



NEWSLETTER

FROM THE DESKTOP OF THE PRESIDENT AND FOUNDING MEMBER OF SECOND CHANCE QUEST, MR. T. K. BRAVO.

This is the first edition of our newsletter, which will be published each quarter annually. Second Chance Quest was founded by prisoners to tackle the many ills of our society. For starters, we earnestly desired to reduce the recidivism rate in our prisons throughout the nation. According to a Department of Justice survey of those released from state prisons in 30 states, “77% of those released in 2005 were arrested within five years; more than half of the arrests were within a year of release”. Armed with that and other troubling information led to the birth of Second Chance Quest. We’ve come to the conclusion that prisoners have to take a proactive role in bringing about lasting changes in the justice system. We are fully aware of the countless pitfalls in society that is playing a major part in why so many men and women are returning to prison in such short time span after release. We strongly believe that any lasting solution to those concerns is futile without prisoners themselves having a say in that conversation. Second Chance Quest was organized to play such a role, to be the voice and positive image of men who have transcend from their criminal past. And are fully committed to right the wrongs that plague our cities and the judicial system alike. We fully realize that we are locked in a never ending cycle where it is not uncommon to find three generations of family members in prison serving time, some even in the same facility. That reality transcends race and religion. But far too often it is African Americans, Hispanics, and Poor Whites who live with that reality. We believe, a positive way to combat that problem and so many more that affect this nation is through alternative sentences. It is without doubt, the longer you keep a parent in prison and away from their children the greater the possibility that

that child will end up in prison as well. Some people don’t belong in prison, while there are those who do. We are not delusional to that fact. Believe it or not, but the vast majority of prisoners want safer streets for their families and loved ones. I have seen firsthand the anguish and pain on the faces of prisoners who have lost a child to violence. I too have lost a nephew to street violence. No doubt, if I were out there I would have steered him away from that lifestyle. The same can be said for hundreds of thousands of dads, moms, uncles, and aunts who are currently locked up for decades, while their children are dying in the streets. They too, would have led their child away from the street life. With that said, there is common grounds for people of goodwill, both prisoners and civilians to work together to insure a safer world for all of our children. Second Chance Quest is committed to that endeavor. So we are extending our hand in good faith and asking people of goodwill to join us and work hand-in-hand with us to insure a better future for all.

The prison population in the United States, now stands at over two million and growing by the day. The United States is by far “the leader of the free world”, so how then can we lead the world in good conscience when we lock up more of our citizens than any other country on the planet. That has to change, if not, then that is pure hypocrisy! After all, this is not North Korea, China, or Russia. But the land of “liberty and justice”. Justice cannot be won by having the largest prison population on earth, something is definitely wrong with that picture.

The founding members of Second Chance Quest were encouraged by the visit of President Barack Obama to El Reno, a medium security prison in Oklahoma. That visit marks the first time in American history that

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SPONSORS



MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

- Prisoners: \$2.00**
- Families: \$25.00**
(can include 1 prisoner)
\$10 Renewal annually
- Non Profits: \$50.00**
- Businesses: \$65.00**

All members receive a 1-year subscription to our newsletter which is published quarterly. Members will also have member only access on our website where you can access the newsletter and other members only privy information. Donations will be used to support the mission of Second Chance Quest. Second Chance Quest is a nonprofit organization. We are privileged to be under the fiscal sponsorship of International Youth Organization 501(c)(3). All donations to Second Chance Quest must be made out to:

International Youth Organization
 703 S 12th Street, Newark, NJ 07103
 (973) 621-1100
 Memo: For Project
 Second Chance Quest

Contributions made this way may be tax deductible.

"WHAT TIME IS IT?"

* It's time to step up, do it for yourselves and others, for those hugging corners, and your sisters, brothers, fathers, and mothers.

* It's time to tell it like it is, it's time to stop lying. Our children are more afraid of living, than dying.

* It's time to take responsibility for yourself. Self Empowerment is the order of the day, waiting for outside help that's not coming, is not where it's at. It's time to restore our communities, build our own businesses- Support those who have them already. Grow your own foods, make your own instead of supporting a bunch of outsiders who care nothing about you.

* It's time to make time, to learn how to be better men and women.

* It's time to be better parents to your children. You have to spend time with them to teach authentic history of themselves, if nobody else does it, you have to.

* It's time to put an end to mandatory minimums, outrageous sentences. And prisons that have become big businesses, privatized prisons, no parole. I say, "Ask me," I'm living this.

