

Winter 2014

Highlights

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Director's Corner

This fall I was privileged to speak at a League of Women Voters Community Awareness Forum in Prince William County in November. I learned that the Community Reentry Council there is very active and I intend to attend a meeting in the near future. I also attended the state League of Women Voters Women's Legislative Roundtable in Richmond. Medicaid expansion was the most important concern of many organizations there. We also met with both the McAuliffe campaign staff and transition staff to explain our issues. We were encouraged by the awareness of the McAuliffe team of the parole situation. Virginia CURE made several suggestions for board members whom we felt could bring objectivity, compassion and diversity to the new parole board. We met, as well, with some legislators to discuss this issue. Finally, we met with the new Secretary of Public Safety, Brian Moran who is also well aware of our issues. Other events included our Annual Meeting held in October in Northern Virginia which allowed us to host speakers from national organizations for an informative meeting. Speakers included Spike Bradford of the Justice Policy Institute, Bob Cluck of the National Alliance on Mental Illness, Nicole Porter of the Sentencing Project, Marcus Hodges, Regional Director, Central Region, Virginia Department of Corrections; and Tom Petersik PIE representative, Virginia CURE. Al Simmons of VACURE and Fran Bolin of Assisting Families of Inmates met with DOC representatives to discuss the new visitation procedures. We did not receive satisfaction on many of our complaints since administrative processes have already been established. The telephone contract has not been decided yet, so we shall monitor progress as we can. We answered nearly 800 letters by year's end. Local Virginia CURE chapters signed over 1000 Christmas cards to prisoners in December. We have been working on a new web site we hope will be uploaded by the time you receive this newsletter. We are currently planning Advocacy Day at the General Assembly on January 20. This event will probably be over by the time this newsletter is received, so we hope that all families and friends who could attend this event will have joined the ranks as many voices make a loud noise! We will be sending information and alerts on legislation during General Assembly.

Lastly, we wish to thank all the volunteers who have helped Virginia CURE in 2013. Special thanks go to Tom Petersik for his work on employment for ex felons in Richmond, as well as for advocacy for Prison Industries; to James Bailey for his work for jobs for ex felons and the job fair he organized in Norfolk, to Bill Richardson for his work on the parole issue and his help with legislative advocacy, to Al Simmons and Mary Anne Stone for being available to attend meetings in Richmond for CURE, to Karissa Williams for sending hundreds of birthday cards to prisoners in 2013, to Bob Bohall for keeping us up to date with parole statistics, to Mason Nottingham for fund raising, to Edythe West for designing our new web site, and to Ben Goldberg our long time volunteer webmaster. We approach 2014 with hope that the political changes we have seen this year will bear fruit for our cause. *Carla*

VACURE Unveils New Website

If you visit the Virginia CURE web site now, you will see a big change. To keep up with the times, Virginia CURE has developed a new web site. The site should be online by time of publication of this newsletter, though we are still in process of "populating" the site with information. A major goal of the new site is to increase visibility, so that we may recruit more people to volunteer, and work collaboratively with Virginia CURE. We also have a you tube channel, and a twitter account as additional means of getting our message of justice reform to everyone. Virginia CURE's yahoo newsgroup will be replaced by the Virginia CURE Campaign on Nation★Inside. This web site is a platform that brings prison reform organizations together. We will now be posting news stories on Virginia CURE'S Nation★Inside page. The platform's Storybank feature will allow members to share their stories. Nation★Inside also has a "take action" feature that will send letters to your representatives on different CURE issues. Check out the National CURE Campaign at <http://nationinside.org/campaign/>. Virginia CURE and several other CURE state chapters, are represented there.

Edythe West

Have you updated your membership yet? January is the month most members send in their membership donations, so please check your records and update your memberships. If you sent in dues in November or December your membership expires on Dec 31, 2014. We will not delete people who paid dues at other times during the year, but if you can afford it, send something in now and establish a January due date!

Virginia CURE An effort to reduce crime through criminal justice reform

VACURE/DOC Meeting October 31 2013

Highlights

This was a long meeting with a great deal of information. This report only briefly touches on the major topics discussed.

