

Spring 2018 Highlights

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This issue of Insideout looks to be the “academic issue” since we have a number of reports concerning many of the most important issues in criminal justice reform. We are grateful to organizations like the Prison Policy institute and the Vera Institute for the studies and reports they create to generate statistics and information that we can use in our advocacy

NOTICE: We have reduced the rate for membership to 4 stamps since the value of the stamps has gone up.

Vera Institute Releases New Report on Trends In Criminal Justice Reform

The Vera Institute has launched a new interactive report, **The State of Justice Reform**, that identifies the major trends and developments in justice systems that occurred across the country during the first year of the new administration. The report also looks at how the information presented will influence reform throughout the country especially in the upcoming election year. Vera asserts that the report “starts a vital conversation on progress and places for reform across issues in our justice systems, including pretrial justice, immigration, policing, substance use, and jail incarceration”

The report takes the form of a slide show on various issues with links (Explore Buttons) on each slide to more detailed documents focused on the issue. Among the issues covered are: The State of Bail, The State of Prosecution, The State of Public Defense, The State of Jails, The State of Youth Justice, The State of Immigration Justice, The State of Victims of Crime, The State of Sentencing and Decriminalization, The State of Prisons, and The State of Reentry. Each slide has several links to more detail.

Following the slide show on major issues is another group of slides called “lenses” which looks at issues from a broader view. Titles on these slides include: Bipartisan Support, Racial Justice, Women and Girls, Disability, LGBTQI, Health, and one page devoted to “The Best of 2017”

This site contains huge amounts of information including links to other studies, to pod casts, books, documentaries, and, of course, Twitter!

This report has got to be the most fun to read of any report we have seen! Yet we must remember that it is still chock full of information on every possible topic relating to criminal justice reform. All with access to a computer are urged to check out this site:

<https://www.vera.org/state-of-justice-reform/2017>

Virginia ACLU Releases Report On Solitary Confinement

The report, “**Silent Injustice**,” calls for solitary confinement to be banned in state prisons except “only in rare and exceptional cases, for the shortest duration, with the least restrictive setting necessary and only when the prisoner poses a credible continuing and serious threat to the security of others.”

Some conclusions arrived at:

- Prisoners are not sentenced by a court to solitary confinement; the decision to hold prisoners in such conditions is an administrative one. Prisoners are often placed in solitary without a due process hearing or periodic status hearings as required by the VDOC’s own policy;
- There is a lack of clarity about the length of time it takes to progress through the Step Down program, a process theoretically intended to offer inmates a path to a prison’s general population; however, many prisoners remain in solitary for years;
- Abuse from correctional staff is commonplace, including abusive and racist language used by prison employees, withholding and tampering with food, sexual harassment and assaults, destruction of personal property, withholding of recreation and showers, use of restraints and strip cells for longer durations than permitted by VDOC policy, and pervasive interference with prisoners’ access to the grievance procedure.
- Some inmates designated as intensive management appear to be held in permanent isolation, even for years after completing the Step Down program with no disciplinary infractions.

The report calls for a ban on solitary confinement for vulnerable populations, including people with mental illness and disabilities, as well as for juveniles, LGBTQ individuals, those who are pregnant, and people with physical disabilities. Further information can be accessed on the ACLU web site at www.acluva.org. Readers are urged to contact the Governor and call on him to ban this painful and ineffective form of torture.

★ **SB105 Grand larceny; threshold. Increase** [David R. Suetterlein](#) | a Grand larceny; threshold. Increases from \$200 to \$500 the threshold amount of money taken or value of goods or chattel taken at which the crime rises from petit larceny to grand larceny. The bill increases the threshold by the same amount for the classification of certain property crimes. (This bill incorporates SB 21, SB 102, SB 138, SB 157, SB 220, SB 221, and SB 472) crimes [01/18/18 Senate: Read third time and passed Senate \(36-Y 3-N\)](#) 03/09/18 Senate: Bill text as passed Senate and House (SB105ER)

★ **HB 417 Sentencing guidelines; modification, new sentencing proceeding.** [Elizabeth R. Guzman](#) | . Creates a mechanism for a person incarcerated for a felony offense to petition for a new sentencing hearing if the sentencing guidelines for the offense have been modified subsequent to the date of the person's conviction and the sentence indicated by the current guidelines is less than the sentence indicated by the guidelines in effect at the time of the conviction. imposed. [01/17/18 House: Subcommittee recommends passing by indefinitely \(8-Y 0-N\)](#)

