

COMPILATION OF TEACH-IN 2 SESSIONS November 22, 2015

A. **Punitive and Current Practices**....Fran Gilmore (facilitator); Dennis Strain (scribe)

1. Ideas From Discussion

Avoid abusive language: convict, ex-con.

Respectful language: returning citizens; incarcerated (children, mothers, fathers).

Returning citizens need food, clothes, shelter, jobs and communication with family.

Village cooperatives could provide those needs and a social network.

Jobs can be created through cooperative ventures.

Legislative barriers include garnishing wages, charging inmates for fees and services, blocking returning citizens from many jobs

2. Next Steps

Identify prison generated products and boycott them.

Organize lots of visitors for those in prison.

Join mentoring programs to reestablish social networks and provide emotional support.

Identify people affected by incarceration in each legislative district and report to legislator.; point out the cost to constituents from taxes for prisons.

Lobby legislature to overturn disenfranchising legislation.

Support existing organizations: Incarcerated Nation

<<http://incarceratednation.org/#welcome>>, Center for Returning Citizens

<<http://tcrcphilly.org/>>., PA Prison Society <<http://www.prisonersociety.org/>>.

B. **Trends for Restorative Justice**....Lynne Iser (facilitator); Eric Foster (scribe)

1. Dr. Renaya Wheelman (I'm FREE: Females Reentering and Encouraging Each Other)

Organization works with women, only....promotes the idea that they are not throw-away people, emphasis is not on punishment but being empowered. 6 week informed program of training

looking at what happened (trauma, not fear based); how to support (handle shame and guilt).

Part of their pay goes to restoration. Fact: Over 1 M. women in prison.....70-90% are traumatized. The focus is not on the "sinner" (crime committed) but on the sinned against (crime suffered).

2. Rev. Chris Kimmenez (Healing Communities). The sum of who we are is not our worst decision. Still encountering stigmatization even after more than 20 years after a minor crime. Systemic problem: Can't get away from the crime; can't get past the record.

3. Barbie Fischer (Restorative Encounters). Restitution.....not all victims want it.

Restorative Justice must look at all the people involved, emphasis on interconnectedness; inform communities why they should care;

4. Q&A: How help? Have a conversation/make noise/show up/show people care (especially white middle class) Look at the returning citizen with compassion that they have been through something. Educate yourself and volunteer for communication workshops for families of criminals. Educate family and friends. Follow DecarceratePA, NAACP, incarceratednations.org. Create safe spaces in faith communities so returning citizens can talk about incarceration. Work with prison and prisoners before reentry. Partner with organizations that have a holistic view.....crime breaks the web of communities.

5. Action Strategies: Help register returning citizens to vote in PA, invite TCRC folks to speak in faith communities, support ending mandatory sentences to look at the bigger picture, listen to victims of crimes asking them what they want, educate people both inside and outside the prisons to be less punitive (this include social workers and wardens). Systemic focus: Subscribe to receive legislative notices so you can understand the systemic nature of

restorative justice/punitive justice and also share legislative up-dates in houses of worship for advocacy.

Recommendation of books: Changing Lenses, The Little Book of Justice

C. Union Apprenticeships and Sweat Equity.....Shobhi Kanal (facilitator); Bonnie McDairmant (scribe)

1. Andrew Anderson (Ex. Dir. Friends Rehab Program); Rochelle Culbreath (SEPTA manager legislative affairs and community relations); Baird Brown (President Friends Fair Hill Board); Ryan Boyer (Business Manager Laborer).

2. Question: Is it easier to keep people out of jail or change the system?

Rochelle: Takes a lot of money to house a prisoner.

Question: How are local organizations working to help returning citizens find solid jobs?

Rochelle: SEPTA hires returning citizens. Inmates learn trade and technical skills which can translate to SEPTA jobs. SEPTA funds apprenticeship programs. Certifications are important to show qualifications. A lawyer at SEPTA researches what returning citizens have done and makes determinations.