Attendees included: DOC: Buck Rogers, Assistant Director of Operations; Elizabeth Rawley, Legislative Representative; Wayne Bennett, Division of Education; Scott Richeson, Re-entry and Programs Director; Steve Seldon, Financial Systems; Scott Magazine, Procurement and Risk Management; Peter Batley, Telephone system; Dr. Amonette, Chief Physician, Health Services; Eric Masten, VA Dept. of Behavioral Health and Developmental Service, Civil Commitment expert. VACURE members present: Carla Peterson, Director; Sandra Brandt, Board member; Dr. Mary Ann Stone, Board Vice Chair; Frances Boatman, Board member; Christa Pierpont, Board member; Al Simmons, Richmond Chapter leader and Board member; and Dr. Tom Petersik, Prison Industries Representative.

Scott Richeson reviewed the **Step Down Program** at Red Onion that the DOC claims has reduced the isolation environment by 65%. The program works by providing incentives for prisoners to earn privileges incrementally through exhibiting appropriate behaviors. Those with Internet access can go to http://www.scatlanta.org/STAR/VA_Step_Down.pdf to see a detailed description.

Ms. Rawley and Mr. Masten referred to studies regarding **civil commitment** of violent sexual predators. They praised the Static 99 as ‘the’ decision making tool. (VACURE has posted reports on the problems with the Static 99 assessment tool). We were informed that a person who is being held at VCBR in Burkeville could petition the courts for release during annual review. This would be a conditional release that requires” challenging supervision”. Masten acknowledged the challenges sex offenders face when returning to the community. This conversation was mainly a defense of current practices which is often encountered at these meetings.

As for the **telephone** situation. GTL’s contract expires at the end of the year. Typically there is a 6 months extension of the contract to work out the details. The Request for Proposal, is out. Dr. Cei will examine the bids for lower rates, negotiable fees and equipment. The evaluation criteria will be set by his office. The new federal ruling on the phone system will have “some” impact on decisions that need to be made on the state level. How it will impact was not specifically noted. Mr. Batley listened to the concerns of VACURE. Issues discussed were: poor equipment impacting the quality of the communication, penalizing those who pay their phone bills on time by the treating all callers as you would those who do not pay their bills, and the high cost of the calls.. There was discussion about the over 3 million dollars the phones provide to the VA General Fund. It is not likely that this will change anytime soon. Nothing much was resolved as VACURE continued to press for more equitable treatment of families.

There was a complaint from Frances Boatman that the set price for items in the **vending machines** was very high. Of note she had a small chocolate pudding cup that sold for \$1.50 but could be purchased in the community for .25. This does not seem to be in synch with the CPI as we have been told. We were informed that the Department for the Blind and Vision Impaired has first refusal for the contract to stock the vending machines. They may, in turn subcontract the matter out to others. Apparently, they do and this practice needs to be investigated. Dr. Cei is convener of the Commissary Committee. Ms. Boatman will contact him about joining this committee. (*Ms. Boatman was approved for membership on the Commissary Committee as a representative of Virginia CURE*)

The 3 representatives for **Jpay** responded to a number of questions from the group. Explanations abounded. There have been delays in getting the Jpay systems up and running. The expectation is that those problems will be resolved and things will again move forward in the first quarter of 2014. Jpay believed that it would be linked into the Coris computer system and that has not been the case, so money goes from their office in Florida to the individual institutions where it is hand keyed into the inmate’s account. This is causing delays. There was talk of the system being completely electronic, but this is not going to be the case. The system is not fully integrated at this time. Costs, as explained in our last newsletter, differ if payment is by Money Order via post office, Internet, telephone or by purchasing money orders in specific locations. (*CURE does not understand why a larger amount has a larger fee and will continue to pursue this issue*). The receiving inmate can figure that 10% will be taken out for their use upon reentry. Then 5% will be taken for other court-mandated debts and expenses. Senders must consider adding to the amount to cover these fees. Currently 6 institutions have the media players. These players cost \$49.99.

