discovered, it may be too late then, the damage had been done.

The Federal Trade Commission requires everyone to collect mail promptly. Yet, under this new third-party mailing system your mail will be held by a corporation, not a storing office, and not available for request for seven years. This is not storing personal information in a safe place (e.g. home). The FTC encourages shredding unwanted paperwork with personal information & images. Again, this corporation will be holding it for seven years.

What's to prevent your family's personal data (information/ images) from being shared? Most free world citizens share ID information (e.g. tax, medical, child, education, financial info and personal images) which can result in a theft. Consumers are always warned not to assume corporations provide the level of privacy you want. So, what agreement, contract or legal document has your family entered into and/or signed? Or, have they sent their private or personal information and images to a third-party mailing corporation other than a postal office, under pressure to maintain contact with their loved ones?

Remember, prisoners' rights are limited. Free world citizens have more rights, more protections. Personal information & images are a valuable resource for identity thieves, scammers and even to corporations. Your loved ones were under pressure to use this third - party mailing service, Smart Communications.

Part of the Solution and Not the Problem

Claude Cuyjet, MX-5448, SCI Albion

To err is human, to forgive, divine. Many people believe in prisons because they believe that some people deserve punishment only. That's why they're called Correctional Institutions. People who are incarcerated need help in seeing the errors of their ways. Many are mentally ill people who belong in state hospitals that no longer exist. Most prisons don't require that all their residents undergo mental health treatment, yet many inmates suffer from emotional problems that don't magically disappear by keeping them behind bars for an extended period.

It's no coincidence that very few rich people end up in prison. They can afford high-priced lawyers and high-priced psychiatrists to prevent them from having to do time. Our society always

looks to blame someone or something when bad things happen. I submit that we need pre-emptive and proactive solutions to the criminal justice systems problems. Many people society labels as bad or evil are in fact sick. If a young person kills someone out of rage, there's something wrong with that child and they should be treated as children by people who show them love as well as discipline. Most men and women in prison are there directly or indirectly due to drugs and alcohol, yet how much money is spent on treating addiction?

Some of the money that is generated from prisons should be directed toward making the prisons places where people who have made poor decisions can learn to change. The bail system is designed to generate lots of revenue, but it adversely affects the poor.

There are many different options for prison reform, but reform must start in the minds and hearts of the public. Criminals are people who, for one reason or another, have made poor choices. Many of us know what its like to make mistakes and what its like to be forgiven and given another chance. Why can't we extend that same spirit of forgiveness to the rest of society? Jesus said that the Good Shepherd will rejoice more over the one lost sheep that was found than over the remaining 99 who never strayed.

New Games for Tablets

Martin Kelly, MQ-3191, SCI Pine Grove

In the July issue of Graterfriends an inmate suggested we contact the tablet manager at DOC about volume controls. I wrote to her, but not about volume. I suggested that the DOC and GTL work together to get us old school Nintendo games on our tablets. Most of the games on there now are terrible. There are hundreds of Nintendo games that are great with classic titles like Mario Bros, Zelda, Castlevania, Final Fantasy, and Metroid. The software to play these games on Android tablets exists already so it shouldn't be too difficult to pull off.

I'm suggesting that inmates contact the DOC tablet manager or GTL directly through the kiosks and let them know there is demand for classic Nintendo games sold on our tablets. Adding hundreds of these games would give us something fun to do, keep us occupied, and make GTL money. Everyone wins.

Contact: Christine Meukel, PA DOC Tablet Manager/Liaison
1920 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg PA 18105

**Want to subscribe to
Graterfriends?
See the order form on page 20.**

PROFILES

Richard Gene Gauker
Joan Gauker, Graterfriends founder



Richard (Rich) Gene Gauker, a Graterford and Graterfriends volunteer, died on January 12, 2019.

After serving in the U.S. Navy, he earned a degree in Electrical Engineering and married Joan (the founder of Graterfriends). He then began a 33-year career with General Electric.

It was his deep commitment to his faith that inspired him to care about prisoners and try to help them on their journeys to successful lives. He volunteered at Graterford for more than 20 years, teaching literacy, visiting and befriending prisoners while sharing Jesus' teachings. He and his wife Joan often attended worship services at the prison chapel. Along with his wife, he founded and funded the Graterfriends Newsletter (see stores in the May 2018 issue: pages 3-4 and the September 2018 issue: page 6).

While retired, he transported ALS patients, for whom he cared deeply, making this time a calling for him rather than a job. Few knew of his own medical struggles due to Tourette Syndrome. He would have agreed with this quote from Adrienne C. Moore: "The truth is, we all face hardships of some kind, and you never know the struggles a person is going through. Behind every smile there is a story of a personal struggle."

Rich had a great sense of humor, was intelligent, had a deep love of family, served his church and community, was generous, welcomed others (often strangers) into his home and at his table, was charitable, friendly, sociable, fun-loving, peaceable, neighborly, kind, non-judgmental, and so much more. The world is a better place because Rich was here.

We are grateful for his many years of service to the incarcerated and his friendships with many of these men.

A Farewell and Tribute to Gary Khectmar
Hugh Williams, AF-2932, SCI Phoenix

News of Gary Khetchmar's sudden passing came as a shock and I am no less saddened than the host of those who knew and respected him. His calm and cordial demeanor will be missed, and he leaves behind a legacy and list of accomplishments both at Phoenix and Graterford.