HB 419 Juveniles; increases minimum age for trial as adult.: [Elizabeth R. Guzman](#) | Increases the minimum age that a juvenile can be tried as an adult in circuit court for a felony from 14 years of age to 16 years of age. The bill would still allow juveniles 14 years of age or older to be tried as an adult for capital murder or first-degree murder [01/17/18 House: Subcommittee recommends passing by indefinitely \(8-Y 0-N\)](#)

★ **HB 797 Electronic visitation; state correctional facilities.:** [Patrick A. Hope](#) | . Authorizes the Director of the Department of Corrections to prescribe reasonable rules regarding electronic visitation systems and the collection of fees for the use of such systems. The bill requires that the fee be established at the lowest available rate and provides that any facility that uses such a system shall not prohibit in-person visitation. [02/12/18 House: Left in Courts of Justice](#)

★ **HB 795 Isolated confinement in prisons prohibited; exceptions.:** [Patrick A. Hope](#) | all patrons Prohibits placing an inmate who is a member of a vulnerable population, defined in the bill, in isolated confinement, also defined in the bill, or placing any inmate in isolated confinement for more than 15 consecutive days or 20 days in a 60-day period, unless (i) there is a facility-wide lockdown, (ii) isolated confinement is necessary because of a risk of harm to the inmate or others, (iii) the inmate is placed in medical isolation, or (iv) the inmate is placed in voluntary use of isolated confinement [01/25/18 Senate: Stricken at the request of Patron in Militia, Police and Public Safety sub #2](#)

HB 976 Felony conviction; compensation for wrongful incarceration [Elizabeth R. Guzman](#) | Clarifies the process by which a person who has been awarded compensation for wrongful incarceration requests the payment of a transition assistance grant of \$15,000 from the Criminal Fund. The bill provides that such grant shall be disbursed to such person within 30 days of receipt of a written request for disbursement by the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court of Virginia. Current law does not specify the process by which the person wrongfully incarcerated requests and receives such grant. [02/13/18 House: VOTE: PASSAGE \(99-Y 0-N\)](#) [02/26/18 Senate: Passed Senate \(40-Y 0-N\)](#)

HB 1243 Parole Board; parole review, sentencing guidelines.: [Mark D. Sickles](#) | Requires the Parole Board to base its parole decision for any person eligible and under consideration for and seeking parole for whom the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission has determined, or who otherwise demonstrates, that his time served has exceeded the midpoint of the sentencing guidelines solely on relevant post-sentencing information, including the person's history, character, and conduct while in prison [02/01/18 House: Subcommittee failed to recommend reporting \(3-Y 3-N\)](#)

HB 1312 Sentencing guidelines; appeals.: [Joseph C. Lindsey](#) | Allows a court's departure from the discretionary sentencing guidelines to be reviewable on appeal, provided that the court failed to file the required written explanation of such departure and the sentence imposed exceeded the maximum of the sentencing guidelines range by more than 12 months. The bill provides that the appellate court reviewing the sentence shall (i) determine whether there exists evidence of potential bias by the court that imposed the sentence and (ii) if such evidence is found, review the sentence for abuse of discretion. [01/19/18 House: Subcommittee recommends laying on the table \(7-Y 1-N\)](#)

★ **HB 1314 Parole; exception to limitation on the application of parole statutes.:** [Joseph C. Lindsey](#) | . Provides that a person is entitled to parole who was sentenced by a jury prior to the date of the Supreme Court of Virginia decision in *Fishback v. Commonwealth*, 260 Va. 104 (June 9, 2000), in which the Court held that a jury should be instructed on the fact that parole has been abolished, for a noncapital felony committed prior to the time that the abolition of parole went into effect (January 1, 1995). [01/19/18 House: Subcommittee recommends passing by indefinitely \(6-Y 2-N\)](#)

SB 40 Marijuana; reduced penalties for distribution or possession with intent to distribute. : [Barbara A. Favola](#) | Marijuana; reduced penalties for distribution or possession with intent to distribute. Raises the threshold amount of marijuana subject to the offense of distribution or possession with intent to distribute from one-half ounce to one ounce. The bill also reduces the criminal penalties for distribution of or possession with intent to distribute certain greater weights of marijuana and creates a rebuttable presumption that a person who possesses no more than one ounce of marijuana possesses it for personal use. [01/29/18 Senate: Failed to report in Courts of Justice \(6-Y 9-N\)](#)