The merger of the **Department of Correctional Education** (DCE) and DOC has been fairly smooth. DCE, formerly its own agency with its own budget, is now a division in the DOC and teachers work for corrections. The agency has gone from operating as a “decentralized “system to working within a centralized system of governance. Forms, travel, purchasing, accounts have all had to be reformatted into the new centralized system. DOC has been careful about protecting the educational budget (addressing CURE concerns about the new division becoming a line item in the DOC budget) and even providing additional money to pay for the restructuring. Typically, the schools have operated at a 9.8% vacancy rate in order to meet expenses. Currently, with the 2 million dollar shortfall from the state, the department is asking its employees to wait or do more than they would have to do if the positions were filled. There will be a 2 million dollar budget request to the General Assembly to fill vacancies and hire the IT people needed to roll out the new GED to the locations that still do not have it in place. GED prep materials are being ordered. This includes keyboarding instruction. Regarding the issue of bringing the college classes back to each facility: New River Community College has worked out an on-line system. Liberty University representatives will be meeting with DOC Education Division staff to discuss

renewing that program. It takes at least 15 students who need to take the same class at the same time to make it viable to operate a class. Money for the college project is simply not available at this time. Community colleges could pick up the class option if DOC were to cover 80% of the course and the inmate cover the remaining 20%.

Dr. Amonette discussed a **Hepatitis C** study that is being run through VCU's Medical Center. The new treatments for Hep-C are quite expensive and not yet fully researched. The VCU study is not complete. It is not possible to provide the differentiated treatments to all who are Hep-C affected. Dr. Amonette went on to briefly discuss the for-profit company, Corizon that is contracted to provide medical services at 12 institutions. This is a separate contract from the VADOC's medical services. Dr. Amonette recommended that an individual get answers to questions by directing queries to specific facilities.

John Garman is the new administrator of **Correctional Enterprises** and the person who determines if and how Prison Industries (PIE) would be implemented. Its purpose is to encourage states and units of local government to establish employment opportunities for prisoners that approximate private-sector work. Virginia has completed the PIE certification process but does not currently have any PIE programs in operation. Tom Petersik shared information from an analysis of PIE programs in Virginia, and in North Carolina and South Carolina. Dr. Petersik has had extensive experience evaluating PIE programs across the United States. He offered to meet with John Garman to discuss the successful projects with which he is familiar.

Virginia News

DOC Signs New Health Care Contract with For-Profit Company

The VADOC has signed a contract with for-profit health care provider Corizon. The firm, has been accused of abuses in Maryland, Maine, Ohio and many other states. Maine lawmakers criticized Corizon for failing to medicate thousands of sick prisoners. The Tennessee-based firm was let go by Maryland's system following abuses. It was grilled by investigators about years of negligent treatment in Idaho's prisons, and criticized by lawmakers in Maine for failing to give medicine to thousands of sick prisoners in the past year. Corizon was known until 2011 as Prison Health Services (PHS). Multiple lawsuits and investigations across the country allege that Corizon staff was negligent and incompetent. According to the ACLU, Corizon has been sued 660 times for malpractice over the last half-decade. Nevertheless, Corizon makes \$1.4 billion a year.

**This month, Idaho dismissed Corizon and will again manage it's own healthcare.*

Governor's Budget Proposes More Money for Reentry

The proposed budget that Gov. Bob McDonnell has introduced will include more than \$3 million toward prisoner re-entry and restoration of rights. McDonnell has streamlined the process for restoration of rights during his tenure as Governor. At a meeting with the Secretary of Commerce last month, his staff revealed that over 7000 rights have been restored between July and October with more than 4000 in the pipeline and staff rushing to finish before the administration leaves office.* Funds will also be available for reentry services: The budget provides funding for emergency housing for offenders upon release, adds \$533,517 the first year and second year of the biennial budget. and increases funding for inmate education programs. The funds are for the cost of administering GED testing and for additional computers in classrooms, and funding for part-time instructors to enable the Department of Corrections to enhance its re-entry efforts.

Adding \$331,660 for the first year and \$482,773 the second year in general fund support. It also provides funding for the Residential Substance Abuse Treatment grant match. The Department of Corrections was awarded a federal grant to provide substance abuse treatment services to improve its re-entry services. The grant program serves over 300 inmates and is established in 11 correctional facilities. For FY14 the state match is \$342,147; and the state match for the first year is \$537,660 and \$586,538 for the second year of the new biennial budget.

** Gov. McDonnell in his farewell address stated that over 8000 have restored voting rights at the close of his administration.*

Reentry News

The Advancement Project has released its **Virginia Civil Rights Restoration Guide**, which helps felons navigate the steps the state has established to restore their voting rights and other civil rights. The Advancement Project has worked on the issue for the past decade. The new guide includes eligibility checklists for both the automatic process and the five-year application. It also has copies of all required forms, the rules for paying off court costs, contact numbers for circuit courts and probation and parole offices, and a voter registration application to be completed once rights are restored. The guide can be accessed by Internet at:

http://b.3cdn.net/advancement/cf54939bb16ba7cbc9_acm6vunw0.pdf or by calling (202) 728-9557

Illinois and California have removed "the box" from their applications for state employment that inquires about prior convictions. joining several states and 50 municipalities including Richmond, Virginia Beach, Hampton Roads and several other Virginia Cities that have "banned the box".