His major and most successful accomplishment was his petition to convert the little-used chapel balcony into a dedicated place of worship for observant Jews. And because he worked in the chapel, he became its caretaker. Besides this, his most admirable quality

was his strict adherence to his faith, and he did not shy away from authorities who often unwittingly misunderstood the tenets of Judaism.

Gary was a humanitarian who served as a volunteer hospice attendant, spending countless hours and days with those facing the imminence of death. In some cases, he was the last person the departed saw or heard.

He was Chairman of the Lifers Inc. Ways and Means Committee and secured several grants from the Bread and Roses Foundation. He was also a member of the Pennsylvania Prison Society and worked closely with Ms. Joan Porter, who for years, faithfully visited Graterford and then Phoenix every Friday morning. Their working relationship, in a funny way, was difficult to determine: who was mentoring whom?

Gary joined in as a plaintiff in a civil action* that challenged then-Governor Tom Corbett's refusal to grant lifers clemency based on his campaign promise to deny applications even before the Board of Pardons had reviewed, approved, and forwarded them to him. Though this effort failed, the Governor and Board of Pardons were put on notice that their actions and inactions were under public scrutiny.

Without doubt, Gary has left his footprint on Corrections and he will be remembered as much as he will be missed. Farewell Gary, from a friend he knew and worked with for decades.

*Smith, et al v. Tom Corbett, 605 Pa. 457, 991, A2d. 306 (2010)

Know an inmate who wants to be profiled?

Interview them and send in a submission to have their story published in the next edition of Graterfriends.

Please be sure to include permission to publish from the author and the person profiled.

Please remember that any submissions we receive will NOT be published without permission to print and a note stating that you are the original author.

If we receive a submission without either of these two requirements, we will not print it.

We also cannot print copyrighted material.

Original submissions will not be returned.

REPORTS FROM THE INSIDE

Photocopied Photos: Robert Pezzeca (DX-1148, SCI Dallas) reported that most of the photos he has received over the last few months were very low resolution. He recommends an article by Mia Armstrong on Slate.com about the consequences of the new mail policies, that includes some of his photocopied photos and comments from PPS executive director Clarie Shubik-Richards, frequent Graterfriends columnist Heather Lavelle and him. Below are excerpts from the article:

“Claire Shubik-Richards, the executive director of the Pennsylvania Prison Society, says her organization has received complaints about mail not getting delivered, being severely delayed in delivery, or being misdelivered. Incarcerated people have also complained that the quality of scans [...] is glaringly inadequate. Blurry images and unrecognizable faces make them feel even more distant from their families than they already are.

“Since the change in Pennsylvania, some incarcerated people have told their families not to send mail at all—the delays, poor quality, and privacy concerns made it not worth it, outside advocates said in interviews. Heather Lavelle, who’s serving a life sentence in the state, echoed that in a message provided to Slate. Robert Pezzeca, also serving a life sentence, told Slate in a message that both of his parents had died from cancer in the past 14 months, and all he has left of them are printouts of scanned photos sent by an aunt.

“‘You can barely tell who is in the pictures,’ he wrote. ‘So this is how I must remember my mom & dad.’

“For many, there are also serious privacy concerns with the new process. Initially, the Department of Corrections said scans would be kept in a searchable database for seven years, though that has now been changed to 45 days.

“‘The delivery and quality of scanned mail seem to have gotten better over the past couple months, according to advocates I spoke with. But I don’t think it’s ever going to be good,’ Shubik-Richards said.”

The entire article is available at: [Slate.com/technology/2018/12/pennsylvania-prison-scanned-mail-smart-communications.html](https://slate.com/technology/2018/12/pennsylvania-prison-scanned-mail-smart-communications.html)

Mail Policy: Curtis Wormley, KY-3005, SCI Mahanoy writes about how the recently implemented mail restrictions, as a means to protect DOC staff from possible exposure to drugs, have had a terrible impact on inmates. He sees both sides:

“I am a father and grandfather, so I’m inclined to approach this from a father’s perspective, with a father’s and grandfather’s heart. I’m persuaded to ask myself, ‘How would I be affected if my children or grandchildren worked for the DOC?’ They would leave the comfort of their own homes, to make an honest living and provide for their families. They would work in environments that threaten their physical health. As a loving father would that sit well with you? Wouldn’t you be concerned for their well being?”

“You have men here doing life sentences, some men with a lot of years to do. They have wives, significant others, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews etc. Every human being needs affirmation, attention, and affection, even more so in jail. The medium to express these things are mail, JPays, pictures, and phone calls. If any of these are compromised, discomfort is the outcome. I’m convinced there’s a resounding echo in the mind of every incarcerated man, ‘Who loves me? Who cares about me?’

“Both parties have legitimate concerns. What if the staff and inmates loved and treated each other with the same dignity and respect that they would administer to the children, family, and friends they love. May we never minimize the fact that staff are fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, sons, daughters, grandmothers and grandfather etc. Each and every individual should be treated with equal dignity and respect.”

An Unjust Solution to Stop Drugs from Entering Prison: Jason P. Kollock (HC-9934, SCI Houtzdale) updates us on the mail related lockdown: “On August 29th, Governor Wolf and DOC Secretary Wetzel declared a statewide prison lockdown ‘due to some staff members exposure to unknown substances.’ When the lockdown was lifted, it came with a new incoming mail policy at a cost of \$15 million to state tax payers.