Baird: Friends Fair Hill gives premier training program for making ordinary houses into energy efficient ones. This program funds itself to a large extent.

Question: Where do people go after training?

Andrew: 18 houses were bought in Strawberry Mansion....hired locals for renovation. S.T.A.R. program.....1 year gets taken off parole. FRP is about SERVICE. Department of Justice gave them \$28,000; first to be partnered with federal government. There are 1,500 shells owned by the Housing Authorities (750 have been shells for a very long time). FRP recycles them.....using equity to employ more people.

Form LLC, non-profit can be a managing member of LLC, limited liability; managing member has equity. A non-profit and mediate the system for people. When property is sold the crew gets a split of the equity. Uses the philosophy "If you want people to think like home owners....make them home owners".

The prison pipeline is re-articulating slavery.

Rochelle: Transition Fair-valuable in prisons all over. It's a big job fair with much information on housing, etc.

From a participant: Need to employ veterans in green jobs. He was in prison on entrapment 20 years ago. Had trouble getting certifications he needed to work.....so he created a job for himself.

Question: What can we do?

Rochelle: make sure they have certifications; attend transition fairs. Elected officials must create legislation to insure returning citizen has: 1. Access to a computer 2. Understands health insurance 3. Has a driver's license.

Andrew: Donate to FRP for operating support for returning citizens. Donate a house. Check out Pioneer Human Services in Washington, DC.

Baird: Lots of opportunity now because of change of administration in city. Reach out to elected officials (Kenney's Transition Team). Money is available for green/sustainability/energy efficiency jobs.

There can be numerous jobs about to happen in sustainability.

Inmates need mentors on the outside.....like job coaching.

There should be a job coach for returning citizens as they make their re-entry.

3. Action Steps: Keep up-to-date with incarceratednation.org. Join UUPLAN. Help social networks of prisoners. Advocacy: Lobby so inmates can have access to computers, get driver's licenses and get health care. Make financial contributions to FRP, TCRC.

A suggestion from Kathy Riordan: CAMI'S key leadership in this effort to reduce barriers to employment where unions are present (presumably CAMI) ought to initiative a meeting with Patrick Eiding, President of the the Philadelphia AFL-CIO Council (who also serves as Sec.-Treas. of the Phila. Building Trades) in order to fully explore barriers to employment faced by returning citizens and to solicit his help in reducing those barriers. Ms. Riordan would be available to set up such a meeting on behalf of CAMI if requested. Kathy is very knowledgeable about both the Pennsylvania and the Philadelphia trade union movements. She has had a long career with the PA Dept. of Labor, and in the field of labor education, and is an activist in the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW). She is known and respected by PA and local labor leaders, including Mr. Eiding. Kathy can be reached at: 215-248-2024 (hm), or 267-738-5791 (mobile). Email: kathleen.riordan@att.net

D. Employment and Entrepreneurship for Returning Citizens.....Gail Mershon (facilitator); Elaine Hills (scribe)

1. Reuben Jones (Founder/Director of Frontline Dads). Organization is all over Philadelphia. Boycott and divestment of companies who financially benefit from the prison industrial complex. Model business investment in returning citizens. Get government and businesses involved. From Day 1, train the inmate in good business practices/attitudes/skills. Recommends job readiness through the mayor's office (RISE).

2. Ray Rios (AVP Entrepreneur). Mr. Rios is a product of prison educational programs. His businesses are: Mikey Likes it Ice Cream (9 full time employed); Breathing Space wines. Even with successful businesses, Mr. Rios cannot get bank funding because all are returning citizens. Recommended reading from prison "What Color is Your Parachute?" Also "Slay the Dragon: Journey from the Dungeon to the Ivory Tower"

3. Mark Boyd (CEO of Goodwill Industries). The business is self-funded. Does not take reentry \$. . . . doesn't want bureaucratic dictating. Goodwill may be able to support entrepreneur with HR, Accounting, cash flow, buildings.