The EEOC filed suits against a BMW facility in SC and Dollar General, based in Tennessee. These companies allegedly denied employment to individuals with certain criminal convictions without proper consideration to the nature of the crime, the length of time passed since the conviction, or how the crime pertains to job duties. Employees were fired as the result of background checks after being hired.

Opinion:

From time to time, when space permits, we will make room for prisoner input to this newsletter. Here is an opinion by a prisoner who has researched an issue important to many of our members and has drawn some conclusions he will share with us .

Conflict Identified Between State Law and Parole Board rules

While the outcome of the class action lawsuit against the Parole Board, Burnette vs. Fahey was disappointing, I believe the court opened the door to a legal challenge of the Parole Board’s crime related parole decision factors by concluding: “Inmates may have some ex post facto-protected interest in the rules that guide and govern the exercise of discretion”. This conclusion was based upon the arguments I raised in my Amicus brief in support of the Burnette appeal. I have since filed a Rule 23 class action complaint challenging the constitutionality of the Board’s crime-related factor in their rules. The District court, however, dismissed these claims without any discussion of the constitutional and statutory allegations contained in the complaint. On appeal, the Fourth Circuit affirmed this dismissal, but did so by ignoring the Court’s statutory rules of construction and controlling Supreme Court of Virginia authorities in my petition for rehearing and rehearing en banc. This petition is still pending.

There is a conflict between state law and Parole Board rules regarding the factors the Parole Board may consider. The state law limits the parole review to prisoner related factors whereas Parole Board rules include the prisoner’s crime, sentence, and criminal record in addition to these statutory factors. In such conflicts, the statute always prevails, without exception. So far, the courts have used their no-publication and no citation rules to avoid an honest discussion of this issue. They cannot, however, run from the truth forever. If you want justice for old law prisoners use every means available to engage a public discussion about this conflict between state law and Parole Board rules.

Steve Goodman

Please Contact Virginia CURE at vacure@cox.net for further information.

Update Parole Grant Rates 2013

Month	Granted		Ngr	Revk
2013	No	%	No	No
January	5	1%	344	7
February	3	1%	303	25
March	9	3%	269	48
April	9	2%	419	13
May	11	3%	346	20
June	8	3%	281	47
July	5	3%	170	14
August	5	2%	305	11
September	5	2%	257	13
October	6	3%	225	26
2013	66	2%	2919	234

Virginia State Crime Commission to Help Wrongly Convicted

A proposal to allow bond for some prisoners attempting to clear their names through the courts appeared to pick up support from the Virginia State Crime Commission. Members directed the staff to draft a bill similar to one the last General Assembly delayed action on for further study. The legislation would allow commonwealth’s attorneys to join petitions for writs of actual innocence filed in the Virginia Court of Appeals for newly discovered non biological evidence and in the Virginia Supreme Court for new DNA evidence.

Under a bill patroned by Del. Charniele L. Herring, D-Alexandria, once a commonwealth’s attorney joins in a petition for a writ of actual innocence the prisoner could ask the circuit court where he or she was convicted to be released on bond while the case is considered in appellate court.

CURE meets with DOC to discuss new visitation regulations

Al Simmons, of Virginia CURE and Fran Bolin of Assisting Families of Inmates, met with DOC personnel, Elizabeth Thornton and Beverly Richard, to discuss prisoner visitation. The new practice causing deep concern is the move to computerized applications. Because many families and other visitors may not have computer access or the expertise to fill out applications on line, this change may discourage visitation or cause delays and bottlenecks. Assisting Families of Inmates has 9,600 adults, not counting children, registered in their program which provides rides and video visitation to inmates. There is fear that the new procedures will reduce and/or delay the number of visitors. Ms. Bolin’s program provides multiple buses three Saturdays a month from Richmond to state prisons throughout the state and is widely used. It was also felt that the state’s decision to limit non-related visitors to only one inmate would also diminish the number of visitors. Virginia CURE pointed out that the Federal Prison System encourages non-related visits through PVS (Prison Visitation and Support). We suggested the state look into a similar program to encourage more visitors. The DOC says security concerns and visitor flow are the reasons for the changes. We believe the previous security has been good and this new set of rules may result in fewer visitors. Everyone who has studied prisons or experienced prison visitation knows that the more often prisoners are visited the better adjusted they are and the more likely they are to succeed when released. Virginia CURE asked the DOC to track visitation rates to see if the new rules decrease the number of visitors. Visitation should promote more access to prisoners, not less