* It's time to stop focusing on hatred, division, differences, UNITE ALL PRISONERS! I promise you'll win at this, if not now then when, if not you, then who?

* It's time to grow and develop yourselves in this 21st Century as we strive in our struggles for educational, economical, political, and social empowerment. Let 2 come as 1, and let 1 come as none. The collective will succeed!

Thanks for listening...
Once again.

By: Joseph Royall-El

"MASKED BUT NOT HIDDEN"

As a child, raised and taught to be conscious of the history of our country, my pigment and its role in my future. Coming of age has been mind-boggling; Faced with the onset of reality. To see, in a society so progressive in thought and modern in legislation, that we still live under the rule of outdated laws, predicated on erroneous thought, proves that (in this society) prejudices overshadow intellect in most ways. Racism still exist and it is poorly masked by the facade of "Equal Rights" and equal opportunity. - (Two completely different things, separated through economics.)

The Judicial System of the United States is not an arrangement designed to give justice to African Americans, in the manner it caters to the affluent, Caucasian American. Question: Who is to blame, a man who orchestrates a body of laws that aid him in obtaining wealth and maintaining power or the man who accepts as his constitution a thing constructed without him in mind, correction, without his well-being in mind? Seven times more African Americans than Caucasian Americans are incarcerated, on parole, on probation, involve in the never-ending cycle of so called prison reformation. This fact suggest that there is something catastrophically wrong with our criminal justice system, especially after noting that African Americans are the minority in this country But the majority in prison. If this seems to you a blatant violation of human rights. Please remember, there was a time when every human was not treated as such, this being their condition,

they had no rights. Our constitution is a remnant of that time. Look up the word ANACHRONISM. [Ahmed]

"TOUGH ON CRIME"

"A wave swept this country during the Reagan years, a wave that said, no mercy, no more. From now on, judges would be severely limited in the sentences they could hand down for certain crimes..."

"We got tough on Jerry Dewayne Williams, a small-time criminal who stole a slice of pizza from a group of children. He got 25 years.

We got tough on Duane Silva, a guy with an IQ of 71 who stole a VCR and a Coin collection. He got 30 to life.

We got tough on Dixie Shanahan, who shot and killed the husband who had beaten her for three days straight, punching her in the face, pounding her in the stomach, dragging her by the hair, because she refused to have an abortion. She got 50 years..."

"Charles Smith, the judge who sent Shanahan away, put it best. He said the sentence he was required to impose 'may be legal, but it is wrong!'"

(Source: To read the entire article contact, Leonard Pitts at Pitts@miamiherald.com. Tribune Media Services)

SCQ Comment: This article further highlights the view of President Obama and Second Chance Quest that the Justice System is broken and must be fixed. Lives are being ruined, and this cycle will continue until people of goodwill say enough is enough. Our current system is responsible for the imprisonment of over two million of its citizens. Nowhere else on earth is that taking place, it begs to question, who is the real criminals? Big business, special interest, or just plain

racists! People of goodwill sacrificed lives and limbs to end slavery, the slaughter of Native Americans, the Holocaust of the Jews, and the Civil Rights struggle of the 60s. So too, we have to struggle and say to those who are getting rich off the misery of the poor, Enough! This cycle must end, don't wait until you find your love ones in the clutches of this broken system to take a stand, 25 years for stealing a slice of pizza? That is ridiculous! That could have been your son or daughter. There's a well known statement in prison, "it is easy to come in, but very difficult to get out." Join Second Chance Quest, and together we can make a difference in all our lives.

"THE SINS OF A FATHER"

There's a saying that goes, "the sins of the father are visited upon the child." When one commits a crime, and ends up in prison, rarely does that individual take into account the hardship which he/she has now placed at feet of their love ones. Those that they say, that they love and care for, also suffer the same fate as we do, be it in a different way, they pay a heavy price none the less. Countless family members travel many hours, (risking lives and limbs on those highways) to visit their incarcerated love ones.

At the age of 22, I was sentenced to 45 years in the Virginia Department of Correction. At that time, I was the father to an 8-year-old and an 8-month-old, from two different relationships. Though I was able to maintain a strong relationship with my eldest child who, 12 years later has graduated from high school with honors, and is now attending college with a 3.8 GPA. My youngest child

didn't get to know me, or have a relationship with my family. Her mother took her and moved to another state. In October of 2016, she left this world never knowing her father and my never to know her. We will never have the opportunity to meet and embrace each other. My daughter, gone too young. We are never prepared to lose a child, we prepare ourselves for the passing of our elders, but never a child!