“In a Philadelphia Inquirer article entitled, ‘Banning Books is Bad Medicine,’ Abraham Gutman reported that ‘many experts believe that mass hysteria is a more likely explanation than actual poisoning – in one incident at SCI Mercer, six ‘exposed’ staffers experienced seizures and became unresponsive even though toxicology testing confirms they were not exposed to a controlled substance.’ Since the restrictions were initiated, I have received only two pieces of mail, nothing from my family, friends or church.

“For the last 12 years of this nightmare - my incarceration – I have considered myself blessed by all the family and friends who have stood by me throughout. Now I have lost contact with my family, friends, and church. If this unjust policy has affected you, please contact state representatives and senators, the Governor, the DOC, and the ACLU, and ask your loved ones to do the same.”

Soy Resistance: Ricardo Noble (BX-9351, SCI Greene) describes DOC’s current soy foods as inedible: “The Alternative Protein (AP) diet is a lacto-ovo-vegetarian diet and a religious diet.

“Since Aramark was granted a food contract with Pennsylvania DOC, SCI Greene has been serving a soy product that looks like dog food, is tough to chew, hard to digest, and known to cause stomach problems, excessive gas, and constipation. It is used to make soy burgers and other soy entrees only served on AP diet. It replaced the more edible and digestible soy served in the past.

“DOC food policy (DC-ADM 610) states that, even if a food is nutritionally adequate, it must be edible. ‘Preparation of meals shall take into consideration food flavor, texture, appearance, palatability, and inmate preferences. Inmate preferences shall be obtained by inmate direct feedback, inmate survey, inmate requests, inmate complaints, or production of records.’ Grievances have been filed. This issue continues to be ignored.”

PUSHING FORWARD IN PA: FAMM'S ORGANIZERS SPEAK

In January, Gov. Wolf announced that PA's prison population is the lowest it's been in a decade, the state's largest decline since record-keeping began. Notably, so is the crime rate. Both have been dropping since the state's Supreme Court struck down its mandatory minimum laws as unconstitutional. The data is clear: crime doesn't go down because more people are in prison. Crime goes down because of smart criminal justice reform, like rolling back unjust sentencing laws.

As FAMM organizers in PA, this data is tremendously helpful in our push for reform. But even more important are the people who experience the need for reform most intensely—affected family members and returning citizens. In our work, we try to mobilize, educate, and empower them to become strong and determined advocates for reform. We hold storytelling workshops, one-on-one-meetings, and public education events where we hear difficult and important stories from people whose loved ones are among the 47,000 people currently incarcerated in PA. With each person we meet and each story we hear, we're reminded that we still have a long way to go to achieve a fair criminal justice system in PA.

For example, in the fall of last year, the PA DOC implemented new mail policies that ban prisoners from receiving original copies of mail—that means no photographs, greeting cards, or original handwritten letters. No handwritten cards from the kids, no original photos of a daughter's wedding. One man serving a life without parole sentence in PA will be forever heartbroken because his father—his best friend—passed away, and he's unable to receive original photos to help him remember. This policy flies in the face of data that proves that staying connected to family while incarcerated is a major factor in reducing recidivism.

Another area in which reform is badly needed is sentencing. Many of the stories we hear come from loved ones of prisoners serving life without parole sentences. Even with a declining prison population, PA has one of the highest life without parole populations in the country. More than half of the state's lifer population come from Philadelphia County alone. FAMM advocate Charles Brown used to be one of them. Charles served 36 years of a juvenile life without parole sentence until he was released because of the U.S. Supreme Court's ruling in *Montgomery v. Louisiana*, which made a previous change in sentencing of juveniles to LWOP retroactive. He is using his second chance to help those he left behind, people for whom reform can't come fast enough.

Our goal is to keep pushing for more reform in PA. There are forces that would like to take us backward. The data and the stories are clear: progress means pushing forward.

You can reach out to FAMM organizers Celeste Trusty (Eastern PA) at ctrusty@famm.org or Evans Moore (Western PA) at emoore@famm.org to join FAMM's army in PA!

OFFICIAL VISITOR REPORTS

Lycoming County Prison

By John Hargreaves, Volunteer Director

The Lycoming County Prison has come to the attention of Prison Society visitors due to a recent death of a young female inmate and a video posted on Facebook of a woman in a prison jumpsuit wandering in a local hospital.

Jennifer Colon has been leading this charge. Ms. Colon runs a drug and alcohol support group at the prison called Women For Sobriety: Addiction/Mental Health Recovery Support Group. She has been doing so for a year.

She attended the March prison board meeting and questioned the board about the video and the death. The death investigation is ongoing as the autopsy has not been finished. The video was deemed unfortunate and highly unusual. She will continue to be a regular presence at Lycoming county prison board meetings.

Among her priorities are implementation of a peer support system, addressing the impact of crowding due to out of county inmates on the mental and physical health of Lycoming inmates and establishing better ties between the community and the prison, perhaps through regular Family and Friends meetings. A full plate indeed.

To its credit, the prison has undertaken a recidivism study with Lycoming College faculty member Kerry Richmond. This study is uncommon in county prisons and is in its preliminary stage.

Wondering about the status of a submission?



We think it is important for you to know that, because we receive many submissions, we are unable to print every article.

You may receive a postcard like the one above in the mail as a thank you for your submission with either confirmation that it has been considered for publication or a reason for denial.

