

# OREGON CURE

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

A Newsletter for Families and Friends of Incarcerated Individuals

P.O. Box 80193 – Portland, OR 97280 (503) 977-9979



Spring 2019, Volume 57

## NOW IS THE TIME TO TAKE ACTION.

OREGON LEGISLATURE IS IN SESSION

For educational purposes here are **some** of the criminal justice bills up for discussion:

**SB 1008** establishes a process where all youth who are convicted in adult court have access to a “Second Look” hearing half way through their sentence. At that hearing, a judge determines whether the youth has taken responsibility for their crime and been rehabilitated, which would allow the remainder of their sentence to be served under community-based supervision, rather than being incarcerated.

**SB 969** places youth accused of any crimes in the juvenile justice system instead of the adult justice system. To move a youth to the adult justice system, prosecutors would need to request a special hearing with a judge who would decide where youth are placed.

**SB 966** would require an additional review before a youth with a long sentence would be transferred to an adult prison. Currently, Oregon youth who are given long sentences can stay in a youth prison until age twenty-five and are then transferred to an adult prison. This proposal would allow a judge to determine if the 25-year-old has been sufficiently rehabilitated to transfer them to community-based supervision, rather than adult prison.

**SB 968** would eliminate life without parole sentences for youth in Oregon by establishing a process to ensure that anyone convicted of a crime when they are under eighteen years old receives a chance for parole after fifteen years of incarceration.

**RETRACTED SB 1007 (Bill no longer up for discussion):** proposed the following change to Measure 11: (1) A person convicted of an offense listed in ORS 137.700 (2) or 137.707 (4), other than murder, shall receive a reduction in the term of imprisonment of six

days for each 30-day period of the sentence, commencing on the first day of the arrival of the person at the facility to serve the sentence, if: (a) The person at the time of sentencing had no prior convictions; and (b) The person’s record of conduct shows that the person has faithfully observed all the rules of the facility. (2) The Department of Corrections shall adopt rules to establish a process for granting, retracting and restoring the time credits earned by a person under this section.

**HB3064** is for the accountability, equity and the promise of justice reinvestment. It will ensure that the needs of communities across Oregon are more effectively served to increase both safety and justice. The proposal seeks to better measure outcomes of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative with particular attention to historically underserved groups to promote accountability, equity and healing.

**HB3255** appoints hearing officers to parole board proceedings. Currently after the board of parole and post-prison supervision holds a hearing it issues a board action form which provides the inmate with their decision and reasoning behind it. The inmate has 45 days to file a request for review and in most cases the board disagrees with the inmate and affirms its earlier decision. This does not provide an opportunity for independent administrative review of the board’s initial decision. HB3255 will appoint independent hearing officers to reside over parole board hearings. The inmate will have 60 days to file the request for review. It will then be up to the state board of parole and post-prison supervision to either accept or reject the preliminary decision as the final decision, issue a modified decision, or conduct a new hearing. This method neutralizes the current conflicts of interest by

providing a separate hearing from those who decide the preliminary decision and those who review the appeal.

**HB3258** is the right to counsel for parole. Currently individuals appearing before the board of parole and post-prison supervision have no statutory right to appointed council except for murder review hearings. HB3258 addresses the difficulties an inmate may face when seeking parole by removing the requirements that are currently used to determine whether an individual

can be appointed counsel for parole and instead requires that any person appearing before the board of parole and post-prison supervision has the right to be presented by counsel.

An overwhelming majority of Oregonians - 88 percent - want the youth justice system to focus on prevention and rehabilitation more than punishment and incarceration, according to polling by the ACLU of Oregon.

## YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE BY

**contacting your legislators about issues that are important to you.**

Find your legislators at [www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/](http://www.oregonlegislature.gov/FindYourLegislator/) to start a conversation today.

## HELP SUPPORT OREGON CURE WHEN YOU SHOP

**Amazon:** Help us earn .05% for all of your Amazon purchases by selecting Oregon CURE on Amazon Smile. Visit [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) and search for Oregon CURE. Select Oregon CURE and start shopping using the [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com) URL every time!

**Fred Meyer:** Link your Fred Meyer rewards card with Oregon CURE and Fred Meyer's will send us a quarterly donation. It's easy! Visit [FredMeyer.com/communityrewards](http://FredMeyer.com/communityrewards) then Link Your Rewards Card Now. Login to your account or sign up and then search for Oregon CURE (Org # BN477).

We also accept donations through mail or through our website [www.oregoncure.org](http://www.oregoncure.org)!

