

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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## For Change: Think Outside the Boxes

We lose almost 1,000 people a week to drug overdoses. The U.S. consumes more than 80% of the world's opioid pills, even though we have less than 5% of the world's population. If only 10% of drug addicted defendants received drug rehabilitation instead of incarceration, the legal system would save \$4.8 billion. If 40% of those addicted and convicted received treatment instead of imprisonment, the savings would increase to \$12.9 billion [numbers from 2012]. Our dominant culture's commitment to inequality and its consequences dooms us all.

We know many important things in our lives are just terrible. In order to work, effectively, for change, we must be able to imagine quite different ways of structuring our lives and our community resources and systems. Especially for those of us whose lives are directly driven by how the police, court and penal system treats us, it is very difficult to imagine a system that treats us differently.

There are, however, people and ideas that can be examples for and help in our thinking and actions as we work to survive and to improve our circumstances. One powerful example is the ideas and institutions that have been developed over the last several decades called "transformative justice."

"Transformative justice sees 'crime' as an opportunity to build a more caring, more inclusive, more just community. Safety doesn't lie in bigger fences, harsher prisons, more police, or locking ourselves in till we ourselves are prisoners. Safety and security--real security--come from building a community

#+  
....One after another  
The inmates do pray  
That Santa will bring help  
Maybe on his sleigh

So in this season of Joy  
We do wish you well  
Please remember our love  
As we send it from a cell.  
-- Stacy, GA

where, because we have cared for and included ALL, that community will be there for us." (Ruth Morris, *Stories of Transformative Justice*, 2000)

Three core beliefs underlying transformative justice are:  
> individual justice and collective liberation are equally important, mutually supportive and fundamentally intertwined.  
> the conditions that allow violence and other forms of injustice/inequality to occur must be transformed in order to achieve justice on a community wide basis. "The opposite of poverty is justice." as we have learned from Bryan Stevenson.  
> governmental and other existing systemic responses to violence/inequality actually condone and perpetuate cycles of violence.

There is a lot of work to be done!  
We must ask ourselves, keep asking ourselves, how is it we have spent \$1.46 trillion on wars since September 11, 2001? When the 2018 fiscal year budget is approved, it will bring war spending in Afghanistan alone to \$840.7 billion.

We again salute U.S. Rep. Barbara Lee of Oakland, the lone congressional vote against the war in Afghanistan in 2001.

And we salute Colin Kaepernick, who figured out a way to act, "for his selfless heart, conviction and personal sacrifice. Only hope to change the world for the better, to change the way we treat each other, especially people of color" as Beyonce said when presenting him with the S.I. Muhammad Ali Legacy Award. Kaepernick responded in part: "if it were not for my love for the people, I would not have protested. And if it was not for the support from the people, I would not be on this stage today."

*this one would fit our  
Brothers & Sisters in prison where  
they can add their personal touch...  
(making the hair long/short, straight/  
fro, or color of uniform--Texas is  
white)*

*The theme to the card is "one's  
Struggle" is: Good/Bad, Right/Wrong,  
Love/Hate... the list goes on and on  
for some of us-- it's a thin line.*

Raúl, TX



## Guantánamos flotantes

**La Guardia Costera usa la detención indefinida para llevar adelante una "guerra contra las drogas" en alta mar**

La Guardia Costera estadounidense detiene a miles de sospechosos de traficar drogas en aguas internacionales y los mantiene en la cárcel en alta mar por un periodo de varios meses, previo a acusarlos ante un tribunal federal estadounidense. Muchos de los sospechosos son traficantes de bajo nivel provenientes de pueblos pesqueros empobrecidos de América Latina. Durante su encierro en alta mar, los detenidos permanecen con grilletes en cubierta, expuestos a los elementos y se les niega comunicarse con abogados o familiares. Las crecientes detenciones empezaron cuando el general John Kelly encabezaba el Comando del Sur del Pentágono, desde el año 2012 a 2016. Kelly es actualmente jefe de personal de la Casa Blanca de Trump, luego desempeñarse brevemente como secretario de seguridad nacional

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To receive the CPR Newsletter by postal mail monthly, send us 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 the mailing list for the upcoming January holiday card/new calendar as accurately as we can.

Also, note that the only address to be sure to reach us at is: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. Some resource address listings 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 making our Newsletter free on-line for downloading and free distribution. It is at: [realcostofprisonsproject.org/html](http://realcostofprisonsproject.org/html)--this is a GREAT site!

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### Executions Increase Slightly This Year

The number of imprisoned people executed by U.S. governments this year is 23, up from 20 in 2016. Texas killed (7), as it did last year. The other seven states killing were: Arkansas (4), Alabama & Florida (3 each), Ohio & Virginia (2 each), and Georgia & Missouri (1 each).

## SOME POSITIVE STEPS

> The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) is publishing a Survivors Manual written by and for women in prison. It will include prose and poetry, artwork, and whatever strategy contributors believe might help another woman. Send submissions to: Bonnie Kerness, AFSC Prison Watch c/o Women, 89 Market St 6th fl, Newark NJ 07201.

> LifeLines Poetry Competition 2018. Deadline: Monday, April 2, 2018. No more than 3 entries/person and open to all who are or have been on Death Row. Send entries to: The Wing Editor, Helena Coxshall, 41 Wordsworth Way, Measham, Derbyshire, DE12 7ER, England (1st oz. postage-5 pp. is \$1.15).

> Regarding LWOP developments in CA. On Friday, August 18, 2017, the governor of California granted a total of nine commutations. Five were for people doing LWOP sentences. On April 15, 2015, there were 7 other commutations granted, including two people with LWOP sentences. One was Kenneth Hartman, the founder of The Other Death Penalty Project.

There remain more than 5,000 people doing LWOP in California prisons. Of them, 36 are women doing LWOP at CIW.

On October 11, 2017, the governor signed SB 394 into law. People who were sentenced to LWOP for crimes that occurred when they were under the age of 18 will be eligible for Youth Offender Parole after 25 years of incarceration.

> Work has begun in CA by the Free to Vote Coalition to amend the state constitution to restore voting rights to ALL California citizens 18 or over. This would affect approximately 180,000 people. The first step is to gather almost 600,000 signatures of registered voters to get on the state ballot for November 2018. To get copies of petitions and more info contact: [initiatejustice@gmail.com](mailto:initiatejustice@gmail.com).

Resource: The Fire Inside, Newsletter of the CA Coalition for Women Prisoners. 1540 Market St, Room 490, San Francisco CA94102

> The "Ban the Box" movement--that is the box on job applications asking for information on job applicants' "criminal history"--has been steadily gaining ground. California is now the 10th state to do so both for government and private business jobs. The others are Connecticut, Hawaii, Illinois, Massachusetts, Minnesota, New Jersey, Oregon, Rhode Island and Vermont. Some progress has been made in 29 states and 150 counties or cities. The cities include Philadelphia and Los Angeles, and allow for a background check only after a job offer has been made. Resource: The National Employment Law Project.