If we believe that the issue presented in a submission is of serious concern, your letter may be forwarded to an official visitor or relevant personnel for further inquiry.

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

The PA General Assembly began its two-year legislative session in January, and several important criminal justice bills have already been introduced. PPS is partnering with groups like FAIMM, ACLU of PA, Americans for Prosperity, and the Commonwealth Foundation, among others, to support positive reforms and oppose negative bills. In January, representatives from all five of these groups spent a day at the state capitol sharing our priorities with lawmakers and expressing our bipartisan support for criminal justice reforms. Below, we describe some of the important topics and bills we are monitoring.

SB 123

This would allow the parole board not to consider a sexually violent predator for parole if that person has been denied parole within the previous three years.

Sponsor: Senator John Sabatina (D)

Status: Introduced 1/28/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Oppose

SB 14

This would reform how long Pennsylvanians stay on probation, and the time served in prison for probation violations. Among other reforms, the bill would require ending a person's probation sentence if they have no violations or revocations over an 18-month period; limit prison stays to 30 days for probation revocations based on administrative violations of probation conditions (e.g., missing a meeting with a probation officer); limit the length of prison stays for revocations based on the commission of new crimes; cap probation sentences for felonies at 5 years; and cap probation sentences for misdemeanors at 3 years.

Sponsor: Senator Anthony Williams (D)

Status: Introduced 1/24/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Support

SB 93

This would make it a third degree felony for drug delivery with serious bodily injury resulting to others, and require the state's sentencing commission to create a sentence enhancement for such cases.

Sponsor: Senator Camera Bartolotta (R)

Status: Introduced 2/12/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Oppose

SB 8

This would re-instate mandatory minimum sentences for trafficking fentanyl or mixtures of drugs containing fentanyl or fentanyl analogues. Mandatory minimum sentences would range from 2 to 9 years, depending on the weight of the drugs and the person's criminal record.

Sponsor: Senator Mike Regan (R)

Status: Introduced 2/5/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Support

HB 261

This would eliminate parole eligibility for the following offenses if the victim is a detention or correctional facility employee: assault by a prisoner, or aggravated harassment by a prisoner. The bill would also require that people in prison serving life or death sentences who commit aggravated assaults receive and serve the entirety of a sentence for second degree murder. The bill defines aggravated assault to include throwing human feces, urine, blood, or other bodily liquids at others while knowing that those liquids carry a communicable disease such as HIV or hepatitis B.

Sponsor: Rep. Carl Metzgar (R)

Status: Introduced 1/29/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Oppose

HB 257

This would create a five-year consecutive sentence for assaults by prisoners if the victim is a detention or correctional facility employee.

Sponsor: Rep. Carl Metzgar (R)

Status: Introduced 1/29/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Oppose

HB 44

This would require correctional officers to write and submit statements to the parole board within 30 days of a person's parole hearing, or testify in person at the hearing. The parole board would be required to read and consider those statements or testimony when granting or denying parole.

Sponsor: Rep. Pamela Snyder (D)

Status: Introduced 1/28/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Support

HB 440

This would allow expungement of a crime from a person's record when the person is acquitted or is pardoned for the crime.

Sponsor: Rep. Ted Nesbit (R)

Status: Introduced 2/11/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Support

LEGISLATIVE HIGHLIGHTS

Continued from page 11

HB 497

This would limit the use of solitary confinement for PA prisoners to times when the person is in danger from himself or others; is being disciplined; and has received a medical and mental health assessment within the first 48 hours of confinement. Prisoners would be allowed to challenge their confinement at a hearing within the first three days of confinement and every 15 days thereafter. Time in solitary would be capped at 15 consecutive days and no more than 20 days of any 60-day period – including when a facility is placed on lockdown. Among additional other reforms, the bill would also ban the use of solitary confinement on people who are under age 21, over age 70, or pregnant or in postpartum recovery.

The bill would limit placement of prisoners in emergency confinement to 24 hours, and ensure that people are not placed in protective custody against their will unless there is no less restrictive way to keep them safe. The bill would also require the creation of alternative disciplinary measures other than the use of solitary; create an independent investigator to review prison misconduct and misuse of solitary confinement; and require training for staff about how to use solitary confinement.

Sponsor: Rep. Tina Davis (R)

Status: Introduced 2/12/19; no committee action scheduled yet.

PPS: Support

Justice Reinvestment II

In his speech on the budget, Gov. Tom Wolf said he wants the legislature to pass a package of reform bills known as Justice Reinvestment II. These reforms have not been introduced yet but could include granting parole promptly to nonviolent and short-term offenders; improving sentencing guidelines to better evaluate recent criminal history; making more people eligible for State Intermediate Punishments; expanding support for crime victims; reinvesting in county probation systems; and reforming the use of incarceration for failure to pay fines and fees.

Mandatory Minimums

In 2015, the state's Supreme Court found most mandatory minimum sentences to be unconstitutional. We will be opposing bills that would try to reinstate those mandatory minimums.

Life Without Parole

We expect that several bills could be introduced to make more people serving life without parole eligible for parole after they serve a certain number of years in prison. We'll continue to support these efforts.

CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM INITIATIVES

Conviction Integrity Unit

The Philadelphia District Attorney's Office's Conviction Integrity Unit (CIU) investigates and reviews convicted offenders' legitimate claims of innocence and wrongful conviction. In addition to reviewing cases, the unit makes recommendations about ways the office can operate more efficiently, effectively and adopt nationally-recognized best practices.