### Member donation form:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ C/S/Z: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

(Optional):

Name of incarcerated loved one/ SID & facility: \_\_\_\_\_

I would like to volunteer my services! My skills are: \_\_\_\_\_

**RANDY GEER experienced a second leg amputation earlier this year, leaving him wheelchair bound. His good friend Kelly Arrington started a GoFundMe for Randy to help with modifications to his home that are needed for him to maneuver around.**

Randy has long been on the board of directors of Oregon CURE and for those who do not already know, here is a little bio that Kelly wrote for Randy:

Randy Geer was hired as a Correctional Officer at Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP), in his hometown of Salem, Oregon in 1983. By itself, this would not have been a notable historical event except for the fact that Randy's father, Lt. Bob Geer, had been stabbed and killed on duty at that facility in 1972. So we start this professional biography of Randy by asking, if your father had been murdered on the job, would you then go into that profession also? And at the same location? And if you did, what emotions would motivate your professional intentions?

Randy's answers were not just yes, but a yes propelled by forgiveness and beliefs based on progressive thoughts and actions. His subsequent career was built on a foundation of consistently humane interactions, and the transitioning of incarcerated adults into successful community and family members.

In 1985 and 1992, he picked up new titles – Recreation Specialist and then OSP Activities Manager, respectively. In these jobs he was able to focus on offender clubs, cultural activities, and community contacts. These were more than just job duties to Randy. His progressive attitude and vision allowed him to see solutions to the expansion of programs where other people only saw problems of particular interest. To Randy they were sponsoring or promoting events that strengthened ties between inmates and their communities and families.

That visionary perspective also paid off when he was promoted to the hand-picked New Prison Construction team in 2002. Because of his skills and his grasp of issues at both the institutional and system-wide levels, among his recommendations were ones that urged the design of future facilities with emerging technological advancements to enhance family visiting, allowing built-in facility design to improve offender/family connections. He may have moved on from direct institutional work, but Randy's proposals were guided by his natural ability to see the life style implications to the resident incarcerated population in administrative policy decisions.

Randy supervised the first Native American Pow Wow at OSP. He coordinated softball and basketball tournaments, music festivals, and dozens of inmate club fund-raising activities directed at providing resources to youth programs and other worthy initiatives like the freeway overpass screening, among others. He sponsored an ongoing inmate art project in which inmate artwork is hung in the DOC Central Office to remind decision makers of the human potential in the populations they supervise. An inmate poetry project was conducted for the same purposes –of unity and understanding.

In his final year of employment with the Oregon DOC, Randy traveled across the state to meet one-on-one and personally forgive the individual who had killed his father, since that individual was still confined in Oregon's correctional facility system. In this way, he role modelled a phrase he frequently used to teach those he encountered: "You have to give people a way back." Randy often quoted the philosopher and poet John Donne by reminding those prison people, both staff and inmate, that "no man is an island."

*Randy says "Just so you know, I plan on being around a good while. My legs may not work well, but my heart and my mind are as wide as they've ever been. Your friend, Randy".*

**Randy means a lot to us at Oregon CURE.** To help donate to Randy's GoFundMe please visit: <https://www.gofundme.com/randy-geer>

# IMAGINE

BY JAMES ANDERSON, OSP

Imagine darkness, if you will, and in that darkness imagine thousands of prison cells encrusted with the rust and filth of ages. Imagine thousands of fingerprints gripping cold bars of steel as the forgotten men inside come to terms with their solitude.

Imagine the loneliness, the despair, and the tears that imprisoned men drown themselves in as they sit in decrepit 8x6 foot cells. Cells that have warehoused thousands of men before them. Cells that will warehouse even more after they've gone.

Imagine, if you can, those thousands of men sitting alone, their heads hung low, thinking of the damage they've caused to themselves as well as others. Imagine the shame.

Imagine the remorse that grips a prisoner's soul when self-honesty forces him to contemplate the choices he's made.

Imagine those poor choices haunting the minds of prisoners like a nightmare. Imagine within that nightmare not having an opportunity for escape...not physical escape mind you, but mental escape from the unrelenting message that they've failed life at its simplest terms. Imagine guilt-inspired insight being the most brutal of punishments. Imagine.

Imagine the effects of time. Imagine the days, and the months, and the years that pass as loved ones fade away and support systems crumble. Imagine social interactions being reduced to shakedowns and strip searches.

Imagine the long drawn out exhale that comes when a man lowers his head in defeat. Banished. Placed into a warehouse where problems aren't meant to be solved but rather hidden away as though time itself repairs the root causes of failure. Just imagine the thousands of men who are lost, destined only to be

swallowed up by a raging river of regret, shame, and unrealized potentials. It's the river that flows slowly through every prison, methodically stripping the humanness from within just like sediment is loosened and carried away from the muddy banks of a rivers edge.