Al Simmons

Legislation 2014

Bills as of January 25. This is a partial list. Full updated lists will be posted on the web site and enclosed in replies to letters where possible. Bills Virginia CURE has helped create are marked with a ♥

HB 183 Juveniles; commitment to Department of Juvenile Justice, consideration of social history, report . Farrell R-56
 Commitment of juvenile to Department of Juvenile Justice; consideration of social history. Requires a judge to review and take into consideration the results of an investigation of the social history of a juvenile before ordering the juvenile to be committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice for placement in a juvenile correctional center, 01/15/14 House: Subcommittee recommends reporting with amendment(s) (10-Y 0-N),

♥**HB 414 Prisons; telephone systems; Prisoner Reentry Fund established. Hope, D-47** Provides that inmate phone services commissions paid to the Commonwealth shall not exceed 10 percent of the overall net revenue realized by the provider. All commissions or revenues received by the Commonwealth on prisoner telephone calls shall be paid into the state treasury and credited to the Prisoner Reentry Fund to be used for independent pre-release and post-release reentry and transition services programs. 01/23/14 House: Subcommittee recommends reporting (8-Y 0-N), 01/23/14 House: Subcommittee recommends referring to Committee on Appropriations

HB 671 Writ of actual innocence; bail hearings. Herring D-46 Provides that when the attorney for the Commonwealth joins in a petition for a writ of actual innocence, the petitioner may move the circuit court that entered the felony conviction for a bail hearing 01/10/14 House: Assigned Courts sub: Criminal.

HB 723 Sentence credits; drug-related felonies. McClellan, D-71 Allows a maximum of seven and one-half sentence credits to be earned for each 30 days served on sentence for drug-related felonies. All other felony sentences will continue to earn sentence credits at a maximum of four and one-half days for each 30 days served. The bill also allows all felons to earn an additional two and one-half sentence credits for each 30 days served for participating in programs intended to assist in rehabilitation that are taken in addition to the mandatory programs in which they are already required to participate. 01/10/14 House: Assigned Courts sub: Criminal

HB 892 State employment; questions about criminal convictions, arrests, and charges. Krupicka, D-43 |. Prohibits state agencies from including on any employment application a question inquiring whether the prospective employee has ever been arrested or charged with, or convicted of, any crime, subject to certain exceptions.. *Ban the box* 01/10/14 House: Assigned Courts sub: Criminal

♥**HB 951 Parole board; parole review; required release. Sickles, D-43** Requires the Parole Board to release any person eligible for parole whose time served, including earned sentence credits and good conduct credits, has exceeded the midpoint of the most recent discretionary sentencing guidelines the same or similar offense unless the Board feels there is a substantial risk that such person will not conform to the conditions of parole and issues a reasoned decision explaining the basis for such decision.01/16/14 House: Subcommittee recommends continuing to 2015 by voice vote

♥**HJ 86 Study; Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council; report: Hope, D-47** Directs the Virginia Freedom of Information Advisory Council (Council) to study whether the Virginia Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), specifically § 2.2-3703 of the Code of Virginia as it relates to the Virginia Parole Board, should be amended to eliminate the exemption for the Virginia Parole Board from FOIA. 01/07/14 House: Referred to Committee on Rules

SB 128 Commitment of juvenile to Department of Juvenile Justice; consideration of social history. Favola D-31 Requires a judge to review and take into consideration the results of an investigation of the social history of a juvenile before ordering the juvenile to be committed to the Department of Juvenile Justice for placement in a juvenile correctional center (Also HB 183- Farrell R-56 01/21/14 Senate: Read third time and passed Senate (38-Y 0-N))