All requests to the CIU must be submitted in writing by the petitioner using the CIU Submission Form (See: www.phila.gov/districtattorney/aboutus/Pages/CIU.aspx for a copy of the form and the mailing address of the CIU).

Requests for review will not be accepted by third parties including friends and family members. If a petitioner is represented by counsel, the submission must come from his or her attorney. Submissions will first be reviewed by the following criteria before the unit conducts an in-depth review: (1) The conviction must have been in the Philadelphia County Court of Common Pleas (First Judicial District), (2) There must be a claim of actual innocence or wrongful conviction, and (3) The claim must not be frivolous.

Note from the CIU: Due to the high volume of submissions we receive, we will not send confirmation upon receipt of submission forms. Instead, we will contact the petitioner if we require additional information or when we are ready to communicate our final decision. We do not provide updates over the phone.

Equal Justice Initiative

More than 2.2 million Americans are imprisoned, most serving excessively long sentences that advance no public safety purpose and come at great expense to taxpayers. The politics of fear and anger in the 1980s and 1990s led to so-called "tough on crime" sentencing policies that are now being recognized as harsh, counter-productive, discriminatory, and fiscally irresponsible.

EJI challenges excessive sentences and advocates for sentencing reform. EJI is committed to ending mass incarceration and excessive punishment in the United States, to challenging racial and economic injustice, and to protecting basic human rights for the most vulnerable people in American society.

For more information, see EJI.org. If you are seeking legal assistance, you can email us at intake@eji.org or address a letter to the attention of the Intake Department at EJI, 122 Commerce Street, Montgomery, Alabama 36104 (Phone: 334-269-1803). We receive many requests for assistance and we regret that we have limited resources and are unable to assist in most cases. Please do not send legal materials relating to your case, as those documents will not be maintained.

RESOURCES

Life Without Parole

Women Lifers Resume Project of PA

PO Box 324
New Hope, PA 18938
P: 814-393-5400 (Cambridge Springs)
P: 570-546-3171 (Muncy)
W: www.wlrpp.org

Reconstruction Inc.

ATTN Fight for Lifers
PO Box 7691
Philadelphia, PA 19101
P: 215-223-8180

Juvenile Life Without Parole

Juvenile Law Center

The Philadelphia Building
1315 Walnut Street, 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
P: 800-875-8887 (toll free)

The Campaign for the Fair Sentencing of Youth

1319 F Street, NW Suite 303
Washington, DC 20004
P: 202-289-4677

Prisoner's Rights

Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration

c/o Decarcerate PA
PO Box 40764
Philadelphia, PA 19107
P: 267-217-3372
W: www.decarceratepa.info
E: decarceratepa.pgh@gmail.com (Pittsburgh)
E: cadbiphilly@gmail.com (Philadelphia)
E: decarceratepa@gmail.com

PA Institutional Law Project: Philadelphia

The Cast Iron Building
718 Arch Street, Suite 304 South
Philadelphia, PA 19106
P: 215-925-2966 (Philadelphia)
F: 215-925-5337 (Philadelphia)
P: 570-523-1104 (Lewisburg)
P: 412-434-6004 (Pittsburgh)
W: www.pailp.org
E: alove@pailp.org

Prison Activist Resource Center

PO Box 70447
Oakland, CA 94612
P: 510-893-4648
W: www.prisonactivists.org/resources
E: info@prisonactivists.org

Families Against Mandatory Minimums

FAMM, a DC-based sentencing reform organization, is working to fight mandatory minimums in Pennsylvania, but needs case examples to help convince lawmakers to support fair sentencing.

If you are serving a long mandatory sentence for a drug or gun offense, please send 1) your name, 2) your contact information, 3) contact information for an outside friend or family member, 4) a brief description of your offense, and 5) your sentence (example: I received a 10-20 year mandatory minimum), to:

FAMM

Attn: Pennsylvania Stories
1100 H Street, NW, Suite 1000
Washington, DC 20005

Note: FAMM does not offer direct legal assistance and cannot respond to every letter received, but the organization will contact you by mail if they'd like to learn more about your case.

Pro Bono Services

Pittsburgh Pro Bono Partnership

436 Seventh Avenue, 400 Koppers Building
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
P: 412-402-6677

Philly VIP

1500 Walnut Street, Suite 400
Philadelphia, PA 19102
P: 215-523-9550

Refers indigent individuals to volunteer lawyers, paralegals, and others who provide legal services free of charge.

American Bar Association

W: www.findlegalthelp.org
Allows site users to search for a list of resources available in their state, including pro bono or inexpensive lawyers, legal information, and self-help materials.

Inmate Authors

If you are a prisoner who has written a book, the Prison Foundation wants to publish it! There is no charge to read or publish your book. Your book will be scanned and published exactly as we receive it. Any language is acceptable. It may contain drawings and photos. For more information, contact

Prison Foundation

2512 Virginia Avenue, NW Suite 58043
Washington, DC 20037
W: www.prisonfoundation.org
E: staff@prisonfoundation.org

RESOURCES

PA State Officials

Governor Tom Wolfe

Governor's Correspondence Office
508 Main Office Building
Harrisburg, PA 17120
P: 717-787-3391
F: 717-772-8284

Attorney General Josh Shapiro

PO Box 22653
Philadelphia, PA 19110
P: 215-886-7376

Senator _____

Senate PO Box 203 ___-__ *
Harrisburg, PA 17120

Representative _____

PO Box 202 ___-__ *
Harrisburg, PA 17120

*If you know the three-digit district number for your Senator or Representative, add it to the PO Box number. If you do not know, information for Senators is available at www.pasen.gov; information for Representatives is available at www.house.state.pa.us.

