

MARYLAND CURE

Maryland CURE
P O Box 1541
Millersville, MD 21108
www.marylandcure.org



From Your President



One of my main concerns is families of those of you incarcerated. I'd really like to engage your families to join our efforts. I am the mother of a lifer and I know how hard it is to miss your loved ones and how valuable support is.

I want to pass along information about monthly conference calls conducted by National CURE to share information and encourage one another. On the first Sunday of each month from 5 PM to 6 PM EST time (4 PM CST, 3 PM MST, 2 PM PST) for the Get Out Lifers call – 1-515-739-1033, access 663535#. On the first Saturday of each month from 10 to 11:30 AM EST (9 AM CST, 8 AM MST, 7 AM PST), for the Civil Commitment group, call 1-605-472-5381, access 491204#.

I will do all I can this year to support legislation to improve our justice system. Do your part and let your elected officials know of changes you would like to see. Together we can make a difference.

Most Sincerely,

Lea Green

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Older and Medically Incapacitated Inmates – Is Forgiveness and Release Possible?

In prison, men and women with long sentences can grow, develop, change and pay for their crimes frequently with decades of their life. The one thing they can never do is change the nature of their crime. We are in desperate need of a system that acknowledges rehabilitation, forgives, and releases the many inmates that have paid their dues and are not a threat to society. The recidivism rate for older "returning citizens: is very low. According to the Urban Institute, the re-arrest rate for prisoners 50 years and older is 5%. The re-arrest rate for all federal prisoners is 41%. The rate for the 200 State of MD Unger defendants is less than 1%. These men and one woman were an average age of 64 and had served an average of 40 years each.

Aging and medically incapacitated prisoners are costly to incarcerate and not a serious risk to public safety. The costs of incarcerating these individuals are three to five times higher than younger individuals. Prisoners released through the compassionate release program demonstrates a recidivism rate of 3.5%.

Let's encourage our lawmakers and the courts to approve the release of our older inmates – a compassionate and cost-effective practice that brings prisoners home when continued imprisonment would be pointless and cruel.

CURE International Conference

CURE International in collaboration with GNPDR- Good News of Peace and Development for Rwanda held the 8th International Conference on Human Rights and Prison Reform in Kigali, Rwanda from May 21-25, 2018. The conference explored reconciliation, restorative justice practices, alternatives to imprisonment, and other issues in the criminal justice context, while looking at the Rwandan experience of post-genocide reconciliation.



Restorative Justice in Rwanda

During the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, up to one million people perished and as many as 250,000 women were raped, leaving the country's population traumatized and its infrastructure decimated. Since then, Rwanda has embarked on an ambitious justice and reconciliation process with the aim of all Rwandans once again living side by side in peace.

In the years following the genocide, more than 120,000 people were detained and accused of bearing criminal responsibility for their participation in the killings. To deal with such an overwhelming number of perpetrators, a judicial response was pursued on three levels: the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda, the national court system, and the Gacaca courts.

To address the fact that there were thousands of accused still awaiting trial in the national court system, and to bring about justice and reconciliation at the grassroots level, the Rwandan government in 2005 re-established the traditional community court system called "Gacaca".

In the Gacaca system, communities at the local level elected judges to hear the trials of genocide suspects accused of all crimes except planning of genocide. The courts gave lower sentences if the person was repentant and sought reconciliation with the community. Often, confessing prisoners returned home without further penalty or received community service orders. More than 12,000 community-based courts tried more than 1.2 million cases throughout the country.

The Gacaca trials demonstrated restorative justice and promoted reconciliation by providing a means for victims to learn the truth about the death of their family members and relatives. They also gave perpetrators the opportunity to confess their crimes, show remorse and ask for forgiveness in front of their community. The Gacaca courts officially closed on 4 May 2012.

The reconciliation process in Rwanda focused on reconstructing the Rwandan identity, as well as balancing justice, truth, peace and security. Laws have been passed to fight discrimination and divisive genocide ideology. Rwanda, now the land of a thousand hills, solutions, and smiles, is one of the most stable countries in Africa today



Resolution Sent to the United Nations

The members of the 8th International Conference on Human Rights & Prison Reform Held in May 21-25 in Kigali, Rwanda declare:

- **WHEREAS** the Rwanda experience is one of profound restorative justice and reconciliation in response to the genocide of 1994;
- **WHEREAS** the Preamble of the African (Banjul) Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, identifies the process of restorative justice as reflected in the "virtues of their historical tradition and the values of African civilization";
- **WHEREAS** mass incarceration has become a global pandemic;