I've lost my daughter to an automobile accident. I often wonder, if the choices I made had been different, my child may not have been in that car. However, everything happens for a reason, as difficult as it is to accept that, we have to find closure in our hearts. I lost my child, I gain some understanding and a somber outlook on life.

By: Amir

"PROGNOSIS"

Analyse the concept that's presented before you. Can you picture it... A world void of corruption where babies live and problems don't exist. Can you picture it... A world void of separation where families strive and persecution diminishes. Can you picture it... A world void of segregation where the right of every man actually

means the same. Can you picture it... A world void of hate where everybody lives under God's unchanging Hand. Can you picture it... A world void of struggle where everyone never goes without the essentials of life. Can you picture it... A world void of death where life is the meaning of immortality and peace. Can you picture it... A world void of anguish where peace is characterized as a virtue and longevity. Can you picture it...

To imagine a world similar to this, should be imprinted in the depths of everyone's mind, in the hope that someday it will become a reality.

[Haneef]

"THE DREADED WALL"

I was talking to a family member and during the course of dialogue they said, " You been behind bars almost 30 years, but you remain strong, how do you do it?" Now before I go deep into that question I must give you readers some of my background. Firstly, I was a young arrogant dummy with no direction, and because I valued violence and the street and all things felonious. I didn't care one way or the other if I ended up in prison. My thinking

was, what the hell, all my friends are there anyway, I'll be okay, boy was I wrong!

The evolution of that abstract strength my family member metaphysically defined came about as a result of trauma. When I entered prison I was too mad to be scared and my mantra was, "test me you will fail!"

My second day at a prison in Virginia called "The Wall", as I'm about to enter the mess hall a guy bumped into me and grab my ass. Then he runs into the mess hall and he's looking at me daring me to do something. It's surreal because he's standing with about five other cats and it's like everything is moving in slow motion. I get my tray and as I walked pass the predator I see the smirk on his face and he says, "what's up?" Everything is still moving in slow motion, on my tray was two pieces of fried chicken, macaroni and cheese, green beans, mash potatoes and a piece of cake. When the predator says, "what's up?" I walked past him and then spin around and hit him in the face with the tray, but somehow I caught a piece of chicken as I break the tray on the predator's face.

I held the chicken in

one hand and took a bite, then I kick the predator (who was on the ground) several times. Back then I was about 150 pounds while the predator was about 6'2 and maybe 230 pounds. While the predator is on the ground I started to stomp him and in between by butt-kicking I was putting on him, I'm eating my chicken. The fight ends when a group of older convicts said, "Young blood, you prove your point he had enough, it's over!" I stop stomping the predator and went back and got another tray and sit down and ate my meal. While I was eating several cats came and explained that the predator is what convicts call "a booty bandit" (a prisoner who preys on new and weak prisoners for sex).

From that incident came growth because I decided that I valued myself enough to fight anyone, and at no time could I or would I compromise my principles. To do so, would make me less than a man, and momma didn't raise no fool.

I remain strong by knowing that everything has levels- the beauty of a thing is known by its opposite.

[Rafeeq]

COVER STORY (CONTINUED FROM PG 1)

a sitting president walked into a prison. That visit took place in 2015, the President states, "If you're a low-level drug dealer, or you violate your parole, you owe some debt to society. You have to be held accountable and make amends. But you don't owe 20 years. You don't owe a life sentence." We at SCQ couldn't agree with that more. President Obama further states, "Justice is not only the absence of oppression, it is [also] the presence of opportunity." We at Second Chance Quest believe that there must be some level of balance put in place that provides good paying jobs, housing, and opportunities for those being release from prison. By far it cost less

to put these programs in place than have to arrest and prosecute that 77% mentioned earlier.

We were further encouraged to learn that the ACLU was awarded a \$50 million grant to help reduce mass incarceration by George Soros' Open Society Foundations. Anthony D. Romero, the ACLU's executive director, stated the goal of the Soros-funded campaign will be to reduce the U.S. prison population by 50 percent by 2020.

On a somber note, the founding members of Second Chance Quest would like to send our belated condolences to the family and friends of the late Jack Gravely, Executive

Director, Virginia NAACP. Mr. Gravely has chaired the Board of Director and served as Special Assistant to Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, National NAACP, Baltimore, Maryland.