4. Ceciley Bradford-Jones (Center for Employment Opportunities/ceoworks.org). Organization is in 4 states: CA, OK, NY, PA. Philadelphia is the 11th site. Supports recently released, any age. They are paid every day. Get training along line of employment. . . . telephone etiquette, personal presentation, etc. It's not a GED program/literacy. 4 days of classwork and work on the 5th day.

5. Marc Kramer (Change the Hustle). Sales is everything. Work full time but create your business part time. Plan the business and show investors all the parts.

6. Strategies/Next Steps: Make a directory of services and products that are created by returning citizens (Mikey Likes It Ice Cream; shop Goodwill); Give \$\$\$ as backing. Get money from wealthy or a pool of people (churches?) to back an enterprise. Use the Open Table model to support one family of a returning citizen. Promote mentorship. Bring Mikey Likes It Ice Cream to Philadelphia. Follow DecarceratePA.

E. Changing the Laws and Sentencing Practices.....Andrea Durham (facilitator); Sarah Frazier (scribe)

Panelists: Anthony Dickerson = AD, Frank Turner = FT, Sarah Mullen = SMu, Sarah Morris = SMO

1. **SMu:** I'm with ACLU PA which is affiliated with the national organization. Criminal justice reform is our top issue right now. Racial injustice permeates criminal justice. We're focusing on stuff around police, racial profiling and eliminating or reducing entry points into the prison system. Examples of entry points are police in schools, the juvenile justice system, and criminalizing marijuana possession.

Black people are 5 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession than white people are, even though white and black people use it equally. Also ACLU wants to address stop and frisk practices which are often against Amendment rights.

Debtors' Prison – Criminalization of the poor- Some people can't pay fines owed to the city or state and go to jail instead. There's an example of a woman who went to jail for a few days to be relieved of debt but then died in prison because of health complications. There are many dads in jail because they can't afford child support payments. This criminalizes the poor because you can pay your way out of all of these situations, but poor people who lose their jobs in jail are stuck. Indigent Defense – We're the only state with no state funding for public defenders. The county where you commit the crimes affects the quality of your public defender and therefore affects the outcome of the charges. For many people it's easier to plead guilty to get out of jail quickly than it is to go through the process, even if they're innocent. But once they plead guilty that will be on their record forever. PA is behind Mississippi in rates of incarceration. The populations in prisons has stopped going up but it's not going down either. Laws for mandatory minimum sentences stopped, but now people are proposing them again. ACLU concerns about re-entry - Expungement opportunity is limited. They want Clean Slate legislation – record cleared after a certain number of years; there should be reforms in licensing laws so that returning citizens can get more types of jobs.

FT: I work with Philadelphia Lawyers for Social Equity. We focus on the expungement aspect things. People sign up with us and we expunge the parts of their records that are eligible. People's records follow them through their entire lives, so we see people whose crime happened 30 years ago. We're promoting a bill to make expungement easier and increase the number of crimes that can be expunged. It's illegal not to hire based on previous convictions, so we ask people if they have denied a job because of that and look for cases to get employers to change their practice or to get cash settlements for people who were denied jobs on that basis.

SMo: I'm part of 2 organizations, Decarcerate PA and the Youth Art Self-Empowerment Project. The YARSP is staffed with young people who were arrested as a teen but ended up with adult convictions in and in adult jails. We focus on how people are criminalized and funneled into the prison system. From there I came to work for Decarcerate PA which is entirely volunteer run. We focus on 1. No more prison expansion 2. Decarceration 3. Community Reinvestment – schools, jobs, housing etc. There is also the high cost of fines levied on people upon release. Sometimes the money pays restitution to the victim, but often it goes to fund the broken court system. We have 3 Campaigns going on right now: Campaign 1: There are 3 bad laws being considered in the Senate Judiciary Committee currently in regards to these heavy fines that released persons can't afford: 1. State can take 50% of the savings a family keeps for the individual upon release 2. State can garnish 25% of wages earned the person earns upon release 3. State can take the bail money people pay and never return it, defeating the point of bail. We're trying to stop these bills. The people on the Senate Judiciary Committee are from all over the state, not just Philadelphia. Campaign 2: Started in the spring and is called the No 215 Jail Coalition. It is against new land for jails in Philadelphia. Yes, jails are overcrowded, but the city holds people for a long time before trial. We're trying to end cash bail because it means that people are held just because they're poor – wealthier people can pay bail and be released. Campaign 3: Coalition to Abolish Death by Incarceration:

10% of people who go to jail never go home again. PA is #2 in the country for the Life without Parole sentence and #1 for sentencing people to Life as children. We want to change laws so that all people can apply for parole at a certain point.

AD: I'm the Director of Prison Outreach for the Center for Returning Citizens and I'm with the Coalition Against Mass Incarceration. I personally served 10 years in Graterford prison. That's what got me involved in this work.

I had people on the Inside direct me down the right path. Lots of jailed people are very progressive thinkers and they will guide you along a good path if they see you trying. They asked me what I wanted and I said "to get out of here". They pointed to the Law Library and said "The people who get out of here go in there." When I went to court I had no idea what was going on so I learned about what happened in the Law Library. I started to focus on sentencing issues. They can send you on a nightmare journey trying to get parole, and then if you're on parole and you make a mistake, they can send you back to jail and add the years you were on parole back onto your jail sentence. A lot of people in society don't know this. Our goal is to educate prisoners and their families on how to help themselves and address the real issues about over-sentencing based on current laws.

Andrea: Our essential question for this break out group is "What laws/sentencing guidelines would improve the lives of returning citizens and families?" Could any of you please speak to that?

AD: Let's look at parole, what we call "street time". I suggest amendments to the parole act. If you're arrested and convicted right before you're released from parole, they will take the "street time" you served and add it back on top of your new prison time, even though you already served that time while on parole. There are people still in jail from the 80's because their parole years keep getting added back onto their prison time. In New Jersey, every day a person is in the system takes time from both ends of the sentence – in jail and on parole. A lot of people in prison are serving old sentences that were just never exhausted.

SMo: PA should stop passing laws that further criminalize people. Right now with mandatory minimums, a judge can apply it concurrently or successively if there's more than one crime. But a new law being proposed would forbid concurrent sentencing. Terrible laws that make it worse need to stop. There are 5,200 people in PA serving life sentences, and it's not because there are more crimes here than in other states. It's because a life sentence without parole is a mandatory for first and second degree murder. For the death penalty, the jury can examine the situation and decide, but they aren't given any time to consider Life without Parole – it's an automatic sentence. If a white Penn professor beats his wife to death he could get 5 years, but a black teenager who happens to be near a crime could get Life without Parole, because being associated with a murder is second degree murder. Even if the person had no idea a gun was involved in the situation.

AD: Sentencing is one of our key areas.

SMu: Emphasize mandatory minimums. A big problem is the culture in District Attorney's offices, and since the system is very decentralized, we must go county by county to try to change the culture. The DA's Association is a big road block.

FT: The DA has more money than the public defenders, the funding is uneven.

SMo: Most bad legislature begins in the House Judiciary Committee, because the members built their careers by selling black and brown people down the river into the prison system. I asked a member of the committee “What if it was your child in prison?” He talked about big screen TVs in jail cells, which in reality aren’t allowed. He talked like he got all his information from a TV show. He was appalled by the idea that his kid would ever be in prison. He was totally detached from the real-life impact prison has on people. If your representative is on that committee they need to hear about it. Reps from Philadelphia pass these terrible laws. We need to hold them accountable.