★ **SB 93 Parole, eligibility for; at liberty between offenses.[3 strikes]** : [Scott A. Surovell](#) | . Provides that a person convicted of three separate felony offenses of murder, rape, or robbery by the presenting of firearms or other deadly weapon, or any combination of such offenses, shall be eligible for parole unless that person was at liberty between the three convictions and used a weapon during the commission of each offense. Under current law, such a person convicted of three separate felony offenses is ineligible for parole regardless of liberty status between offenses and the use of a weapon during the commission of each offense [01/19/18 Senate: Continued to 2019 in Rehabilitation and Social Services \(14-Y 0-N\)](#)

SB 96 Juvenile offenders; Juvenile sentencing factors; geriatric release of juvenile offenders. : [David W. Marsden](#) | . Provides that for any juvenile felony a circuit court shall consider a juvenile's diminished culpability and heightened capacity for change in determining the particular sentence to be imposed. The bill also requires that the Parole Board consider a petitioner's demonstrated maturity and rehabilitation and the lesser culpability of juvenile offenders in reviewing a petition for geriatric release when submitted by a person serving a sentence imposed on a juvenile for an offense that would be a crime if committed by an adult. [03/06/18 House: Left in Courts of Justice](#)

★ **SB 100 New sentencing hearing; abolition of parole.** : [Jennifer L. McClellan](#) | Provides that a person who was sentenced by a jury prior to the date of the Supreme Court of Virginia decision in *Fishback v. Commonwealth*, 260 Va. 104 (June 9, 2000), in which the Court held that a jury should be instructed on the abolition of parole, for a nonviolent felony committed after the time that the abolition of parole went into effect (January 1, 1995), is entitled to a new sentencing proceeding if such person is still incarcerated. The bill provides that such person shall file a petition for a new sentencing proceeding with the circuit court in which the order of conviction was originally entered. The circuit court shall empanel a new jury for the purpose of conducting the new sentencing proceeding and notify the appropriate attorney for the Commonwealth.. [01/24/18 Senate: Read third time and defeated by Senate \(19-Y 20-N\)](#)

SB 111 Marijuana; decriminalization of simple marijuana possession. : [Adam P. Ebbin](#) | . Decriminalizes simple marijuana possession and provides a civil penalty of no more than \$50 for a first violation, \$100 for a second violation, and \$250 for a third or subsequent violation. [01/29/18 Senate: Failed to report \(defeated\) in Courts of Justice \(6-Y 9-N\)](#)

SB 777 Post-conviction relief; previously admitted scientific evidence [William Stanley](#) Provides that a person convicted of certain offenses, upon a plea of not guilty or an Alford plea, or who was adjudicated delinquent upon a plea of not guilty or an Alford plea, by a circuit court of an offense that would be such offense if committed by an adult, may petition the Court of Appeals to have his conviction vacated. The petition shall allege (i) that the petitioner did not commit the covered offense for which the petitioner was convicted or adjudicated delinquent, nor engage in conduct that would support a conviction for a lesser offense or any other crime arising from, or reasonably connected to, the facts supporting the indictment or information upon which he was convicted or adjudicated delinquent; (ii) an exact description of the forensic scientific evidence and its relevance in demonstrating that the petitioner did not commit the covered offense; (iii) specific facts indicating that relevant forensic scientific evidence was not available at the time of the petitioner's conviction ... through the exercise of reasonable due diligence by the petitioner or that discredited forensic scientific evidence was presented at the petitioner's conviction or adjudication ...; and (iv) that had the forensic scientific evidence been presented at conviction or adjudication of delinquency, the petitioner would not have been convicted or adjudicated delinquent. The bill provides that if the court finds by clear and convincing evidence that the petitioner has proven all of the required allegations contained in the petition, the court may grant the petition and vacate the petitioner's conviction, subject to retrial in the discretion of the Commonwealth.. [03/02/18 House: Continued to 2019 in Courts of Justice by voice vote](#)

HB 444 Parole Board; personal interviews of prisoners eligible for parole. : [Jennifer Carroll Foy](#) . Requires that at least two members of the Parole Board personally interview any prisoner eligible for parole who has served at least 20 years of his sentence and has no record of institutional violations within the five years immediately preceding the Board's review. [02/13/18 House: Left in Appropriations](#)

HB 126.: Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission; status of parole-eligible inmates [Jennifer Carroll Foy](#) | . Directs the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission to review the status of all offenders who are housed in state facilities operated by the Department of Corrections and who are subject to consideration for parole. The bill directs the commission to determine the number of such offenders who have already served, or who within the next six years will have served, an amount of time in prison equal to or more than the amount of time for which they would have been sentenced for the same offense under the current sentencing guidelines. [02/02/18 House: Subcommittee recommends passing by indefinitely \(5-Y 2-N\)](#)

