



The Newsletter of Missouri CURE

P.O. Box 1212
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1212
missouricure@hotmail.com
www.missouricure.org

FROM THE CHAIR ~Paula Skillicorn

Greetings,

By now, most of you are using the new phone system. While I commend the Department of Corrections for providing debit cards and overseas calls, I remain upset that the state has refused to address the additional \$1 million it is charging prison families for non-inmate phone calls and has written off those of us who live near prisons as unimportant.

It seems that many families remain under the impression that PCS, the second highest of five bidders, was the only bidder to offer debit cards.

That is not true. Every one of the bidders offered debit cards. The difference in phone call prices between PCS and the lowest bidder, CCPS, was this:

- PCS charges everyone a \$1 acceptance charges and 10 cents a minute for collect calls.
- CCPS offered to charge a .65-cent acceptance charge for all but local calls and less than 7 cents per minute for collect calls. Charge for local calls was 95 cents for unlimited minutes.
- PCS charges 10 cents per minute for debit calls.
- CCPS offered to charge less than 7 cents per minute for debit calls.
- PCS said in its contract that it would charge only 10 cents per minute for pre-paid. Now the company is saying it will charge \$1 acceptance charge and 10 cents per minute. Spokesmen for the company/DOC have told some families pre-paid calls will be cut off at 15 minutes. If that is true, a one-hour prepaid call will cost more than long-distance charges for a one-hour call under MCI.
- CCPS offered to charge less than 7 cents for pre-paid calls with no mention of a cutoff time and no acceptance fee.

Even more egregious is the fact that the state amended its "request for proposals" (RFP) sev-

eral times. The last time, it added a requirement that the winning bidder supply phone service materials to be used by the DOC for non-inmate calls. Our taxes already pay for telecommunications for the DOC.

The added service and materials was estimated at \$1 million, about the same amount of money that Gov. Matt Blunt cut in the DOC telecommunications budget for FY 2007.

PCS increased its charges in the final contract to account for the additional, non-inmate services. CCPS offered the \$1 million in services at no-charge. The difference in the two bids is \$3.4 million per year. All those costs will be paid by prison families, not the state.

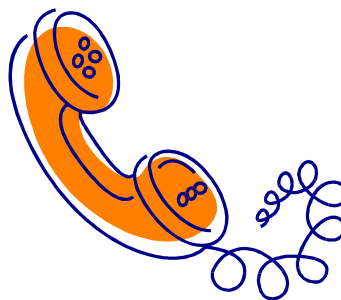
The state chooses to dwell on the fact that these prices are the lowest in the country. However, by eliminating local calls and adding an unnecessary \$1 million charge for services prison families already are paying for through taxes, the state of Missouri is charging us steak prices and giving us hamburger. Those of us who object to being double taxed and overcharged for calls from down the street will continue to fight this contract.

On a brighter note, the annual meeting resulted in commitments from several members to work in special committees on legal, medical, membership, and sex offender issues. Participation has grown on the list server – an information/support service available to all Mo CURE members who have Internet access – allowing us to address problems sooner and coordinate information and efforts.

After long consideration, and more signs from the courts that the people of Missouri are determined to kill my husband, I have decided to step down from the chair of Missouri CURE.

I need to focus my efforts on abolition and the fight to preserve my family, which leaves little time for my duties as Chair.

Continued page 6



MASW Forum Takes on Parolee Intervention Fees and Child Support Issue

On January 15, I attended the monthly Friday forum sponsored by the St. Louis chapter of the Missouri Association for Social Welfare (MASW). The topic was re-entry issues, specifically monies the state collects from parolees: an "intervention fee" of \$30.00 per month and immediate child support payments. Sr. Carleen Reck of the Center for Women in Transition moderated the program. The state Department of Probation and Parole is charged with enforcing the collection of this fee. Failure to pay can result in a written violation and the threat of re-incarceration. A so-called waiver can sometimes be obtained, which defers payment until a later date.

Both male and female parolees testified about the hardship of paying immediate child support, often in exorbitant amounts unrelated to their income. A woman who had made \$21.00 per hour prior to her incarceration was still being required to pay child support based on that income, while earning only \$7.00 per hour after



release. Byron Campbell, who helps parolees find jobs through NovaSource, is himself a former prisoner struggling to pay child support to the state. In order to have the amount reduced to reflect current wages, Campbell said, one must appear in court at a designated time, which occurs only once every 3 years. While in prison this is impossible. Nobody denied the need for non-custodial parents to support their children, but the practice of charging them full support payments throughout incarceration while earning nothing but the "state tip" of \$7.50 per month seemed ludicrous. And then to demand payment immediately upon release defeats the purpose of parolees who are trying to reintegrate back into society as responsible citizens.