Imagine self-worth, or for that matter, the lack thereof as thousands of men become more and more aware that society has in large part given up on them and cast them into exile.

Image them believing that if they died within the stagnant filth of the rusty prison cells, what they'd be remembered for most is being disappointments. Nothing more than who they were on their very worst day. Imagine.

Imagine that the cell door does open for those that are lucky, five years, ten years, and sometimes thirty years later. Imagine the swell of hope when a man is told that freedom is once again his...penance paid, only to have that hope abandoned when he discovers that a clean slate is just a phrase, not a reality that he'll experience.

My name is James. I've been here since I was seventeen years old. My fingerprints have gripped the same cold bars of steel that thousands before me have held. My emotions have soared and plummeted just as theirs have. My poor choice has filled me with guilt and shame just as theirs surely did. I've struggled within the currents of this rivers punishment for eight thousand and sixty eight days so far.

I don't know if my cell door will ever open. I don't know if that's something I'll ever deserve. But I'll tell you what I do know. I sure wish I could imagine something different, something better, for the person I harmed with that poor choice made so long ago. Imagine.

# TIME WELL SPENT

BY JOSHUA CAIN, OSP

There are a number of ways in which I personally could, in my role as an ACE for Credit student, constructively and significantly change the conversation around the issues of mass incarceration and education for the incarcerated. One of those ways would be to publish articles in newsletters, journals and books. Another way would be to write letters to representatives and other government officials. In these ways, my voice could have an impact on voters and policy makers that could ultimately change the conversation surrounding these issues.

Publishing articles in newsletters, such as the newsletter for CURE, gets my voice out to other people interested in criminal justice reform. My message comes from experiential expertise, lending credibility to my story. In this manner I can inform and inspire others to action by sharing the knowledge that I have gained through my life experiences.

I can also publish articles in journals and books that will be reviewed by criminologists and sociologists. These articles can then be referenced as they work to understand and transform the landscape of the criminal justice system, as well as society's understanding of prisons and the impacts they have on our communities and citizens. I can lend my voice to the conversations being held by people who can assist in the implementation of change and potentially inform people from all different walks of life.

Another way in which I could participate in these conversations would be to write letters to representatives in state and federal government. These stakeholders and decision-makers could benefit from my unique perspective and may be inspired to look to the voice of the prisoner as a person who is affected by their realm of influence, the nature of the political world could be influenced in ways that would at least be considerate of those who must live in prisons.

The reason I chose to focus on my ability to change the conversation about mass incarceration and education for the incarcerated is because they are two of the issues that I am closest to. I have a good deal of

knowledge gleaned from years of studying mass incarceration, as I feel it directly affects me and my mandatory minimum sentence. I have also spent most of the last two decades being involved in different forms of education while incarcerated. I feel like this provides me with an informed opinion about different ways prisoners can receive education, as well as the importance of those ways.

Writing to elicit change is an important and empowering way in which one can use their incarceration to better themselves and society. In this way, there is not only the fostering of the ability of an incarcerated person to influence the world at large, but there is also the changing of the prisoner's perspective that can lead to powerful transformation and reduced recidivism.

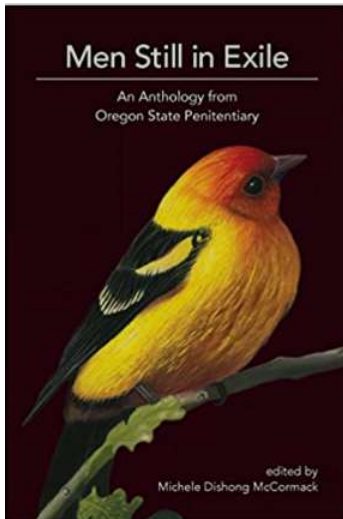
There are many ways in which I personally could, in my role as an ACE Credit student, constructively and significantly change the conversation around any number of issues. The issues of mass incarceration and education for the incarcerated are two that are near and dear to me, as I believe I have a good deal of experiential expertise surrounding them. One of the ways I could affect the conversations would be to publish articles in newsletters, journals, and books from my unique perspective. Another way would be to write letters to representatives and other government officials that could affect legal changes. In this fashion, I could influence voters and policy-makers that could ultimately change the conversation surrounding these issues and have a positive impact on myself and the world in general.

In the words of Tobi Jacobi, "The products that emerge have the potential to influence public understanding of individual students, youth culture, and juvenile detention trends and policies." (p.10) The same is true for adult incarceration trends and policies, criminal culture, prison culture, and individual prisoners. Sharing these products can have the power to change conversations and the entire nature of our criminal justice system. That is what I call time well spent.