SB 142 Juvenile offenders; sentence modification:. Provides a mechanism for persons who are sentenced to more than 25 years for a nonhomicide offense committed while a juvenile to petition for a modification of sentence at age 35 or after serving 20 years of the sentence, whichever occurs later. Marsden, D-37 12/30/13 Senate: Referred to Committee for Courts of Justice

SJ 16 Study; mental health and the criminal justice system; report.: Howell, J. D-32 Establishes a joint subcommittee to study mental health and the criminal justice system, including (i) the training provided ... (ii) the need for crisis receiving centers at the local level, and (iii) the need for mental health treatment beds ... for jail diversion at the regional or local level, . 01/17/14 Senate: Incorporated by Rules (SJ47-Deeds) by voice vote.(Deeds Study is of general mental health services in Commonwealth).

SJ 24 Study; expungement of juvenile records; report. Favola, D-31 Directs the Virginia State Crime Commission to study expungement of juvenile records. 01/20/14 Senate: Stricken at the request of Patron in Courts of Justice (9-Y 0-N).

A Note About Letters to Virginia CURE

While Virginia CURE cares about your concerns and appreciates being kept informed, but 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**

Recent Reports

A Lifetime of Punishment: The Impact of the Felony Drug Ban on Welfare Recipients

A provision of the welfare reform legislation passed by Congress in 1996 subjects an estimated 180,000 women to a lifetime ban on welfare benefits, according to a report released today by the Sentencing Project, an advocacy group.

The “Personal Responsibility and Work Opportunity Reconciliation Act” (PRWORA) imposed a denial of federal benefits to people convicted in state or federal courts of felony drug offenses. The act gave states the discretion to opt-out of or modify the ban; there are currently 12 states that impose the ban in full.

Using data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics, researchers for the Sentencing Project estimated the ban’s affect on women with felony drug convictions in states where the ban is fully implemented.

“In 2009, 85.9 percent of adult TANF recipients were women; women are also about twice as likely as men to receive food stamp benefits at some point in their lives,” researchers wrote.

The report recommends that states adopt policies to opt out of the ban’s provisions in full or in part, and that Congress repeal the ban.

Marc Mauer, The Sentencing Project ,November 2013

VACURE has supported bills to opt out of the drug offender ban on TANF recipients for many years. Maybe Washington will end this ban nationally thus ending this issue in Virginia.

Virginia's Justice System: Expensive, Ineffective and Unfair

With the 8th highest jail incarceration rate in the U.S., 1 of every 214 adult Virginians is behind bars in county jails across the state; African-American youth over-represented in the juvenile justice system; and the Commonwealth’s over reliance on incarceration – largely as a result of arresting Virginians for drug offenses – Virginia has an over-burdened correctional system unable to consistently provide services or safety. The report points to reforms that, if implemented, would result in relief for Virginians directly impacted by the justice system and taxpayers alike.

The policy brief -- the first in a series of publications being released by JPI as a group of justice advocates and concerned stakeholders have been meeting in the Commonwealth to discuss pushing for reforms -- is an overview of the Commonwealth’s adult and youth justice system, which identifies areas of progress – like the recent effort to re-enfranchise formerly incarcerated residents with voting rights and other civil rights – and also identifies solutions to revise ineffective policies and practices of the past that remain in place.

Recommendations include:

- Reduce focus on drug offenses
- Repeal Truth-in-Sentencing statutes and reinstate parole
- Work to address racial disparity throughout the criminal justice system
- Re-allocate juvenile justice resources from centralized, adult-like juvenile prisons to more robust and proven community-based alternatives.
- Demand better educational resources and opportunities, especially for low-income communities of color
- Restore the authority of judges to make decisions regarding the trial and treatment of youth as adults

Spike Bradford, ‘Justice Policy Institute November 2013

National News

Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act of 2013

Last January, Sens. Al Franken (D-MN) and Mike Johanns (R-NE) and Reps. Richard Nugent (R-FL) and Bobby Scott (D-VA) introduced **S. 162/H.R. 401**, the **Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Act of 2013 (JMHCA)**. This legislation, reauthorize's and improves the Mentally Ill Offender Treatment and Crime Reduction Act (MIOTCRA) of 2004, supports collaborative programs between criminal justice and mental health agencies across the country. The program supports mental health courts, law enforcement training and other collaborative approaches to identifying and treating people with mental illnesses who come in contact with the criminal justice system. The legislation has 62 cosponsors in Congress, and has been endorsed by law enforcement officials, mental health professionals, judicial organizations, and veterans groups. The bill was “hotlined“ with hopes that it would pass the Senate by unanimous consent, as did the original 2004 bill and the 2008 re authorizing statute. However, Senators Lee and Coburn objected to a UC request and placed a hold on the bill. Proponents are working to ensure that this bill is passed.