Mr. Gravely's passing in August of this year has touched the entire Second Chance Quest Founding Members' Board to the core. Mr. Gravely was by far one of SCQ biggest supporters. He has kept a line of communication open with us from the outset of our organization. And when in February of this year we extended an invitation for him to be a guest speaker at our upcoming Black History Month Celebration in Buckingham

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CHILDREN OF INCARCERATED PARENTS*By Times of Trenton Guest Columnist; By Henrie M. Treadwell*

Incarceration has a phenomenal effect on children whose family members are in prison. Studies suggest that girls with an incarcerated household member have sex at younger ages, are less likely to use contraceptives, have more sexual partners and are more likely to become pregnant before age 20. Other researchers report that high levels of incarceration affect the ability of African-American male adolescents to imagine their future, due to the absence of so many men as role models in their homes and neighborhood. Overall, research indicates that 23 percent of children with a father who has served time in jail or prison have been expelled or suspended from school. Parental incarceration is correlated with higher school dropout rates, lower academic achievement, greater involvement with juvenile justice and ultimately more involvement with the criminal justice system as offenders themselves.

Currently, in the United States, one in 134 adults is in jail or prison. Among African-American adults, the number is nearly one in 20. In 2007, approximately 1.7 million African-American children, or one in 15, had a parent in prison on any given day. Data for jails, probation and parole are not available. Children whose parents are in jail or prison experience teasing or bullying in school and in other social settings and tend to withdraw or act out. Many youth who are seen at public mental health agencies have parents who have a prison record. Their depression, anger, withdrawal and/or acting out are ignored or misdiagnosed in school and other settings. Every day is a difficult time for these children and, given the numbers, they are all around us.

A major damaging aspect of incarceration on the fathers, particularly poor fathers, is that child support bills mount; they will leave prison with an average of \$20,000 in back debt. According to the Federal Agency for Child Support Enforcement, 70 percent of all back child support is owed by men earning less than \$10,000 a year. In addition, 29 percent of those fathers who are delinquent on their child support payments are re-incarcerated. Most of those who are institutionalized are actually in prison for failure to pay child support. A de facto debtor's prison has been

reinstated in the United States and primarily houses poor men of color who have become trapped in a well-intentioned but racially insensitive policy that fails to face the reality that poor men of color earn less than white men, even when both have comparable work, incarceration and criminal offense histories. Those coming home are very often unable to find a job because of a felony conviction that employers regularly use to deny employment. In sum, they cannot earn a living wage that provides resources to help heal the wounds of separation.

It is difficult to determine how communities can provide the services that will help these children, as we know too little about them. New Jersey and many other states do not collect information on those prisoners who are parents of minor children. We know the danger of failing to proactively intervene. The New Jersey Human Relations Council recently held a meeting with experts who discussed best practices in addressing the plight of the children of incarcerated parents, a condition which, in the words of the council, "negatively affects a vast number of New Jersey children and families." The council does not know precisely how many children are affected. How large is "vast," and do we have policies and resources in place to meaningfully help? The council meeting was a significant beginning.

Women advocates and policymakers were leaders in securing legislation to support enforcement of child support policies. These same women and their male colleagues can address the problems faced by these African-American children and all children in a similar situation and their families. We need to review and revise punitive policies that make it impossible for men to pay child support fees, which mount inexorably while they are incarcerated, are not forgiven or adjusted and fuel the prison industry. Women can advocate for payment for custodial parents who are left to fend for themselves and for the children when the partner is incarcerated. And women can advocate for child visiting centers in men's prisons and state-supported transportation so that the children will be able to visit their incarcerated parent on a regular basis, as a part of the court order.

EXPLORING MILITARY SERVICE AS AN ALTERNATIVE SANCTION*By: Travis Wade Millburn, Eastern Kentucky University*

"This exploratory thesis will examine the multiple facets of using the military service as an alternative correctional sanction in an attempt to determine the feasibility, challenges, and consequences that would surround using such a sanction. Due to the significant budgeting concerns, especially within the criminal justice and corrections, alternatives

to the expensive sentence of incarceration are being utilized frequently which makes this topic worthy of consideration.

Despite the fact that the United States comprises just 5% of the world's population, 25% of all incarcerated individuals worldwide are incarcerated in the United States (Gottschalk, 2002). The overuse of corrections in the U.S. does not apply

exclusively to incarceration. In fact, in 2009 there were 5,018,855 people on probation or parole in the U.S. (Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2010).

There are several advantages that alternative sanctions offer. They can reduce the problem of overcrowded prisons, rehabilitate the offenders that take part in alternative sanctions, increase safety

for the public, and cut costs to state and federal corrections systems (May and Wood, 2010; Petersillia, 1998)."