Since imprisonment for debt is illegal, some people from the audience questioned the legality of the state requiring such payments as a condition of parole, suggesting a possible lawsuit against the state for such practices.

Hedy Harden

Federal Judge Again Denounces Execution Protocol

US District Judge Fernando Gaitan Jr. ruled again on October 16 that Missouri's execution protocol is unconstitutional and could cause "torturous" pain, confirming his September ruling against the three-drug lethal injection used by the state. The earlier ruling that Missouri's protocol could subject prisoners to an unreasonable risk of cruel and unusual punishment called a halt to executions in Missouri.

In June Gaitan ordered Missouri's Corrections Department to make sweeping changes, based on the fact that the protocol, if given improperly, could cause pain but that the person would be paralyzed and unable to communicate. He ordered Missouri to improve the monitoring of condemned prisoners to ensure they get sufficient anesthesia during execution. He also demanded that an anesthesiologist mix the chemicals or supervise the mixing of them. Missouri has been unable to get an anesthesiologist to assist in executions.



Missouri was given until October 27 to produce a revised protocol. However, the state simply resubmitted the same protocol on October 6, claiming that it was constitutional and requesting Gaitan to reconsider his position quickly, so an appeal could be filed if necessary. Gaitan wrote in response that "the state's response does nothing to address these concerns and indicates its lack of willingness to even attempt to comply with the court's order."

The ruling is in response to a legal challenge by Michael Taylor, who was within hours of execution earlier this year. ◀

Moratorium Resolution in St. Louis

On October 27, St. Louis became the first municipality in Missouri and the 150th nationwide to adopt a resolution calling for a moratorium on the death penalty. Alderman Terry Kennedy introduced this resolution, which asks the legislature to reconsider the call for a moratorium with a study as well as to consider a permanent moratorium on all executions in Missouri. Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty (MADP) was instrumental in this effort. ◀

Missouri CURE Health Committee

The Health sub-committee has been hard at work in the last few months. We have received some complaints about the amount of food and quality of food being served to the inmates. Rest assured, we take those complaints very seriously and want to hear about them. What we hope to be able to do is get a nutritionist to look at copies of menus that have been and are being sent to us and compare that to national standards for caloric intake for "average" adults. If you can get a copy of a menu from an adult institution in the state, please feel free to send it to us. (Also, be sure to make note of our NEW mailing address)



We also have received a few reports of things in the canteens being sold with mold on them. We understand, though, that has been taken care of and if the inmates do receive something like this from the canteens, they need to notify a CO as soon as possible and they can exchange it. Many thanks to the DOC for addressing this concern promptly.

In the future we hope to address the concerns about the health care within the Missouri prisons. Complaints of not being able to see a doctor or nurse within a timely matter and not getting prescribed medications when needed have been reported. If you or someone you know has had experienced these or any other problems with the healthcare within the DOC in recent days, again, please feel free to write us a letter. When writing to us about the healthcare or food situation, please be sure to put it attn: Healthcare Committee. Also, in the mean time, be sure to fill out (or have your loved one fill out) IRRs. IRRs are the official "complaint process" of the DOC.

We look forward to working with MO CURE on these issues and many more.

Lisa Harrison
Committee Chair

International CURE Plans 2007 Board Meeting in KC Area

International Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants (CURE) is planning its annual Board Meeting to be held near Kansas City from **May 4 through 7**, to include tours in Leavenworth, KS at a work release program and also a prison program where students are taking classes through Donnelly College. Charlie Sullivan, Director of National CURE, will be coming to Kansas City on November 17 to work on planning this meeting. Our new Chair, Michelle Dodson, and Vice Chair, Lisa Harrison, are planning to meet with Charlie on behalf of Missouri CURE. We will let you know more details as they are available! Also note the new email address for International CURE: cure@curenational.org