AD: I was at community college and I was asked about what law makers and judges do after a campaign. There’s no incentive to for a judge to be lenient. A judge who helps people doesn’t get elected. We put people in power who tell you they will bury people in jail. Nobody should have the audacity to get up in front of a group of supposedly good people and say they’re going to steal prisoners’ and families’ money.

Andrea: I’ve been an attorney for 20 years, and there are cases of single parents, making dinner for their kids at 6:30 one night. Someone told the police there were drugs in the house and the police can enter with a warrant and arrest you in front of your kids. So if you have no money, and you’re arrested, the first thing you think about is “what about my kids and my job?” There’s no money for bail. Then a public defender who met you for 10 minutes says you can stay in jail and go through a trial, or you can plead out – which means you can get out of prison and go back to your kids and your job. But they you have a record for something you’re actually innocent for, but now they’ve signed away all their rights. A friend called me once in this situation and I told her “Do Not Sign Anything”. There are Das with high conviction rates because people plead guilty to crimes they didn’t commit so they can get out of jail. There’s a one-up-man-ship thing, bragging about the number of convictions they have made. This is the blood of other people. It is very common for people to be arrested in front of their children.

Question Cards:

Question 1: What responsibility does the PA state legislature have to control, monitor and care for people in private prisons, concerning things like education, diet, medical needs, etc.?**Answer 1:**

FT: PA doesn’t have prisons that are entirely private, although there are many private contractors within prisons. There is one federal private prison in PA but no state private ones. The food and medical care corporations are making millions of dollars. The medical care is awful. **SMu:** Corizon company (sp?) in Pittsburgh – people were dying because they weren’t receiving their meds. **AD:** Graterford has many law suits about medical care and food. They sell defective products and cheap drugs to prisoners. They had people acting as doctors but they had lost their licenses and they were still there writing prescriptions. There is no oversight of any prisons. **Andrea:** Often people think that public and private prisons are different, but ALL prisons are making money for someone. Sometimes everyone in a small town is employed by the prison there. Any prison is a paycheck for the people living in the area.

Question 2: What do you see is the role of for-profit corporations/prisons in recidivism, harsh sentences, and prison for fines? It seems like all the people have a profit motive. **Answer 2:**

AD: Keithan (sp?) Corporation is the commissary company, and they made \$40 million last year just from the commissary. So why would they want you to leave jail? It's a cash cow, and it's locked in, the prisoners can't buy from the outside. The Guards Union made a sneaker company and was selling sneakers to the prisoners – this is racketeering. The whole system is a racket.

Question 3A: California has changed their felony drug laws to misdemeanors. Is this a possibility for PA?

Answer 3A:

FT: There's nothing on the books to change those laws. **SMu:** PA likes to be among the last of the states to change things.

Questioner: Lawmaker Leach (sp?) proposed it. **SMu:** God bless Leach but we need bipartisan support. In PA people can't vote on things like this. Reading PA is gerrymandered into 5 different districts, so their voices are not being heard. **Audience member:** CA can't pay for the prisoners so they can't afford the prisons and had to find a way to have fewer people in jail.

Question 3B: How much money from corporations like CCA and GEO fund the campaigns of our legislators? **Answer 3B:** **SMo:** Those companies don't operate much in PA but there are many private half-way houses that are rife with civil rights abuses and they make donations to legislators' campaigns.

Questioner: If there are many separate contractors, does it make it that much harder to track where the money is coming from? **Andrea:** Look up who is contributing to a person's campaign, and that will tell you a lot about them.