Correctional Boot Camps as Alternatives to Prison:

Of the wide variety of alternative sanctions used today, perhaps the most restrictive is correctional boot camps; it is certainly viewed as one of the most punitive. One example

for this finding is that correctional Boot camps are the alternative most like military service. In this alternative sanction, prisoners take part in military drills and engaged in physical labor and exercises that emphasize team work. In theory, correctional Boot camps have the potential to meet the Criminal Justice System's goal of

deterrence, punishment, and incapacitation (Parent, 1989). Like other alternative sanctions, correctional Boot camps may also reduce costs because they reduce prison overcrowding (Frana and Schroeder, 2008; MacKenzie and Shaw, 1990; Parent, 1989).

Some evidence suggests that participants in these boot camps graduated with more positive

outlook on their ability to change in comparison to inmates completing a term in a traditional prison (Mackenzie and Shaw, 1990). Unfortunately, poor aftercare and little follow-up for boot camp graduates caused this optimism to subside (Salerno, 1994). Kurlychek and Kempinen (2006) determined that those offenders that finished an aftercare program after

their time at boot camp had a lower recidivism rate when compared to a group of former boot camp participants that did not receive aftercare.

With the popularity of boot camps in the late 20th century, there has been a resurgence of a conversation regarding the use of military service in lieu of imprisonment..."

COVER STORY (CONTINUED FROM PG 3)

Correctional Center, he didn't hesitate in accepting our invitation in spite of his busy schedule. Our hats off to him, the world has lost another true champion in the cause of making this nation and world a better place.

Second Chance Quest have been making steady progress since its founding on October 11, 2015. We have started a mentoring group in Buckingham Correctional Center which is called: "Second Chance Quest-Support Group," which is an extension of the main body of Second Chance Quest. I will take this opportunity to thank the staff and administrators in that facility for allowing us the opportunity to work with the prison population in an effort to empower those men with the necessary tools to turn the tide of recidivism. So our thanks goes out to: Warden Younce, Asst. Warden White, Dr. Lightbody, Ms. Toney, and Dr. Lyle-Jones. I would like to also take this opportunity to thank the prisoners (some of whom are founding members of SCQ) who are making a difference by sacrificing their time and energy in serving as facilitators of Second Chance Quest-Support Group. First and foremost the Vice President of SCQ, Mr. W. Anderson, Secretary Mr. K. Hill, Sergeant-at-Arms Mr. W. Long, Mr. G. Johnson, Mr. S. Traber, Mr. T. Campbell, Mr. D. Bonilla, Mr. J. Saenz, Mr. W. Seaward, Mr. W. Short, Mr. J. Taylor, Imani, Mr. A. Hugine, Mr. E. Johnson, Mr. H. Robertson, Mr. T. Nguyen, Mr. H. Ngo, Mr. W. Richards, and Mr. A. Johnson.

What is Second Chance Quest-Support Group? We are a mentoring group for the prison population. Our program is a twelve weeks program, once a week with 25 students in attendance. Our objective is to empower these men with the

necessary tools to prepare them for life inside and outside of prison. As for those men going home shortly, we provide them with as much information as possible to aid them in their preparation to succeed in living a productive life, free of crime. It is our hope that this and other projects in the making by Second Chance Quest will succeed, where others have failed, in reducing the recidivism rate in the state and nation.

Some of the subjects we expound on in our class are as follows: Family Reunification; Interacting with special population (gangs, mental health, religious, etc.); Doing Time in a Positive Way; Importance of Education; Asking for Help; Creating Meaning to Your Life; Relationship Issues; Goal Setting for the Future, etc.

At the completion of the twelve weeks, the students are awarded a certificate of completing Second Chance Quest-Support Group, and are given a graduation ceremony by Buckingham Correctional Center. The program is a huge success for the prison and all parties involved. So much so, that one of our members had a parole hearing recently, and the parole officer asked him about Second Chance Quest. Needless to say the member was blown away at the mere mention of our organization at such high level within the state. We owe that in part to the late Mr. Jack Gravely, Executive Director of the Virginia Chapter of the NAACP. Mr. Gravely wrote the Chairperson of the Virginia Parole Board Ms. Karen D. Brown dated April 21, 2016 on behalf of Second Chance Quest, and I quote, "It has been brought to our attention that there are six non-violent offenders who are currently incarcerated at Buckingham Correctional Center. We would appreciate your reviewing

the particulars concerning these men and their situation, and possibly recommending them for early release/parole." At press, the six nonviolent offenders are still awaiting early release. It is our hope at Second Chance Quest that these men and the thousands like them will be released sooner rather than later.