Missourians to Abolish the Death Penalty

will hold its Annual Meeting **November 16, 2006** at 7:00 PM at the First Christian Church of Blue Springs, 701 NW 15th Street in Blue Springs, Missouri. This meeting is geared towards moratorium resolution and getting involved. Invite a friend or a group -- all are welcome. The location was selected for outreach into the suburbs and because there are 3 heavy hitter legislators in the area:

- ▶ Senator Matt Bartle, District 8---Chair of Judiciary Committee.
- ▶ Rep. Bryan Pratt, District 55---Chair House of the Judiciary Committee.
- ▶ Rep. Gary Dusenberg, District 54---Member of the House Crime Prevention and Public Safety Committee. ◀

Legislative Committee Report

The Legislative sub-committee of Missouri CURE will examine statutes currently in place that deal with Missouri laws and how they pertain to the Missouri Criminal Justice System. We have several goals for this year.

One is working on getting a bill sponsored regarding videotaping of interrogations and witness identifications, as well as having police follow certain procedures when conducting eyewitness identifications. The stats are really high when it comes to this. In 84% of the wrongful convictions exonerated by DNA, eyewitness identifications played a significant part. This should all fall under one bill, because the police are in charge of interrogations and identification procedures. It would come under the heading "Investigations" or "Investigative Procedures".

Another goal this year for the Legislative Committee is looking into trying to get an ombudsman. Rather than the ombudsman's office working for the DOC, it should be totally separate. The ombudsman's office should be an unbiased entity that works neither for the government nor for the inmate or families. It should exist simply to investigate problems and complaints and try to resolve them as quickly as possible. The committee hearing on the previous bill remarks stated, "Those who oppose the bill say that inmate grievances are adequately supervised with mechanisms that are currently in place. This bill duplicates the activities of the Joint Committee on Corrections and the Department of Corrections." We look forward to hearing from those who can pro-



vide proof that their claims have not been adequately dealt with, so we can show the legislators and try and get someone to re-introduce this bill next session.

We are also focusing on those who have been sentenced under the 85 percent law. We are beginning by gathering information on how many of the current inmate population this affects. Legislation needs to be introduced that would allow those inmates with long-term sentences to obtain a fair parole hearing. When the parole board denies parole, they should have to provide support to their decisions. We would like to see that they could no longer deny parole simply based on the

SERIOUSNESS OF THE CRIME. The "seriousness of the crime" is a fact that will never change, and we hope that those inmates who continue to work hard and show that they have reformed will have a chance to be released back into society. Statistics have shown that those who have served long-term sentences have a lower recidivism rate.

We are committed to educating the public and legislators alike to the impact these laws have on our society. As friends and family of those incarcerated, we must stand up and make our voices heard, our votes count, and hold accountable those who would just lock citizens up and throw away the key. We support better laws, better treatment, community corrections, and a complete overhaul of the system in Missouri. We have a long road ahead of us and would welcome any support or help you can provide.

Michelle Dodson
Committee Chair

MASW Criminal Justice Task Force Takes on LWOP

The Kansas City Criminal Justice Task Force will be hard at work come this January. It will be asking Missouri legislators to re-submit HB 1618 from last session. If you aren't familiar with the bill, it would require the Board of Probation and Parole to make periodic reviews of convicted offenders serving a sentence of life without parole. After the review, the board would report to the Governor with recommendations to grant or deny clemency. (Certain stipulations would apply to those cases being reviewed.) Rep. Jenee Lowe from Kansas City sponsored it last year, with sev-

eral co-sponsors. They hope to get more legislators on board this year. The task force is asking for MO CURE's support.

The KCCJTF also works on other issues such as abolishing the death penalty, changing the laws on any and all long-term sentences, and educating the public on speaking out and being heard on criminal justice issues. We also focus on family networking and getting everyone involved. Finally, our work involves legislative strategies, such as learning how to speak to your legislator effectively.

Continued page 6

Let Them Vote! Let Them Vote!

By Lee McDaniel

Most state and federal elections are just 2 weeks away and may even be concluded by the time you read this. I'd like to vote on Election Day, but, alas, I cannot. Why? It is because I am a convicted felon (Leaving the Scene of an Accident) on parole (one more year to go!) in the State of Missouri. This isn't right. It isn't fair. But . . . it is legal.

I work. I pay property, income, and sales tax. I own a home. I volunteer in the community at a local church, a community center, and with the Jaycees. I even own and manage a business. I have been involved in politics and political campaigns since I was in college – 18 years ago. I interned for (former) MO Senator John Danforth in Washington, DC in the summer of 1990.