DOC Secretary John Wetzel

19020 Technology Parkway
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
P: 717-728-2573
W: www.cor.pa.gov
E: ra-crpdocsecretary@pa.gov

Expungements

Juvenile Law Center

The Philadelphia Building
1315 Walnut Street, 4th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19107
P: 800-875-8887 (toll free)

Expunge Philadelphia

Juvenile Expungement Hotline
P: 267-765-6770

Community Legal Services

Center City Office
1424 Chestnut St.
Philadelphia, PA 19102-2505
P: 215-981-3700
North Philadelphia Law Center
1410 W. Erie Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19140
P: 215-227-2400

Reentry

Uplift

700 Delsea Drive
Westville, NJ 08093
P: 856-471-2008
E: info@upliftsolutions.org

Presbytery of Philadelphia

915 East Gowen Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19150
P: 215.242.1400
F: 215.242.1444
E: office@presbyphl.org

Broad Street Ministry

Begun in 2008, BSM's Hospitality Collaborative incorporates stabilizing services that not only meet basic human needs, but also strive to move lives forward. Along with our nutritious meals, guests can benefit from a mailing address, change of clothes, and personal care items. And we partner with other best-in-class non-profit organizations to offer medical and behavioral health care, legal assistance, and assistance with housing, public benefits, and personal identification.

Broad Street Ministry

315 South Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
P: 215-735-4847
W: www.broadstreetministry.org

PPS Mentoring Program

Families and Individuals Reintegrating Successfully Together (F.I.R.S.T.), our mentoring program, is a voluntary program for men currently in the Transitional Housing Unit (THU) at SCI Chester and SCI Phoenix.

The program helps prepare incarcerated individuals for successful re-entry mentally, emotionally, and logistically. After a series of workshops on relevant topics (such as social media, applying for medical benefits, securing housing, and obtaining education and jobs) mentees are assigned to mentors, to meet one-on-one for at least six months to develop and achieve a personalized goal plan. We are also working with soon to be released juvenile lifers across the state to help them bridge into life outside in the community.

We are always seeking mentors and mentee participants. For more information, or for a mentor application, please contact:

Joseph Robinson, Mentoring Program Case Manager
P: 215-564-4775, ext. 1005

TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

THE PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY



WHERE WE VISIT

We have buses to all PA state prisons except Camp Hill, Chester, Phoenix, and Quehanna Boot Camp.

WHO CAN TRAVEL

Anyone can travel as long as he or she is on the inmate's official visitor list, including infants and children. Please check with whomever you are visiting prior to purchasing a ticket to ensure that you are on his or her list. You will not be refunded if you are unable to visit because you are not an approved visitor. If you require a handicap accessible bus from PPS, please be sure to request one at least five days before the bus departs, by calling the Prison Society office.

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

Tickets can be purchased over the phone, in person at our office or online at www.prisonssociety.org/transportation. Cash, debit, and credit cards are accepted. There is a \$2 surcharge per ticket to use a credit card. If you would like to mail in your payment, please note that we only accept money order payments via post mail. Do not send cash in the mail.

SEND PAYMENTS TO:

Attn: Family Transportation
Pennsylvania Prison Society
230 South Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA, 19102



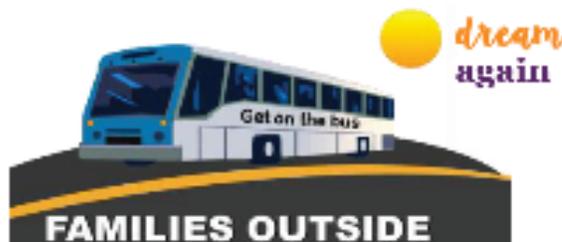
Please make money orders payable to: PA Prison Society at the address listed above.

When sending payments through the mail, please include your full name, the prison you are visiting, and your phone number. We may need to contact you.

A physical copy of your ticket must be presented to the driver. Screenshots will not be accepted.

For more information, see bus schedule on page 17 or contact PPS with the information above.

FAMILIES OUTSIDE



ABOUT FAMILIES OUTSIDE

The Families Outside program provides low-cost transportation for families to visit their incarcerated loved ones at state correctional facilities. Children and older adults are welcome. Children must be accompanied on the visit by a parent, other caregiver, or caseworker. Ticket prices are affordable because of a contract with the PA Department of Corrections.

WHERE THEY VISIT

The program provides transportation to the following institutions: Albion, Cambridge Springs, Greene, Fayette, Houtzdale, Laurel Highlands, Somerset, Forest, Mercer, Rockview, Benner, Phoenix, Frackville, Mahanoy, Muncy, Coal Township, Smithfield, Huntingdon, Camp Hill, Dallas, and Retreat.

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS

Anyone with an incarcerated loved one is able to participate. In order to utilize the program, a first time individual must complete a free orientation session.

HOW TO PURCHASE TICKETS

For information on how to purchase tickets, please contact Families Outside by phone or email with the information listed below.