On a brighter note, several offenders have been paroled from Buckingham Correctional Center this year thus far. We at Second Chance Quest would like to believe that our tireless work is finally bearing fruit.

Looking ahead, Second Chance Quest will soon expand even further to include a goodwill branch of the organization. The goal of this branch will be solely one of donating food and clothing to natural disaster victims, at home and abroad. We will also donate said products to domestic violence victims and the homeless.

We encourage you to join us, become a member/volunteer of Second Chance Quest. Tell your friends and families about us, and advise them to be a part of this growing nonprofit organization call "Second Chance Quest". Join us in making our nation and world a better place than we've found it. Together we can move mountains! The late President John F. Kennedy stated: "Ask not what your country can do for you, but rather, ask what you can do for your country."

Volunteer your time and resources in aiding a nonprofit organization, which is a commendable way in doing for country. Our motto here at SCQ is: "The ends you serve that are selfish, will take you no farther than yourself, but the ends you serve that are for all in common, will take you into eternity." (Marcus Garvey)

THE NEW YORK TIMES:

By Peter Baker

BILL CLINTON CONCEDES HIS CRIME LAW JAILED TOO MANY FOR TOO LONG

Washington- "Former President Bill Clinton disavowed part of his anti-crime legislation that he long considered one of his top accomplishments, concluding that it went too far in sending even minor criminals to prison 'for far too long.'"

Addressing a convention of the N.A.A.C.P a day after President Obama called for a wholesale overhaul of the criminal justice system, Mr. Clinton embraced the idea. He agreed that the law he enacted in 1994 played a significant part in warping sentencing standards and leading to an era of mass incarceration.

'I signed a bill that made the problem worse,' Mr. Clinton said. 'And I want to admit that.'

"The law Mr. Clinton signed in 1994 committed to putting 100,000 more police officers on the street, banning certain assault rifles, enacting background checks for many gun purchases and increased resources to fight violence against women. 'But in that bill, there were longer sentences,' Mr. Clinton told the N.A.A.C.P. gathering in Philadelphia. 'And most of these people are in prison under state law, but the federal law set a trend. And that was overdone. We were wrong about that.'"

"More than 2.2 million people are now behind bars, nearly double the number incarcerated when Mr. Clinton took office. Although the United States makes up less than 5 percent of the world's population, it has more than 20 percent of its prison population."

(A version of this article appears in print on July 16, 2015 on page A16 of the New York edition, same heading as the above caption.)

SCQ Comment: Countless families have been affected, if not destroyed by the lengthy imprisonment of their fathers and mothers. What Former President Bill Clinton failed to take into consideration at the time of signing that bill, was the impact it would have on the children of those affected by that bill, or that, so many of those imprisoned for decades would have been imprisoned for nonviolent offences. What benefit did our society gain from locking up its citizens for so long? On the contrary, it have cost our

tax payers billions, have led to massive overcrowding of our prisons, and have forced some states to scramble to find space to housed its prisoners. While depriving schools and the poor the much needed funds. Annually, it cost tax payers \$80 billion to maintain our massive prison population.

PROPOSAL TO BUY PRISONS RAISES ETHICAL CONCERNS (SOURCE: USA TODAY 2012)

Washington- "A private prison management company's proposal to buy government prison facilities, criticized for requiring states to maintain high occupancy rates, also is prompting debate about the firm's executive who circulated it.

Harley Lapping, a former director to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons, made the offer to 48 prison officials across the country in a letter on behalf of Corrections Corporation of America..."

"The communication goes on to outline the company's \$250 million interest in buying and managing government-owned prison facilities.

As part of a proposed 20-year management agreement, the company would require governments to maintain a minimum occupancy rates of 90% for the life of the management contracts."

USA TODAY, also reported in a separate article under the heading: Private purchases bring in cash, but could mean harsh sentences.

"The \$250 million proposal, circulated by the Nashville-based Corrections Corporation of America to prison officials in 48 states, has been blasted by some state officials who suggest such a program could pressure criminal justice officials to seek harsher sentences to maintain the contractually required occupancy rates..."

"'You don't want a prison system operating with the goal of maximizing profits,' says Texas state Sen. John Whitmire, a Houston Democrat and advocate for reducing prison populations through less costly diversion programs. 'The only thing worse is that this seeks to take advantage of some states' troubled financial position.'

Correction Corporation spokesman Steve Owen defended the company's 'investment initiative,' describing it as 'an additional option' for cash-strapped states to consider.