BE IT RESOLVED

- that we affirm the UN declaration of Basic Principles of the use of Restorative Justice in Criminal Matters (2002) and recommend that retributive justice policies be abolished immediately;
- that we recommend that the UN strongly encourage member states to implement the Mandela Rules;

We further recommend that:

- 1) Incarceration should only be used as a last resort.
- 2) Member states abolish the use of the death penalty and life without parole immediately throughout the world.
- 3) Member states abolish the use of "virtual life without parole" which only considers the crime and not the rehabilitative record of the person during his or her incarceration.
- 4) Member States abolish long sentences, especially for young adults.
- 5) Member States abolish trying juveniles in adult courts.
- 6) Member States abolish the use of incarceration for noncriminal behaviors.

Finally, we strongly recommend that this theme of restorative justice permeate the upcoming Crime Commission scheduled for Kyoto, Japan, in April 2020.

Ex-governor Reverses Stand on Life Without Parole

(condensed from Washington Post 3-7-18)



(Parris Glendening and Lea Green)

Former Maryland Governor Parris Glendening, who declared in 1995 that he would not grant early release to any prisoner serving a life sentence, denounced that stance in March this year as “completely wrong” and called on legislators to remove the governor from the parole process.

Glendening, a Democrat, spoke at a news conference in Annapolis with former Governor Robert Ehrlich Jr., a Republican, as the Maryland General Assembly was considering criminal justice bills, including one that would end a requirement for the governor to sign off on the parole of inmates sentenced to life.

Maryland is one of three states that grant the governor this authority. Since Glendening’s declaration that “a life sentence means life,” no governor has signed off on a parole boards’ recommendation to release a lifer.

Glendening, who has previously, though more quietly, disavowed his former position, said relegating all prisoners to life without parole means a “loss of hope” for them and their families and a financial burden for Maryland taxpayers who pay for the healthcare of geriatric inmates.

The bill did not pass this year but will undoubtedly be reintroduced next year.

Turn Around Tuesdays in Baltimore

Their mission is to prepare “returning” citizens and unemployed citizens to reenter the workforce and to lead in creating job opportunities in Baltimore.

The training sites for the 8-week program are:

East, 9 to 11 a.m. – Zion Baptist Church, 1700 N. Caroline Street

West, 2-4 p.m. – Macedonia Baptist Church, 718 W. Lafayette Avenue

This organization has been very successful in cultivating partnerships with many employers who are hiring graduates. There is no cost to participants other than active engagement

Why Aren’t We Spending More on Prisoner Education?

Every dollar invested in correctional education reduces future criminal justice costs by five dollars. But despite studies bearing this out, policymakers hesitate even to revive programs that were scrapped in the tough-on-crime era, says a leading prison reformer.



Education reduces crime, plain and simple.

The RAND Corporation underscored the positive impact of education in its 2013 review of the research reports on correctional education over the last couple of decades. Bottom line from their reports: providing education programs for incarcerated men and women significantly reduces future crime all by itself, separate from any other treatment they receive.

Combined with other effective programs, such as drug rehabilitation and mental health counseling, education can help to reduce crime and recidivism even more effectively.

RAND also demonstrated clearly that an education program pays for itself several times over. Every dollar invested in correctional education creates a return of five dollars in the reduction of future criminal justice costs.

Most criminologists understand the effectiveness of education and other programs but, because of the American “tough on crime” campaign going all the way back to the late 1980s, less money is spent on rehabilitation than incarceration.

By Stephen J. Steurer, Ph.D, currently the Reentry Advocate for CURE National

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Send us an email at marylandcure@gmail.com

www.marylandcure.org

Maryland CURE is a Chapter of CURE, a national grass-roots organization dedicated to reducing crime through reform of the criminal justice system.



MD CURE Officers
 President Lea Green
 Vice President Thomas Chleboski
 Secretary Sharrie Booth
 Treasurer Mary Pat Donelan
 Post Office Box 1541
 Millersville, MD 21108
marylandcure@gmail.com
www.marylandcure.org

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Dues for Membership

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— Life	\$100

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marylandcure@gmail.com

Maryland CURE
 P O Box 1541
 Millersville, MD 21108

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“The will to win, the desire to succeed, the urge to reach your full potential ...These are the keys that will unlock the door to personal excellence.”

--Confucius



“The most common way people give up their power is by thinking they don't have any.”

-- Alice Walker