Virginia News Continued**Virginia Parole Grant Rates Jan-Apr 2018**

Month	Grant	Heard %	Geriatric	Heard %	Violation	Heard %
Jan	19	293	6	4	49	8
Feb	13	335	4	1	58	2
Mar	39	511	7	5	81	6
Apr	39	272	14	9	63	14

DOC investigates A Death in a Virginia Prison

Virginia CURE learned recently, thanks to an article in the Hampton Roads Daily Press, of the death of a young man in a Virginia prison. This death illustrates the common process that ensues when such tragedies occur.

The parent of the deceased learned of the death when two state troopers arrived to inform her of her son’s death. When she asked how he had died, there was no answer. After several “desperate” phone calls to the prison she finally contacted a nurse who confirmed the death, but wouldn’t offer an explanation. A medical examiner finally informed the parent that the death was a suicide. We understand the need to ensure clarity in situations like this, but shouldn’t there have been a person appointed to inform the parent; a person who was permitted to provide details? Furthermore, the death in a DOC facility was later investigated by a DOC investigative unit, ie: the DOC investigates itself! The Daily Press suggested that teams from the state Medical examiner’s office investigate these deaths. Given our own experience with this issue, we concur with the Daily Press that the DOC should be more transparent, and that “the DOC conducts its business behind a curtain which restricts access to information and does not encourage public inquiry”. In fact they receive protection, through FOIA exemption, from public scrutiny not afforded to other state agencies. We agree with the conclusion of the article that there should be more transparency when something this serious occurs, that the DOC should be more sensitive and responsive to families and that flaws in the system revealed through this death be corrected.

Carla

Reporters Committee Loses Battle to Interview Prisoners with Recorders

Last year, The Reporters Committee for Freedom of the Press sent a letter to Governor McAuliffe urging him to return to a previous practice, letting reporters use recording devices when interviewing prisoners. “Audio and video recording provide the most accurate and credible material for a news story and can be essential to the public’s understanding of something as complex and important as the criminal justice system,” the letter stated. In addition to the Reporters Committee, the letter was signed by representatives for the Virginia Association of Broadcasters; the Virginia Press Association; the Thomas Jefferson Center for the Protection of Free Expression; the University of Virginia School of Law First Amendment Clinic; and the Virginia Coalition for Open Government. Interestingly, the ability to use recording devices was allowed on a case by case basis before 2011. There was no reason given for the continuation of the prohibition in 2018.

Fluvanna Prisoner Battles Cancer; a Result of Neglect

As an inmate at the Fluvanna Correctional Center waited more than two years to get a colonoscopy that would diagnose her with the stage-four cancer she is now fighting. Advocates said issues like that are all too common for the inmates at the women’s prison, the largest in Virginia. Recently, attorneys for several of the inmates appeared in federal court in Charlottesville, arguing that the state has failed to abide by a 2016 consent order to provide adequate medical care for inmates at the Fluvanna prison. An attorney from the Legal Aid Justice Center, told the court that the medical needs of 1,200 women were at risk if the Virginia Department of Corrections refused to make necessary changes. It was reported that three women died at Fluvanna over four weeks and that since the consent order, 12 women have died. An attorney representing the DOC, said the prison has been in compliance every day since the consent order was signed. Plus, “no timeline was ever defined in the settlement, and it takes time to make such sweeping changes.” the prisoner testified that she suffered from abdominal pain, rectal bleeding and weight loss for more than two years before she could get a colonoscopy. When she finally got the colonoscopy, it revealed a tumor that had metastasized to her liver. She is currently receiving chemotherapy and hoping that it is not too late.

Virginia Continued

Drug Court in Lynchburg replaces Punishment with Rehabilitation

Drug courts are becoming more commonplace around the states. The drug court established in Lynchburg has medical treatment and rehabilitation as central elements of its philosophy rather than punishment. The drug court program began as a pilot in March 2017, with the Lynchburg Police Department, the Office of the Commonwealth's Attorney and the Public Defender's Office working together to devise an alternative program for dealing with drug addicts that wasn't just the same old "Lock 'em up". approach. A 2012 study of Virginia's drug courts, done by the National Center for State Courts, estimated each person successfully dealt with in a drug court saved taxpayers more than \$19,000 per year when compared to the average \$30,000 cost of locking someone in a state prison or local jail. That study also found that the people who successfully completed a drug court program had far lower re-arrest and recidivism rates than those simply locked away and released into society at the end of their sentences. The drug court is not automatically available. People facing drug charges have to apply for admission to the program and be approved. Currently there are seven participants in Lynchburg's pilot program, which runs through 2019 when it will be evaluated — and if necessary, tweaked... — before becoming fully operational.