The proposal seeks to build upon a deal reached last fall in which the company purchased the 1,798-bed Lake Erie Correctional Institution from the state of Ohio for \$72.7 million. Ohio officials lauded the September transaction, saying that private management of the facility would save a projective \$3 million annually.

Linda Janes, chief of staff for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction, said the purchase came at a time when the state was facing an \$8 billion shortfall. The \$72.7 million prison purchase was aimed at helping to fill a \$188 million deficit within the corrections agency.

Ohio's deal requires the state to maintain a 90% occupancy rate, but Janes said that provision remains in effect for 18 months - not 20 years - before it can be renegotiated..."

SCQ Comment: In light of this article and others, it becomes clear that "Big Business" has their sight set on making a profit through the purchase of these prisons. And it becomes clear from a business standpoint that those prisons has to be fully housed, 90% occupancy rate for 20 years. Where do they expect to find those inmates? The answer is simple, your sons and daughters, and even your grandchildren. Human misery have once again become a major commodity of greedy opportunist businessmen. Justice have taken a backseat when it comes to the enrichment of those men. If they're left unchecked, the prison population will increase instead of decrease because it is in their best interest. 90% occupancy rate for 20 years!

WRONGFULLY CONVICTED

Thomas Haynesworth, spent 27 years behind bars in Virginia for a crime he did not commit. Haynesworth was convicted in 1984 of rape. In 2009, DNA testing showed the woman had need raped by Leon W. Davis Jr., a Richmond-area serial rapist. Haynesworth entered prison at the age of 18, he was 46 when he walked out of prison a free man. He shared his story of the struggles he underwent to catch up to the changing world around him earlier this year at Times-Dispatch Public Square Meeting. He states, "I came out so frustrated because there was a lot of things at my age I should know how to do. I was robbed of that."

Also attending that meeting was Keith Harward who was released in April of this year after spending 33 years behind bars in Virginia for murder and rape he did not commit. The murder and rape occurred in 1982 in Newport News Virginia. Harward then a 26-year-old sailor serving his country. Walked out of prison 33 years later proven to be innocent by DNA testing, now at age 60, most of his love ones have passed. The nation failed him for the past 33 years.

SCQ Comment: Who bears the responsibility to insure that innocent people are protected from false imprisonment? What about those men and women in prison who are innocent and do not have a DNA case? God forbid, what about those who may have been executed for a crime they didn't commit. Are we to believe that the courts don't convict innocent citizens of this country? Well, we have clear proof that they do.

The years Mr. Haynesworth and Mr. Harward, along with countless others have lost being falsely imprisoned can never be regained, and no amount of money can erase the psychological trauma of an innocent person in prison. Prosecutors who are found to have withheld exculpatory evidence should face disbarment and possible prosecution and imprisonment, that is the only way there can be checks and balances in that regard. After all, it is criminal and an abuse of power, and betrayal of the public's trust for a prosecutor to knowingly prosecute a case knowing there is a strong possibility that the individual is innocent of the crime. Furthermore; it is costing the states millions in wrongful conviction settlements.

5,000 FELONS REGISTER TO VOTE

Thousands of ex-offenders registered to vote after Virginia Gov. Terry McAuliffe restored their civil rights. The actions of the governor is being challenged by General Assembly Republicans. The executive order signed by Gov. Terry McAuliffe restored the rights to almost 206,000 ex-felons living in Virginia.

SCQ Comment: Hats off to the governor. We certainly hope that other leaders across the country will follow suit in restoring the civil rights of ex-felons. It is the right thing to do, we can no longer force ex-felons to

live their lives on the fringe of society, everyone loses when we do that. We look forward to a society that truly put into practice the true meaning of the creed, "Second Chance", after all, we constantly teach our children that, "everyone deserve a second chance."

WASHINGTON - "The Supreme Court rebuked Georgia courts for ignoring blatant evidence of racial bias when prosecutors deliberately excluded blacks from a jury that would later impose the death penalty against a young black man accused of murdering a white woman.

The 7-1 decision overturned the Georgia Supreme Court and told its judges to consider whether a new trial is warranted in the nearly 30-year-old case. The defendant's death sentence could now be set aside.

Chief Justice John Roberts described as nonsense the prosecutors' claims that they excluded several blacks from the jury for legitimate reasons.

It is our "firm conviction," he said, that the prosecutors were "motivated in substantial part by race" when they struck two blacks from the jury. "Two peremptory strikes on the basis of race are two more than the Constitution allows," he said.