Smarter Sentencing Act

Congress came together to say “enough “ to our increasingly punitive criminal justice system with this bill which reduces harsh penalties for drug offenses and allows judges greater flexibility in sentencing. It also extends the more equitable crack cocaine provisions of the Fair Sentencing Act retroactively to individuals serving prison terms under the now discredited 100-to-1 sentencing disparity. **H.R. 3382** known as the **Smarter Sentencing Act** was introduced on October 30, 2013 by Rep. Raúl Labrador [R-ID] This bill was referred to the House Committee on Energy and Commerce and House Committee on the Judiciary which will consider it before sending it to the House floor for consideration. The bill at this time remains in Committee.

CURE Chapters

Northern Virginia CURE
 Carla Peterson
 Vacurel@cox.net
 3rd Thursday, 7:30 PM
 Arlington Unitarian Church
 4444 Arlington Blvd.
 Arlington VA 22204

Richmond CURE
 Al Simmons
 Al22s@hotmail.com
 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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 2013-2014**

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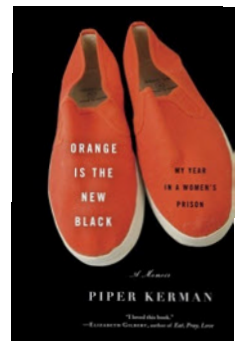
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 If you have an email address and are not receiving updates from Virginia CURE, please send a message to vacurel@cox.net. (vacure one)

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Book Reviews:

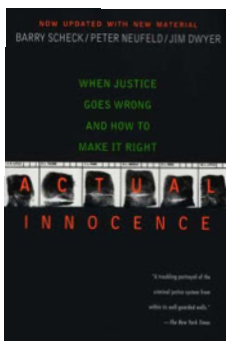
Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison by Piper Kerman

Piper Kerman's "Orange is the New Black" has caused an uproar as a new series on Netflix; however, her book depicts a not so racy version of prison life. The story of her time in prison shows how thin the line is between right and wrong; and how humbling oneself and looking at the consequences of our actions, can be a growth experience. This book shines a light on the dehumanizing treatment of people in prison, and the difficulties all who are incarcerated must face to maintain their sense of self. Ms Kerman has become the voice of the voiceless, crying out for true reentry programs in our criminal justice system, and the need to administer our prisons on a restorative justice model rather than retribution. Spiegle & Grau publishers



Actual Innocence: When Justice Goes Wrong and How to Make it Right, by Barry Scheck, Jim Dwyer, and Peter Neufeld

Stories of innocent men and women—and the system that put them away under the guise of justice. Now updated with new information, Actual Innocence sheds light on “a system that tolerates lying prosecutors, slumbering defense attorneys and sloppy investigators” (Salt Lake Tribune)—revealing the shocking flaws that can derail the legal process. William Bernhardt, editor of Legal Briefs writes “This may be the most important book on American criminal justice in a decade.” Random House publishers



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Virginia CURE web site
www.vacure.org

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*Today's prisoners
are tomorrow's neighbors*



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Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants– National, Inc.

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Membership in Virginia CURE

Join Virginia CURE today and become a part of the effort to work for criminal justice reform and safety in our communities. Send dues payment to:

Virginia CURE, P.O. Box 2310, Vienna, Virginia 22183

Dues are payable January 1 on a yearly, non-prorated basis for current year. Prisoner members need to include state number on all communications to CURE.

Remember to send address changes.

Check type of membership

- Prisoner* \$ 2.00
- Individual \$ 15.00
- Family \$ 25.00
- Sustaining \$ 50.00
- Organization \$100.00
- Life \$100.00
- Renewal

Please make checks payable to **Virginia CURE**. Contributions are tax deductible under the provisions of 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code.

*Prisoners may send five stamps.

Please feel free to reproduce

name _____

address _____
street/or p.o. apt.

_____ city state zip

e-mail _____ prisoner birthday _____

phone day () evening ()

fax () _____

Involvement: prisoner family friend professional volunteer

other _____ Institution _____

please specify

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

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