I was released from the MO DOC on Saturday, July 22, 2006. Since then, I have become active in campaigns in MO and in my adopted home state of RI. I give money to – and raise money for – state and national campaigns. I am informed on the issues. I have written op-ed pieces and other articles on politics, voting, and issues. So, in many aspects, I am a responsible and productive citizen who wants to vote, something barely half of US citizens even register to do, let alone actually do in any given election.

Despite all this involvement and desire to be a voter, I will not be allowed to vote. I am barred by Missouri law from voting simply because I am a felon (in custody or on parole). I joined CURE while in prison because it works to right these kinds of injustice. CURE focuses on advocating for the rights of the incarcerated and educating legislators and those in power. Its volunteers also support voting rights for the incarcerated. Change is necessary to form a more perfect union and to integrate the incarcerated back in to free society. Change is possible, too.

In Canada, incarcerated persons are allowed to vote. The states of Maine and Vermont allow persons in prison to vote. In Missouri, voting rights are automatically restored upon completion of a criminal sentence, probation, or parole. President Clinton signed legislation during his presidency allowing ex-felons to vote in federal

elections upon completion of their sentences. Prior to that, ex-felons were barred permanently from voting in national elections. Anyone convicted

of a crime connected to the exercise of the right to vote is permanently disqualified from voting. Ex-felons, like all other persons, must register to vote before they will be allowed to do so. It isn't fair

that my right to vote (as a felon or an ex-felon) is dictated by which state I live in.



The New York Times recently editorialized about this “felony disenfranchisement” on September 11th. “But even today, felony

disenfranchisement is an enormous obstacle to voting for black [and other] people in the Deep South. These laws are the worst in the free world. The process for restoring voting rights for people who have been convicted of crimes can be so byzantine that officials don't know who is eligible. The confusion bars some eligible voters from the polls for life. In Alabama, an archaic law strips the right to vote from people convicted of crimes involving ‘moral turpitude,’ without explaining what that is or what crimes are covered.”

The answer is simple: Let Them Vote! Let Them Vote! The *Times* continues: “[t]he only honorable solution is to automatically restore voting rights to Alabamians [and all others, like MO has done] who have completed their sentences. That's the only way to take this issue out of the hands of bureaucrats and make amends for one of the most shameful voting rights records in American history.”

Evidently, the MO DOC is to give information about restoring voting rights to all felons when we complete our sentences. If you (or a loved one) are about to complete a sentence, please contact your parole officer or the local elections board to make sure you can register as soon as you are allowed to do so. Join CURE today and help us work for this and other social justice issues. ◀

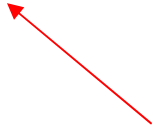
www.LeeMcD@CarberryMorgageCredit.com

Missouri CURE

PO BOX 1212
Jefferson City, MO 65102-1212



MEMBERSHIP EXPIRES



Note New Address!

Note to Readers

Although Missouri CURE is very interested in your concerns, our financial resources are limited. For that reason, we **CANNOT** accept collect calls, nor can we afford to hire attorneys, paralegals, or investigators to work on individual cases. CURE is **NOT** a service organization. CURE has **NO** legal services. CURE is an all-volunteer non-profit criminal justice advocacy organization.

From the Chair -- from page 1

This is not fair to the members, especially with the upcoming national meeting here next spring. Stepping down now will allow others to step forward in plenty of time to help plan that meeting.

I will continue to serve as Potosi Correctional Center family liaison, and I have promised Michelle that I will not leave her alone in the struggle for a better phone contract.

I appreciate all of you who have been a support to me in my tenure and I look forward to Missouri CURE continuing to grow and make even more positive changes in the prison system. ◀

Task Force -- from page 4

Meetings are the first Monday of every month from 6:45pm-8:15pm at Church of the Good Shepherd, located at 4947 NE Chouteau Dr, North Kansas City Mo. 64117. For more information, contact Sara at 816-453-2499 or Debbie at 816-889-2099, ext 223. (Sorry, no collect calls can be accepted at this time.)

Lisa Harrison

Join Missouri CURE Today!

Date _____

Name/ID# _____

Facility _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

Please check the annual membership type:

- Prisoner \$2.00 *
- Individual \$10.00
- Lifetime \$100.00
- Sponsor \$ _____

* Stamps from prisoners welcome if permitted by your institution.