The case has been scrutinized because it revealed new evidence from old court files on how prosecutors secretly focus on the race of the potential juries. In 1986, the court said trial judges have the duty to prevent prosecutors from screening potential jurors based on their race, but civil rights lawyers say that approach hasn't always worked.

Despite the new evidence, Georgia courts refused to grant a new trial for Tyrone Foster, the man convicted of the 1986 murder.

The high court stopped short of overturning Foster's conviction and death sentence, and ordering a new trial. Instead, it said the Georgia Supreme Court decision rejecting his race bias claim "is reversed and the case is remanded for further proceedings."

Justice Clarence Thomas dissented. He said Foster had confessed to the murder of the elderly white woman, and he questioned why "the court affords a death row inmate another opportunity to re-litigate his long-final conviction." Thomas said the prosecutors appeared to have rejected several black women for the jury

because they believed the women would not vote for a death sentence.

But Chief Justice Roberts said files Revealed during one of Foster's appeals showed the prosecutors had carefully tracked the blacks in the jury pool. He all but accused the state and its prosecutors of lying to cover up what they had done..."

(Source: Richmond Times-Dispatch)

SCQ Comment: Prosecutors' misconduct cannot be overlook even in the case of a guilty individual. Reason being, once we overlook such behavior where does it end. Many of those same prosecutors go on to hold higher offices in our society. We must hold our officials to a higher standard. And when all they see is race as oppose to American citizenry, then we should let them know in no uncertain terms, it will not be accepted. We will not support their retaining office, and certainly not, their advancement to higher office. We have to make it clear to them that, to represent the people of America means just that, the people of America, all of them!

When a person commits homicide, whether he kills a black person, a white person, or any other race, why mention the race? That person has taken the life of a human being. We have to stop placing a higher premium on the lives of one race over another. If a person is guilty of murder then he have to pay the price. Why infuse race in the case, if not to fan the flames of racism.

Now in the case of Mr. Foster, he have spent 30 years on death row, his case may and may not have warranted a death penalty verdict. But what is clear is that the prosecutors played the race card (by selecting an all white jury) to increase the possibility that Mr. Foster (a black youth) would get the death sentence. Under the Constitution, his rights may have been violated, The United States Supreme Court have said so in part. The law is the law, and even though a state have the death penalty, not all murder cases warrant the death sentence. And certainly, one should be afforded a fair and impartial jury to make that decision. Not one whom the state have so subtly introduced race into the deliberation process. When will this end, and what message are we sending our children?



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FEEDBACK FROM THE “FREE” WORLD

These are some of the responses supporters gave when asked why they signed the petition.

I can resonate to the potentials this will have
Debra—Newark, NJ

•••

I'm a non violent convicted felon who understands the paths that are encountered when trying to readjust to society and have barriers in place. A clean second chance is needed especially after paying your debt back to society for your crime.

Tyrone—Fairburn, GA

•••

I have loved ones that are incarcerated on non violent charges

Sabrina—Spring, VA

•••

We need change!

Dr. Kathleen—Oxon Hill, MD

•••

There are many people out there who have made prior

mistakes that just need a second chance in life. People that are truly worthy of a second chance. People who would have a positive effect upon society if only they could get around the stigma that often comes along with a criminal record of any sort. Minor infractions, and/or a single isolated charge that may have been circumstantial, where a person has been rehabilitated and/or has avoided trouble for a significant amount of time afterward are why I am an advocate of this push. No one is perfect. Everyone has had a lapse in judgment at some point. We have the power to rebuild people's lives. Hopefully, this is a step towards that.

Fareedah—Brooklyn, NY

•••

I believe in rehabilitating offenders in more positive ways.

Khalil—Heights, TX

•••

Directly affected by the change

Viola—Brooklyn, NY

•••

Everybody deserve a second chance!

Frederick—Trenton, SC

•••

We need to stand and support one another

Sarah—Bay Shore, NY

•••

Non violent should always get a second chance. It's a shame how the rules are.

Maria—New York, NY

•••

I believe a second chance in life and for a non violence

felony to be on someone's record forever is a bit extreme. People are always changing and growing

John—New York, NY

•••

Laws need to be just!

Marlene—Rosendale, NY

•••

Because I think it's only right for a person to have a second chance at life

Stephen John Brooklyn, NY

•••

As a US Veteran, I would like to see a change within the judicial system. Our taxed dollars have been misused, inside correctional facilities, nationwide. Better programs need to be strategically implemented in order to prevent repetitive offenses.

Christopher—Augusta, GA