CONTACT

Families Outside
221 Penn Avenue
Wilkinsburg, PA 15221
Phone: (412) 458-6456
Website: wfspa.org/service/families-outside



For more information, see the bus schedule on page 18 or contact Families Outside with the information above.

PRISON SOCIETY 2018/2019 BUS SCHEDULE (PHILADELPHIA)

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be posted on our social media pages and the website ASAP.

BENNER/ROCKVIEW

**Bimonthly, 2nd Thursday,
4am-9:30pm, \$40/person**

Oct 11, 2018 April 11, 2019
Dec 13, 2018 June 13, 2019
Feb 14, 2019 Aug 8, 2019

FOREST

**Monthly, 2nd Monday,
2am-9:30pm, \$50/person**

Sept 10, 2018 April 8, 2019
Oct 8, 2018 May 13, 2019
Nov 12, 2018 June 10, 2019
Dec 10, 2018 July 8, 2019
Jan 14, 2019 Aug 12, 2019
Feb 11, 2019 Sept 9, 2019
Mar 11, 2019

MUNCY

**Bimonthly (Pending),
5am-7:30pm, \$35/person**

**PLEASE NOTE: All tickets
must be purchased 5 days in
advance.**

Sept 11, 2018 May 14, 2019
Nov 13, 2018 July 11, 2019
Jan 8, 2019 Sept 10, 2019
Mar 12, 2019

PINE GROVE

**Bimonthly, 3rd Friday,
2am-9pm, \$50/person**

Aug 17, 2018 April 19, 2019
Oct 19, 2018 June 21, 2019
Dec 21, 2019 Aug 16, 2019
Feb 15, 2019

GREENE

**Monthly, 1st Friday,
2am-9:30pm, \$50/person**

Sept 7, 2018 April 5, 2019
Oct 5, 2018 May 3, 2019
Nov 2, 2018 June 7, 2019
Dec 7, 2018 July 5, 2019
Jan 4, 2019 Aug 2, 2019
Feb 2, 2019 Sept 6, 2019
Mar 1, 2019

FAYETTE

**Monthly, 3rd Friday,
2am-9:00pm, \$50/person**

Aug 17, 2018 Mar 15, 2019
Sept 21, 2018 April 19, 2019
Oct 19, 2018 May 17, 2019
Nov 16, 2018 June 21, 2019
Dec 21, 2018 July 19, 2019
Jan 18, 2019 Aug 16, 2019
Feb 15, 2019 Sept 20, 2019

LAUREL HIGHLANDS/ SOMERSET

**Monthly, 1st Monday,
4am-9:30pm, \$40/person**

Sept 10, 2018* April 1, 2019
Oct 1, 2018 May 6, 2019
Nov 5, 2018 June 3, 2019
Dec 3, 2018 July 1, 2019
Jan 7, 2019 Aug 5, 2019
Feb 4, 2019 Sept 9, 2019*
Mar 4, 2019

CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS/MERCER

**Bimonthly, 3rd Monday,
1am-12:30am, \$50/person**

Aug 20, 2018 April 15, 2019
Oct 15, 2018 June 17, 2019
Dec 17, 2019 Aug 19, 2019
Feb 18, 2019

FRACKVILLE/ MAHANAY

**Bimonthly, 2nd Monday,
6am-7:30pm, \$35/person**

Sept 10, 2018 May 13, 2019
Nov 12, 2018 July 8, 2019
Jan 14, 2019 Sept 9, 2019
Mar 11, 2019

HUNTINGDON/ SMITHFIELD

**Bimonthly, 2nd Monday,
5am-9pm, \$40/person**

Sept 17, 2018 May 20, 2019
Nov 19, 2018 July 15, 2019
Jan 28, 2019* Sept 16, 2019
Mar 18, 2019

DALLAS/RETREAT

**Bimonthly, 4th Monday,
6am-7:30am, \$35/person**

Aug 27, 2018 April 22, 2019
Oct 22, 2018 June 24, 2019
Dec 17, 2019* Aug 26, 2019
Feb 25, 2019

COAL TOWNSHIP

**Bimonthly, 2nd Friday,
5:30am-7:30pm, \$35/person**

Sept 14, 2018 May 10, 2019
Nov 9, 2018 July 12, 2019
Jan 11, 2019 Sept 13, 2019
Mar 8, 2019

HOUTZDALE

**Bimonthly, 2nd Thursday,
4am-9:30pm, \$40/person**

Oct 11, 2018 April 11, 2019
Dec 13, 2018 June 13, 2019
Feb 14, 2019 Aug 8, 2019

WAYMART

**Bimonthly, 4th Saturday,
6am-8pm, \$35/person**

Sept 22, 2018 May 25, 2019
Nov 24, 2018 July 27, 2019
Jan 26, 2019* Sept 28, 2019
Mar 23, 2019

ALBION

**Monthly, 2nd Friday,
1am-12:30am, \$50/person**

Sept 14, 2018 April 12, 2019
Oct 12, 2018 May 10, 2019
Nov 9, 2018 June 14, 2019
Dec 14, 2018 July 12, 2019
Jan 11, 2019 Aug 9, 2019
Feb 8, 2019 Sept 13, 2019
Mar 8, 2019

* These are exceptions to the usual schedule, due to holidays.

FAMILIES OUTSIDE 2018/2019 BUS SCHEDULE (PITTSBURGH)

This schedule is subject to change.