Legislators Focus on Ending Cash Bail Bonds

The city of Richmond is beginning the process of ending its cash bail system, and now some state lawmakers are pushing for similar changes in other parts of the state. [Recently] a handful of Democratic lawmakers from Northern Virginia asked officials in Prince William County to follow Herring's example. Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy is a public defender and former magistrate judge in Richmond. She says the system has a disparate impact on poor minorities. "They're sitting in jail for weeks, months, sometimes years at a time because they do not have the money to be able to afford their freedom," Carroll Foy says. "And that is the problem." Commonwealth's Attorney Mike Herring recently directed his prosecutors to no longer recommend cash bail. He says the system was unfair, and speculative. "I don't trust even my instinct as a prosecutor, as the chief prosecutor in the city, to correlate risk and money," Herring says. "No one can. I'm telling you there is no science behind that." Herring asserts that the assigning money to a prisoners risk of absconding is nothing more than tradition. Instead of attaching some monetary value to the risk a defendant poses to the community, prosecutors and judges in Richmond will now simply deem someone a risk or not, deciding whether it's a risk they can manage in the community or whether someone needs to be detained until trial. The Virginia State Crime Commission is currently studying the pretrial process, including the bail bond system. They expect to present a report to lawmakers in November

National News

First Step Act Passes House

The FIRST STEP Act, (HR 5682) introduced by Reps. Doug Collins (R-Ga.) and Hakeem Jeffries (D-N.Y.) and Sens. John Cornyn (R-Texas) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), passed the House May 30th and now will go on to the Senate. This bill replaces a previous reform bill that generated objections from conservatives. The legislation focuses on lowering recidivism of federal prisoners and would require the federal Bureau of Prisons to create evidence-based rehabilitation plans for all inmates. If passed the legislation would allow some federal prisoners to earn more credit towards reduced sentences for "good time" and would require federal prisoners to be placed within 500 miles of their homes. It would also ban the use of restraints on pregnant prisoners and encourage compassionate releases for elderly and terminally ill offenders. Although Director Sessions may not approve of it since he takes a more punitive view of justice, the president has indicated willingness to sign. The president's son-in-law, Jared Kushner, has been involved in promoting the bill. Opposition to the bill centers on opinion that the bill could have gone farther. Todd A. Cox of the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund wrote that a narrow proposal would "undermine bipartisan efforts to develop a comprehensive reform package that most Americans support." Last month, a large number of civil rights organizations came out against legislation that only addressed prison reform and said that the bill could have a disparate racial impact because it made large numbers of prisoners incarcerated for certain offenses ineligible for earning time credits. Supporters maintain that the bill is a good start when it's "harder than it's ever been" to achieve something across the aisle.

Reports

New report on Prison Commissaries

In a first-of-its-kind data analysis, Prison Policy Institute explored the economics of prison commissaries in three states, Illinois, Massachusetts and Washington. The report, authored by attorney Stephen Raheer is titled: *The Company Store: A Deeper Look at Prison Commissaries*. Raheer analyzes commissary sales data from the 3 states to address questions like:

- What do people spend the most money on in prison commissaries?
- How "fair" are prices, compared to "freeworld" prices and relative to prison wages?
- How does the emerging digital market compare to traditional commissary sales, like food and toiletries?

The findings indicate that in the states studied:

- **Incarcerated people spent an average of \$947 per person annually** through commissaries - well over the typical amount they can earn at a prison job. In these three states, an incarcerated worker holding a job supporting the prison, such as food service or custodial work, would usually earn \$180 to \$660 per year.
- **Incarcerated people buy most items to meet basic needs**, like food, hygiene, and over-the-counter medicines, rather than "luxuries." 75% of the average person's annual commissary spending in the three sampled states was used to purchase food and beverages, indicating a widespread need to supplement the food provided by the prisons. While private vendors generally charge prices comparable to those found in outside prisons, monopoly contracts and the ability to transfer goods straight from the warehouse to the customer mean **vendors' operating costs are often lower than in the "free world."**
- **The most obvious price-gouging is found in new digital services** marketed to prisons, such as email and music streaming. Prison and jail telecommunications providers are aggressively pushing these new products and services, where they can charge prices far higher than similar businesses do outside of the prison setting.

