

# Coalition For Prisoners' Rights Newsletter

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## PRISON CONDITIONS FIGHTBACK

### *Lawsuits Against Solitary*

As Anthony Graves, exonerated Death Row prisoner said on national radio this week, the prison system "is part of all of us. It threatens all of us." And even though we know it is a long, hard struggle, we're fighting back in many ways. A couple of examples:

The first, yet again, concerns the California prison system. At the end of May, the Center for Constitutional Rights, based in New York City, filed suit against the California prison system concerning the use of long term solitary confinement of so-called high security prisoners at Pelican Bay State Prison. The suit maintains that this should be considered torture and therefore violates the human rights of those incarcerated under those conditions. There are currently more than 500 people in the Secure Housing Unit (SHU) there. Of them, 78 people have been in solitary for more than 20 years.

Another major supermax lawsuit, *Bacote v. Federal Bureau of Prisons*, was filed in mid-June by the Washington Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs, among others. It concerns the abuse, cruelty and torture of mentally ill prisoners in the federal prison, ADX-Florence (Colorado). Rather than money damages for the growing number of prisoner plaintiffs, it seeks to require federal officials to treat mentally ill imprisoned people in accordance with existing law.

The Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) was established in 1930, and consisted of 11 prisons. Today, the BOP is made up of 117 prisons, among other entities. There are now 217,000 federal prisoners. Of them, 18% are caged in for-profit prisons or local jails. There are 38,000 BOP employees.

As we know, prisons are always worse than the officials who run them say they

### *Resistance Inside*

Prisoners all over the country are also putting their lives and what little welfare they have directly on the line. Several examples follow:

In April 2012, a group of Muslim American political prisoners in the Communication Management Unit (CMU) in the federal prison at Marion (IL) went on a hunger strike. Seeing the atrocious mistreatment of Muslim prisoners, the non-Muslim prisoners joined them on the strike in solidarity. One Muslim prisoner has been moved to the federal prison in Terre Haute (IN).

The prisoners' demands include: provision of religiously prescribed meals, uninterrupted individual and group prayer, religious and spiritual classes and educational programs, and contact with family and friends.

At the end of May there was an uprising for over eight hours at the Adams County Correctional Facility, a for-profit prison near Jackson, Mississippi run by the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA). There are 2,500 immigrants from over 70 countries held there, awaiting deportation. More than 600 of them were reportedly involved in the takeover. Their demands included: better treatment and services, medical attention, and "some respect."

Also at the end of May, 45 prisoners at Red Onion State Prison (ROSP), Virginia's supermax, began a hunger strike. Their demands included: fully-cooked food, fresh fruit and vegetables, access to complaint and grievance forms, an end torture by indefinite segregation and adequate medical care. Of the 1,700 people imprisoned at ROSP, 500 are kept in solitary confinement.

Acts of resistance are increasing. In the past year, they have also occurred in Ohio, and at additional prisons in California. Only with struggle can there be progress! Stay tuned.

**AMICUS CHRISTMAS CARD COMPETITION**  
Assists Lawyers for Justice on Death Row

**NO MORE MANDATORY JLWOP!**

Amicus is looking for artwork from a U.S. Death Row prisoner to use on 2012 Christmas cards. The cards will be sold to raise funds for Amicus--a small, legal charity in London which supports capital defense lawyers in the U.S. Our aim is limited to helping to secure better access to justice for people facing execution sentences.

Send all entries to: Eleanor Byrne-Rosengren, Amicus, PO Box 46101, London EC4V 6YT, United Kingdom. Postage: \$1.05 Let us know of any rules relating to money orders so we can look for an alternative way to send your prize if necessary: \$50 for the winning design. No original artwork can be returned. Please include your name and address and an alternative contact person, such as your lawyer or a family member.

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Copies of the Newsletter will be included in all correspondence we send out. To receive the Newsletter monthly, send us self-addressed, stamped envelopes (with the CPR return address)-up to 12 at one time.

Please continue to send us address changes and renewal requests, in order to receive the yearly holiday card/new calendar.

Also, please note that the only address to use to be sure to reach us continues to be: PO Box 1911, Santa Fe NM 87504. And remember: NONE OF US ARE LAWYERS OR LEGAL WORKERS>

Many, many thanks to the Real Cost of Prisons Project for making our Newsletter available on-line for free downloading and distribution. It is at: <http://www.realcostofprisonsprojeet.org/coalition.html>. This is a GREAT site!

We continue to depend on our readers' financial contributions to be able to go on with our work. Thank you so much for your ongoing support!

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**SAN QUENTIN NEWS**

The San Quentin News is written, edited and produced by prisoners incarcerated at San Quentin State Prison. It encourages submitting articles, poems and art work that are newsworthy and encompass issues that will have an impact on the prison populace. The opinions expressed therein do not necessarily reflect those of the Administration or the inmate population. Send submissions to: CSP-San Quentin, Education Dept./SQ News, San Quentin CA 94964 (No street address required).

The U.S. Supreme Court ruled on June 25, 2012, that states may not impose mandatory life sentences without parole on juveniles (JLWOP)--those who were less than 18 at the time of the crime they were convicted of, including those convicted of taking part in a murder. The justices ruled in a 5 (Kagan, Kennedy, Ginsburg, Breyer, Sotomayor)-to-4 (Roberts, Scalia, Thomas, Alito) decision that such sentencing for those under 18 violates the Eighth Amendment's ban on cruel and unusual punishment. The ruling left open the possibility of judges' sentencing youth to life imprisonment without parole in individual circumstances, but said state laws could not automatically impose such sentences.

The two cases in the ruling concern 14 year old boys: *Jackson v. Hobbs*, No. 10-9647 (out of Arkansas), and *Miller v. Alabama*, No. 10-9646. The majority opinion argued that the two cases being considered were an extension of the court's recent rulings on the young. Those had asserted that youth still had unformed emotional and moral structures and that treating them as adults violated "evolving standards of decency."

Nearly 2,500 young people have life sentences without parole in the U.S. There are "almost no other countries" that put teenagers in prison and keep them there to die without the possibility of parole.

**Critica México fallo de la Corte Suprema de EU sobre Ley SB 1070 de Arizona**

La Cancillería mexicana critica la decisión de la Corte Suprema de los Estados Unidos que mantiene la facultad de la Policía estatal para comprobar la condición migratoria de quienes considere indocumentados.

El fallo de la Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos sobre la controvertida ley de inmigración de Arizona viola derechos civiles, dijo el lunes el gobierno mexicano. La Secretaría de Relaciones Exteriores (SRE) criticó en un comunicado la decisión del tribunal de mantener una sección que obliga a la Policía estatal a comprobar la condición migratoria de quienes crea que entraron al país sin autorización legal. El comunicado señala que leyes como la SB 1070 no reconocen las contribuciones que los inmigrantes hacen en sus comunidades de destino, y tienen altos costos policos. La Corte Suprema de Estados Unidos dejó sin efecto el lunes (el 25 de junio) las disposiciones clave de la ley contra la inmigración ilegal aprobada por Arizona en 2010.