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INMATES FAMILIES

I recently read an article about several state legislators who opposed a plan to use an empty womens prison for minimum security male prisoners. I want to address one of the reasons the legislators used: the assumption that prisoners' families would move into the area in droves, drive up crime rates and further strain on community social services.

It is a disgusting assumption and reasoning. It, however, does illustrate a common belief that prisoner families are "other than" people, criminals in wait.

To my knowledge there is no data kept on prisoner families, so no one knows their numbers. However, we do know there are more than

oldest daughter, who is 16, is already taking courses to work in the medical field. She wants to join the Peace Corps and travel to Africa. She worked part time for a local radio station and is a well behaved girl. I'm very proud of her. She is not a "criminal". She does not put further strain on social services.

My youngest daughters mother is the Administrator for a Juvenile Drug and Alcohol treatment Center. The state sends hundreds of kids to her for care and treatment.

Prisoners and their families are not "other than's". Prisoners' family members work and do the best they can to support themselves and their children or grandchildren on limited income.

It is disgusting to see so-called "tough on crime" politicians treating innocent people like criminals. In reality, one needs only glance at a local newspaper and see the corrupt state of the government. The crime that politicians get away with can make even the most hardened criminal look like a petty thief. The animalistic behavior of some politicians and prison officials has been extensively documented in the publication Prison Legal News.