CAMP HILL

Bimonthly, Wednesday,

6am-7:30pm

July 25, 2018	Mar 20, 2019
Sept 19, 2018	May 22, 2019
Nov 28, 2018	July 24, 2019
Jan 23, 2019	

BENNER/ROCKVIEW

Monthly, Thursday,

6:45am-6pm

July 12, 2018	Mar 14, 2019
Aug 16, 2018	April 18, 2018
Sept 13, 2018	May 16, 2019
Oct 11, 2018	June 13, 2019
Nov 15, 2018	July 18, 2019
Dec 13, 2018	Aug 15, 2019
Jan 17, 2019	Sept 19, 2019
Feb 14, 2019	

LAUREL HIGHLANDS/ SOMERSET

Monthly, Sunday,

8am-5pm

July 29, 2018	Mar 24, 2019
Aug 26, 2018	April 28, 2019
Sept 23, 2018	May 19, 2019
Oct 28, 2018	June 23, 2019
Nov 18, 2018	July 28, 2019
Dec 30, 2018	Aug 25, 2019
Jan 27, 2019	Sept 29, 2019
Feb 24, 2019	

ALBION/CAMBRIDGE SPRINGS

Monthly, Saturday,

6:45am-5:30pm

July 14, 2018	Mar 16, 2019
Aug 18, 2018	April 13, 2019
Sept 15, 2018	May 18, 2018
Oct 20, 2018	June 15, 2019
Nov 17, 2018	July 13, 2019
Dec 8, 2018	Aug 10, 2019
Jan 12, 2019	Sept 21, 2019
Feb 16, 2019	

FOREST

Monthly, Sunday,

7am-5:45pm

July 15, 2018	Mar 17, 2019
Aug 12, 2018	April 14, 2019
Sept 9, 2018	May 12, 2019
Oct 14, 2018	June 9, 2019
Nov 11, 2018	July 14, 2019
Dec 9, 2018	Aug 11, 2019
Jan 13, 2019	Sept 15, 2019
Feb 10, 2019	

MERCER

Bimonthly, Monday,

7:30am-6:30pm

July 16, 2018	Mar 11, 2019
Aug 13, 2018	April 15, 2019
Sept 10, 2018	May 13, 2019
Oct 15, 2018	June 17, 2019
Nov 12, 2018	July 15, 2019
Dec 10, 2018	Aug 12, 2019
Jan 7, 2019	Sept 16, 2019
Feb 11, 2019	

PHOENIX

Bimonthly, Sunday,

3:30am-9:30pm

July 22, 2018	Mar 17, 2019
Sept 16, 2018	May 19, 2019
Nov 18, 2018	July 21, 2019
Jan 20, 2019	Sept 22, 2019

FRACKVILLE/ MAHANAY

Bimonthly, Sunday,

4am-9:30pm

July 22, 2018	Mar 17, 2019
Sept 16, 2018	May 19, 2019
Nov 18, 2018	July 21, 2019
Jan 20, 2019	Sept 22, 2019

HUNTINGDON/ SMITHFIELD

Bimonthly, Sunday,

6:45am-6:30m

Aug 12, 2018	April 14, 2019
Oct 14, 2018	June 9, 2019
Dec 9, 2018	Aug 11, 2019
Feb 10, 2019	

DALLAS/ RETREAT

Bimonthly, Friday,

3:30am-9pm

Aug 24, 2018	April 26, 2019
Oct 26, 2018	June 21, 2019
Dec 21, 2018	Aug 23, 2019
Feb 22, 2019	

COAL/MUNCY

Bimonthly, Saturday,

4am-9pm

Aug 18, 2018	April 20, 2019
Oct 20, 2018	June 15, 2019
Dec 22, 2018	Aug 17, 2019
Feb 16, 2019	

HOUTZDALE

Bimonthly, Saturday,

7am-6:30pm

July 28, 2018	Mar 23, 2019
Aug 25, 2018	April 27, 2019
Sept 22, 2018	May 25, 2019
Oct 27, 2018	June 22, 2019
Nov 17, 2018	July 27, 2019
Dec 22, 2018	Aug 24, 2019
Jan 26, 2019	Sept 28, 2019
Feb 23, 2019	

FAYETTE/GREENE

Monthly, Saturday,

8am-5pm

July 14, 2018	Mar 16, 2019
Aug 11, 2018	April 13, 2019
Sept 22, 2018	May 11, 2019
Oct 20, 2018	June 15, 2019
Nov 10, 2018	July 13, 2019
Dec 8, 2018	Aug 10, 2019
Jan 12, 2019	Sept 14, 2019
Feb 9, 2019	

READER SURVEY

We welcome comments and suggestions from all readers. Please complete this form and mail it to PPS. Relevant responses may be used to aid PPS in further advocating for prison reform.

How have you been personally affected by the PA DOC's recent changes to mail policy?

How do you feel about the trend towards virtual visitations as either a supplement for or replacement to in-person visitation in some states?

Do you have any other comments or concerns to share with us?

First Class postage is required to re-mail



230 South Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19102

April 2019

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Patron	\$200
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Founder	\$500
1787 Society	\$1,000

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The Pennsylvania Prison Society
230 South Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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Memberships/subscriptions last for 1 year.

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Prisoner Number _____ Institution _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Payment Amount _____ Payment Method _____