Question 4: How easy is expungement? How many years without criminal activity before a record can be expunged? How much does it cost? What is ARD? How is it different from expungement, how long does it take and how much does it cost? **Answer 4:**

FT: It's not easy. It's near impossible to get an entire record expunged. Small charges can get expunged, but if convicted, misdemeanors and felonies will be on record for life. There are only 3 years to get a record expunged: 1. Get a pardon from the Governor, but there is a 5 year backlog on those 2. When you reach 70 years old and you've been legal for at least 10 years, you can petition to have your record expunged, but by then you've reached retirement age anyway. 3. If you pass away, someone who liked you can wait 3 years and then petition to clear your record. People's arrest records are publicly available. Even if not guilty, all charges come up if you search in the right database. It's illegal to do this but employers look up this information all the time. **Audience member:** If a person is wrongly convicted but signed a guilty plea, if someone clears your name – **Andrea:** Once you sign, there's no going back. **SMo:** There are limited ways out – if you had no idea what was happening, or if the court made a mistake. **Audience member:** What about Clean Slate? **All Panelists:** There's no such thing as Clean Slate. **Andrea:** Tell your friends and family members to Sign Nothing. **AD:** If you're arrested protect yourself by repeating over and over "I don't understand what's going on." to everyone you talk to. If the judge asks you if you understand say "No I don't understand. I have no idea what's going on." Repeat that over and over.

Question 5: Can you explain why felony drug charges exclude returning offenders from working for agencies subject to the state's Child Protection Services Law? Is this new or is it something that can be

amended? These convictions had nothing to do with harming children....**Answer 5: FT:** I think even laws that say employers can't look at a record have an exception for working with children. Felons can't work with children. **Questioner:** A drug felony? **AD:** It has lots to do with insurance. **Questioner:** We have a DHS license and we can't hire someone with a drug felony, even if they aren't going to work with children.

Andrea: By our own design we live in a very litigious society, I'm from another country so I've seen how it can be. As soon as something happens with a child, the first thing is to look for whom to sue. Philadelphia juries are known to be generous with lawsuits. The question is, will your entire organization go down because of a lawsuit? **SMo:** Act 84 limited the work options for people with records. There were people working in the hallways in high schools who had a great relationship with the students, and they were all fired because of it. **SMu:** Because of Sandusky, parents even need clearances to go on field trips.

Question 6: The problems in the DA offices were mentioned and there is increasing national conversation about police accountability. What initiatives can we support and/or demand in terms of oversight and accountability of judicial and legislative bodies? For example, hold (?) laws permit us to have video reporters and journalists regularly in courtrooms? Or demanding that, as Anthony mentioned, public leniency records of judges up for re-election or retention be made public and widely accessible? **Answer 6: AD:** Legislators – who are we putting there? You're required to do so many hours of community service, but they're not required to do anything. The climate is – "I'm gonna be tough on crime.", and that comes back on us. Some things shouldn't be acceptable. And voters have no choice because a tough guy isn't running against a lenient guy – all the candidates are tough guys. **SMu:** Judges shouldn't be elected at all. **SMo:** There's no oversight of judges. They can charge a person with 50 things just to see what sticks. There's no **oversight for bail or for the DA office either.**

Question 7 which was not asked because we ran out of time: What can concerned citizens do today to address this problem? What is one action step? 2. Audience Ideas on Next Steps: Group 1: Extend "ban the box" to private employers; Make more things expunge-able; Union contracts should include hiring 10% employees who are returning citizens Group 2: Write to state senators and representatives because they want our vote; Create an organized campaign toward the politicians to tell them what we want; Change the narrative away from "tough on crime"; Go to restorative justice; Encourage people to stop calling police when they're not necessary; Recognize that unarmed police are better in some ways than armed ones

F. **Alternatives to Incarceration**.....Susan Zingale-Baird (facilitator); Dennis Brunn (scribe)

1. **Speakers:**

Michael Lee – Phila Lawyers for Social Responsibility. Has initiated a significant program to facilitate the expungement process. He goes out into the community to educate people and to find people who need help with this process. We file 200 motions to expunge at a time. Puts pressure on the judges operating an unjust system. Unfortunately, many convictions are not expungeable. One of his techniques working with formerly incarcerated individuals is to shred their old documents, make new paper from the shredded paper, and use the paper to make positive plans for the future.

In terms of advocacy, his organization educates City Council about how the current system of incarceration and expungement is inadequate; how many “diversion programs” put the costs on the individual being charged; and how people suffer from the moment of the arrest.