Even in state-run commissary systems, private companies are poised to profit. In Illinois, the Keefe Group... was not contracted to run the commissary, but still made up the dominant share (30%) of the state's purchases for commissary goods.

Commissaries present yet another opportunity for prisons to **shift the costs of incarceration** to incarcerated people and their families. Meanwhile, telecommunications contractors with prison contracts are maximizing their revenues by offering more digital services at exorbitant rates. Instead of leveraging incarcerated people to **subsidize the prison system** by monetizing their every need, the report concludes, states could more effectively cut costs by drastically reducing prison populations.

2018 Update on Prisoner Recidivism: A 9-Year Follow-up Period (2005-2014),

This new report from the Bureau of Justice covers a 9 year period and reveals the disturbing news that recidivism is much higher than currently thought, given a longer time period after release. Using data submitted by both law enforcement agencies and state departments of corrections, the researchers tracked the offending patterns of a random sample of 67,966 prisoners from among the 401,288 prisoners released in 2005 in a total of 30 states.

Among their key findings:

- The 400,000 released prisoners racked up nearly two million arrests during the nine-year period, or about five arrests per man or woman.
- Forty-four percent were arrested during their first year following release, 68 percent were arrested within three years, 79 percent within six years, and 83 percent within nine years.
- Seventy-seven percent of released drug offenders were arrested for a non-drug crime within nine years.
- Released property offenders were more likely to be arrested again than released violent offenders.
- Eight percent of prisoners arrested during the first year after release were arrested outside the state that released them. That number increased each year—apparently an indication of increasing interstate mobility. By year nine, 14 percent of those arrested were found in another state.

The report does not discuss the causes for this data but perhaps it has something to do with the need for more reentry services that truly support people when they reenter

A Note About Letters to Virginia CURE

While Virginia CURE cares about your concerns and appreciates being kept informed, we don't have a volunteer staff large enough to reply promptly to all letters received. Please, keep it short and to the point. **Do not send legal papers.** We do not have the capacity to deal with legal issues.

Send mail to P.O. Box 2310, Vienna, VA 22183

CURE Chapters

Northern Virginia CURE
Carla Peterson
Carla4vacure@gmail.com
3rd Thursday, 7:30 PM
Arlington Unitarian Church
4444 Arlington Blvd.
Arlington VA 22204

Richmond CURE
Mary Anne Stone
mary.anne.stone@verizon.net
4th Sunday, 1 :00 PM
Friends Meeting House
4500 Kensington Ave
Richmond VA 23221

Hampton Roads CURE
James Bailey
Jbailey383@aol.com
3rd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
Norview Baptist Church
1127 Norview Ave.
Norfolk VA 23513

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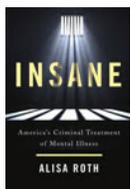
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Book Reviews:

INSANE: America's Criminal Treatment of Mental Illness

Alisa Roth



In “Insane,” Roth is looking to frame the incarceration and treatment of the mentally ill as the next civil rights issue. [She] traces the long history of how we ended up with millions of incarcerated patients all the way back to Benjamin Franklin and the founding of the Republic. America has never quite known what to do with the mentally ill, and Roth argues that the latest solution — lock them up! — is the worst option of all: morally wrong, medically wrong and economically wrong. Roth paints a devastating portrait of lives wrecked — or ended — in prisons, stories of sick people who never got the treatment they needed outside, and certainly didn’t receive it on the inside either.

It’s hard to read “Insane” without concluding that the way the criminal justice system has dealt with mental illness is profoundly broken, and that its flaws have led to tremendous anguish. Insane” is rife with sharp, brutal details that pull the reader beyond the realms of abstract policy debates After so much despair, Roth ends with several promising examples from around the country where the intersection of mental illness and criminal justice has not proved devastating.

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants– Virginia, Inc.
Virginia CURE

P.O. Box 2310
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Involvement: prisoner family friend professional volunteer

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Virginia CURE invites prisoners to submit original articles, poetry and artwork for consideration for publication. Virginia CURE reserves the right to edit submissions accepted for publication.

Virginia CURE will not return submissions unless prior arrangements are made. Send submissions to: Newsletter Editor, Virginia CURE, P.O. Box 2310, Vienna, Virginia 22183

InsideOut is published by Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants–Virginia, Inc., P.O. Box 2310 Vienna, VA 22183 Phone and fax:703-272-3624.