

Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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Together We Can Do What We Cannot Do Alone

On April 10, 2019, the Washington State Department of Corrections (DOC) released an update to its former memo which banned free, used books for Washington prisoners. In it, the Assistant Secretary of Prisons stated: "I am now reaffirming that the Department will continue to support the receipt of donated used books."

Details of this new memo still restrict approved book providers to a narrow and incomplete list, contain ambiguities about the approval and rejection processes, and did not include a full description of how process to be used in future communication between the Washington DOC and prison book programs would be improved to avoid such a repeat of bans.

This positive change occurred because *Books to Prisoners, Seattle* (c/o Left Bank Books, 92 Pike Street, Box A, Seattle WA 98101) worked hard and skillfully to lobby effectively for it. An important part of their effort was creating a statement of support and recruiting signatory prison book program groups from around the country in support of continued prisoner receipt of donated used books. This statement of unity says in large part:

"We affirm and respect the basic human rights of every person, whether or not they are incarcerated, and we believe that intellectual freedom is in the public interest. We support an informed public and assert that all people have a right to access information....Books are vital for building new skills and for supporting educational goals....

"The American Library Association now includes in its *Prisoners' Right to Read* statement that: 'People who are incarcerated or detained should have the ability to obtain books and materials from outside the prison for their personal use.'

"In further support is Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall's 1974 statement: 'When the prison gates slam behind people, they do not lose their human quality: their minds do not become closed to ideas; their intellect does not cease to feed on a free and open interchange of opinions; their yearning

for self-respect does not end; nor is their quest for self-realization concluded. If anything, the needs for identity and self-respect are more compelling in the dehumanizing prison environment.' [with gender inclusivity update]

We reassert our belief in the critical and unwavering importance of prisoners' direct access to books with minimal barriers and interference."

What was crucial in recruiting the many signatory prison book programs from across the country in a matter of a few days and the success in changing the Washington State policy was the existence and timing of the *Books to Prisoners National Conference Books Make a World of Difference*--in Boston, from April 5 to 7. There were over 100 attendees, representing at least 46 organizations engaged in a variety of books to prisons activities. The Prison Book Program (c/o Lucy Parsons Bookstore, 1306 Hancock St, Suite 100, Quincy MA 02169) played a crucial role in bringing this invaluable conference into being. Thanks so much to all who worked on it and in it!

We were fortunate to be able to attend and look forward to the next one.

EVEN MORE

There is a brand new and second edition of the invaluable resource publication *Turn It Up!*--created for and by people in prison--to find new ways to be healthy. The subtitle is: *Staying Strong Inside*. The contents include: *Growing Gray--Staying Strong*, *Ramadan: Nutrition for Body and Soul*, *When We Dehumanize We Can Hurt Somebody Without Feeling Remorse*, *5 Tips for Getting the Best Care You Can*, *Overcoming Barriers to Parenting*, *Keeping My Cool*, *Incarcerated People's Health Bill of Rights*, *Trans Health Basics*, *Self-Care Tips from Inside* and, above all, a 10 page *Resource Guide!*

"To order single or bulk copies of this issue of *Turn It Up!*: The Sero Project, PO Box 1233 Milford PA 18337 info@seroproject.com"

El Arresto de Julian Assange

El fundador de la organización WikiLeaks, Julian Assange, fue arrestado poco después de que el Gobierno de Ecuador revocara su asilo. Ex ex presidente de Ecuador Rafael Correa criticó al actual presidente, Lenín Moreno, por lo que sucedió, escribiendo: "El mayor traidor en la historia de Ecuador y Latinoamérica, Lenín Moreno, permitió que la policía británica ingrese a nuestra embajada en Londres para arrestar a Assange. Moreno es un hombre corrupto, pero lo que ha hecho es un crimen que la humanidad nunca olvidará.

Los abogados de Julian Assange, prometieron combatir su posible extradición a Estados Unidos tras su arresto en Londres. El jueves, la policía británica lo sacó por la fuerza de la Embajada de Ecuador en Londres, en donde había estado refugiado durante casi siete años. Poco después de su arresto, las autoridades estadounidenses presentaron una acusación contra Assange por conspirar con la informante del Ejército Chelsea Manning, quien filtró una gran cantidad de documentos confidenciales a WikiLeaks, incluyendo evidencia de crímenes de guerra cometidos por Estados Unidos en Irak y Afganistán. Se espera que el Departamento de Justicia de Estados Unidos presente cargos adicionales contra Assange. La abogada de Assange en Londres advirtió que el procesamiento de Assange podría en peligro la libertad de prensa. "Esto establece un peligroso precedente para todas las organizaciones de medios y periodistas en el resto del mundo.

To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send up to 12 self-addressed, stamped envelopes--with the CPR return address.

Keep sending us address changes and renewal requests in order for us to maintain our *only* permanent mailing list--the one for our January holiday/new calendar--as accurately as possible.

Also, note that the correct address to be sure to reach us at is: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. The address listings in some lists are incorrect in this regard.

And still: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS; for our protection, please do *not* mark envelopes addressed to us as "Legal Mail."

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for posting our Newsletter on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: www.realcostofprisonsproject.org--this is a GREAT site! Thank you for all your support!

UBIQUITOUS DATA GATHERING

First used by federal agents in 2016, this new technique depends on search warrants, sometimes called "geofence" warrants, which specify an area and a time period and require Google to gather information from an enormous Google database its employees call Sensorvault. In effect, this turns the business of tracking cellphone users' locations into a digital dragnet for law enforcement. Information thus gathered shows where you go, who your friends are, what you read, eat and watch, and when you do it. Most Android devices and some iPhones have this data available from Google.

Another example of ubiquitous data gathering is Facebook. Their new idea is to have end-to-end encrypted messaging by merging communications across Facebook, WhatsApp and Instagram. Facebook may well be moving towards being too difficult to use. So called "content moderators" are being diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder from sifting through numerous posted horrors.

The comparison has been made that big tech platforms like Facebook and Google are elephant poachers and our personal data is ivory tusks. Surveillance capitalism feeds on every aspect of every human's experience according to Shoshana Zuboff's new book: *The Age of surveillance Capitalism: The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power.*

CHALLENGE TO STUDY

"I challenge you to study about your nationality and race, not for hatred but for love of self and understanding and for stronger roots. And as you study of your own self, I challenge you to take pride in the people you come from and respect the other races that have pride in themselves."

--S.M. TX

Fatal Shootings

In each of the last four years, police nation wide have shot and killed almost the same number of people: nearly 1,000. It should be noted that the U.S. does not count police killings in homicide statistics. In 2018 998 people were killed by cops. In 2017, 987. The FBI's tracking system undercounted fatal police shootings by about half. The overall demographic characteristics of those shot have remained constant over the past four years: 45% "white" men, 23% Black men, 16% Hispanic men. All women: about 5% of the total. Of those killed, about 25% were considered to be people in "mental distress."