Judge James M. DeLeon – as a Municipal Court Judge, he has presided over thousands of court cases related to diversion and expungement. He spoke of the several “diversion programs” such as DUI court, Project Dawn, Domestic Violence Court, Drug Court, and Summary Offenses Court. If one successfully completes one of these programs, this should lead to expungement of one’s record. But for all those in jail, there is little preparation for when they will be released. There are some 9,000 persons in Philadelphia released from jail each year, while only 100 a year are pardoned. We need a much better way for both pardons and expungements.

He introduced his program of reforms related to these needs, “Operation Fresh Start: A Pardon and Expungement Diversion Program – An Evidence Based Program,” and distributed copies to the audience. His program calls for the Mayor to set up the “Mayor’s Mentorship Initiative” for those who are released from prison, and includes a set of activities for “those involved in non-violent offenses.” The program would be governed by a “local community board”. Participants in Operation Fresh Start would have speedier access to pardons and expungement. There was not enough time for further details to be shared.

Michael Cobb, Founder, Redeemer. – He said how even with expungement, discrimination against the formerly incarcerated continues because “the system allows employers to discriminate.” Further, current “alternatives” have been tried and have not worked. Philadelphia’s very high poverty rate and high rate of “deep poverty” is rooted in our very high rates of incarceration. He concluded: “the answer to this problem is love.”

2. Questions from the audience:

- Can people in diversion programs also work to sustain themselves at the same time? The panel said “yes” and added that the employer’s cooperation is required.
- Is Operation Fresh Start functioning now? No, it is being considered by city officials.
- Is there an opportunity for offenders to apologize to victims of crime? This often depends on the victim services advocate. In the process of appealing for a pardon, an apology stated to the court is required.
- Is expungement a right? Yes, a statutory right for certain types, but not all types, of conviction.
- Is “victimization” a fair term? No, it is often a “scam” of the right wing and is used to provide support for more services for victims. “Restitution” would be a better process to advocate for. Instead, often fines are levied.
- What about the bond system? It is a major part of the problem of mass incarceration: A very large percent of those in prison are there because they are awaiting trial and have not been able to afford a bond.

3. ACTION STEPS:

1. We encourage people to learn about the “Operation Freshstart,” a program of alternatives to incarceration and for speeding up expungement, prepared by Judge DeLeon, one of our speakers. E-mail: insearchoffatherhood@gmail.com
2. We should critically examine the plea bargaining process and the system of bonding which works systematically to the detriment of the poor and of people of color.

3. We should oppose the construction of new prisons.
4. We should try to eliminate the very broad discretionary power of the Phila. District Attorney in decisions related to expungement.
5. We should broadcast more personal stories of persons who have suffered under the current system of incarceration in order to build a broad constituency for reform.
6. We should support the organizing of returning citizens in Philadelphia and throughout the commonwealth.

Two ways to monitor legislation in Pennsylvania:

PA Legislative Notifications

1. Go to <http://www.legis.state.pa.us/>.
2. Type in the number of the bill that you wish to track in the legislation search box and click the Search button.
3. The "Bill Information" will appear. To track this bill, click on the yellow button with the email icon that says "Subscribe for updates using PaLegis Notifications." Anytime something happens with the bill you have tagged, you will get an email notification to keep you updated on the movement of the bill.

or...

LegiScan

1. Go to <<https://legiscan.com>> and create a free public service "One Vote" account.
2. Click on the Bill Tracking link.
3. Use the pull-down menu to find Pennsylvania.
4. Type in the bill number you wish to track.
5. Click Search.
6. Click Track - Your personal legislative monitoring list allows you to track bills as they move through the process. Receive email notifications and/or individual RSS feeds to keep you updated as changes happen.

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Recommended Reading:

“Just Mercy” by Bryon Stevenson. You can find Bryon Stevenson on youtube.