

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

Vol. 42-yy, No. 3

PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504

March 2017

## CROWDED YET SOLITARY

When we report horrendous conditions and treatment of incarcerated people, it is not so much to tell our readers what we are sure they already know, as to remind us all of how common, widespread, ordinary and accepted such treatment is. We did this in a November 2016 article about conditions in Illinois. And we repeat it below.

Double-celling in New Mexico recently came to media attention with the sentences: "State prison officials have been caught 'double-celling' prisoners at Western New Mexico Correctional Facility (WNMCF) in Grants (NM), in violation of long standing population controls designed to prevent crowding (under the Duran Consent Decree of 1991) ....Double-celling is when two prisoners are housed in a cell built for one, and generally means those prisoners are living in a room that is less than 120 square feet and usually contains a toilet."

A prisoner at WNMCF informed the lawyers in the class-action prison conditions suit--originally filed in 1977--of the double celling in December 2015. Yet it was to take until October 2016 to remove the 232 double-celling bunks that had been bolted to the walls.

The deputy secretary of administrative support was quoted as saying that: "We maintain we had the authority to double bunk at Western (we have been doing so since '88 or '89)." At the time the lawyers toured WNMCF in February 2016, it appeared to them that those in charge were planning to double-cell the whole facility.

\* \* \* BLACK LIVES MATTER \* \* \*

In Menard Correctional Center in Illinois opened in 1878--with stone lions at the entrance and columns propping up an awning carved with skeleton keys and the scales of justice. There, double-celled prisoners, on "restrictive housing" status, are put in rooms that are a foot-and-a-half narrower than those in the general population. With a toilet, sink, shelf and bunks, two people are left with about a foot-and-a-half of unoccupied space. If one stands, the other has to sit. They can palm both walls without fully extending their arms. No window. Solid, corroded metal door. Chipped paint, stained floor.

As of March 15, 2017, the Illinois Department of Corrections reported having 50 people in double-cell solitary at Menard. In June 2015, the Uptown People's Law Center (4413 N Sheridan Rd, Chicago IL 60640) filed a federal lawsuit against the state for sending 2,300 people to single- and double-cell solitary. Hundreds of them had been there for over a decade.

There are no national statistics on the number of people confined in "double-cell solitary" but at least 18 state prison systems double-up some of their restrictive housing and over 80% of the 10,747 federal prisoners in solitary have a cellmate. In Texas and Indiana, prisoners who are locked down for nearly 24 hours a day, but with a cellmate, are not classified as being in "segregation." In March 2017, New Mexico reported about 350 of its approximately 7,000 prisoners--less than 5%, were being held in "restrictive housing."

Multiple studies have found people in solitary are more likely to hurt themselves/attempt suicide than those in general population. Having a cellmate may decrease the risk of self-harm; it increases the risk of inter-prisoner violence.

**Resource:** The Marshall Project, 156 W 56th St, suite 701, New York NY 10019; 212-803-5200.

## Los agentes fronterizos tratan de retener teléfonos celulares

Los agentes fronterizos están reteniendo cada vez más teléfonos celulares y exigiendo a sus propietarios la clave de acceso, incluidos los ciudadanos estadounidenses. El número de se disparó durante el gobierno de Obama y amenazó la cifra de 25 mil el año pasado. Pero se espera que el número sea mucho mayor este año. Más de cinco mil dispositivos fueron registrados en febrero solamente, es decir más del total de en todo el año 2015.

Recurso: Proyecto Tecnológico de Privacidad y Expresión de la Unión Estadounidense por los Derechos Civiles (ACLU). El artículo se titula: "Los agentes fronterizo pueden registrar tus dispositivos electrónicos? Es complicado" -- por Esha Bhandari.

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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 as we struggle to maintain the mailing list for the January holiday card/new calendar mailing as accurately as we can.

Also, note that the *only* address to be sure to reach us 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 sent 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 distribution. It is at:  
<http://www.realcostofprisonsproject.org/html>  
--this is a GREAT site!

We depend on our readers' donations & thank you for your support! Mil gracias!  
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### CALIFORNIANS UNITED FOR A RESPONSIBLE BUDGET (CURB)

The organization envisions changes that will bring people home, dismantle systems of imprisonment, and support true community health and prosperity. It has been involved in 11 fights against the expansion of prisons and jails. Next is the fight against the replacement of the 12 oldest CA prisons. In Oakland CA 94612: 1322 Webster St #210 & in Los Angeles, at Inglewood CA 90302, 1137 E Redondo Blvd.

## ABC ZINE PRISON CHAPTER

The purpose is to raise Black consciousness to and promote Pan-Africanism here in Tennessee. We are looking for sponsors who can support our efforts and mentor us. We are trying to gather reading material, zines, books, literature and downloads off the internet to get study groups going. We would like to network and reach out to as many comrades as possible to assist us so that we will be able to establish and maintain our own Chapter.

(To assist this worthwhile effort, write the CPR at PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504 for forwarding.)

### "Experts" on Mass Incarceration

"Until you've been sitting up in a drunk tank watching grown people peeing, pooping, & throwing up on themselves because they overdosed on alcohol or heroin, then you ain't no "expert" on mass incarceration...

Until you've been patted down, then strip searched, then forced to dress out into old, crusty, musty, too small jail clothes that dozens if not hundreds of others have worn too; been issued a 2 inch thick, 18 inch wide, 5 foot long green mattress with wool blankets that make you break out & itch, then been one of 3 people stuffed into a 2 man cell on the floor in a blue plastic "boat," then you ain't no "expert" on mass incarceration...

Until you've had to eat slushy jail house slop served on dirty, unsanitized trays, gotten food poisoning, been bloated, gassy, constipated & had the runs, then you ain't no "expert" on mass incarceration....

Until you've seen someone wild out breaking windows, throwing everything in the cell around, then get pepper sprayed, tazed, rammed by 6 ERT members riot shields, then tackled, kicked, punched into submission while being handcuffed & then strapped to a chair all night with a restraint mask (muzzle), then you ain't no "expert" on mass incarceration....

Until you've felt the pain of being separated from family and friends, if you've lost contact with them for months, even years because they couldn't afford the high cost of phone calls or to travel hundreds if not thousands of miles to visit you, then you ain't no "expert" on mass incarceration....

Until you've been shackled from head to toe, with cuffs so tight they cut your wrists & ankles, then rope chained to 8 or 9 others, then ushered into a courtroom, then you ain't no "expert" on mass incarceration.... (exerpted from writing by J.G. WA state)