IF YOU'RE INTERESTED IN READING MORE LITERATURE

**by incarcerated individuals in Oregon**

**we've listed some book recommendations of curated work from "inside the Pen".**



### MEN STILL IN EXILE

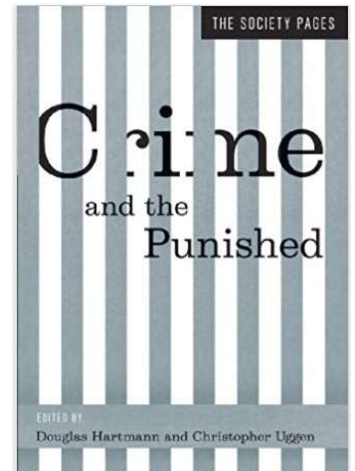
An anthology of poetry and prose by members of the Oregon State Penitentiary writing group, Penned Thoughts. Edited by Michele Dishong McCormack, group facilitator. The collection explores themes of gratitude and faith, hopes and dreams, life, love, family, and regret.

\$18.00 on Amazon here: <https://amzn.to/2TYUoGo>

### CRIME AND THE PUNISHED

The chapters are organized into three main sections: "Core Contributions" exemplifies how sociologists and other social scientists think about otherwise familiar phenomena like crime, incarceration, and suicide. Chapters in the "Cultural Contexts" section engage crime in cultural realms—from politics to families to international crime and justice—that are often ignored or taken for granted. Finally, the "Critical Takes" chapters provide sociological commentary, perspective, and reflections on crime and its control.

\$15.50 on Amazon here: <https://amzn.to/2UC4j8Z>



### WISDOM WITHIN THE PEN

The writing in Wisdom Within The Pen encompasses poetry, short story, and other forms of creative expression that are often autobiographical in nature. There are also many interesting, historical facts relating to the Oregon State Penitentiary and the inner workings of life behind bars.

\$8.50 on Lulu here: <https://bit.ly/2WU0sBB>



\*\*Prices may change at the discretion of the vendor over time, Oregon CURE receives no profit from the sale of these books

## RELEASE ORIENTATIONS

Release Orientations are co-facilitated by Community Corrections and Oregon CURE. Find out how you can help your recently or soon to be released loved one successfully re-enter our communities. Before attending, please phone one of the county coordinators / department listed below to confirm the date, time and location.

### Washington County Dates

Contact: Marcus Ford (503) 846-3494

Held Quarterly: 1st Wednesday of February, May, August, November

Time: 5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Location: Call to Confirm (503) 977-9979

### Multnomah County Dates

Contact: (503) 988-3081 press “0” for TSU

This orientation is for family and friends of prisoners who will be released within 6 months to Multnomah County.

Time: 3rd Thursdays, 3:30 – 5:00PM

Location: Mead Building

First Floor Conference Room

421 SW 5th Avenue, Portland

### Clackamas County

Contact: Gayle Terjeson (503)655-8790

Not being held at this time

### Marion County

Contact: Kayla Thompson (503) 540-8017

Marion County Probation and Parole

Location: Marion County Work Release Center

3950 Aumsville Hwy SE, Salem, OR 97317

## INTAKE ORIENTATIONS

Intake Orientations are co-facilitated by Oregon Department of Corrections and Oregon CURE. Find out about Oregon’s prison system, the intake process, phones, mail, and visiting requirements. You will receive a packet of informational brochures. There will be opportunities to ask questions and learn how you can get through your loved one’s incarceration. Maintaining family contact is vital to your loved one’s time in prison and upon release.

### Portland Metro Dates

Held Quarterly: 1st Wednesdays of March, June, September, and December

Time: 5:30pm to 7:00pm

Location: Varies, please call Oregon CURE to confirm: (503) 977-9979

### Salem Dates

Held Quarterly: 3rd Thursdays of February, May, August, and November

Time: 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Location:

First Christian Church

685 Marion Street NE

Salem, OR 97301

Parlor Room

Corner of Marion and Church streets, on the north side of downtown. There is parking on the street or in the Dept. of Energy parking lot next door. The entrance is on the west side of the building, in the parking lot.

## Support Groups

Oregon CURE support groups are intended for adult family members and friends only. Some topics of discussion may not be suitable for small children or pre-teens. Attend a support group and network with family members who have “been there”.

### **Beaverton Support Group**

1st Wednesdays: 7:00-8:30pm

Please call to confirm the location.

(503)977-9979

### **Salem Support Group**

1st Saturdays: 9:30-11:30am

The Keizer Senior Center

930 Plymouth Drive NE

Keizer, OR 97303

(503)409-3329 (Wayne)

### **Portland East Side Support Group**

Abundant Life Church

17241 S.E. Hemrich Rd.

Damascus, OR 97089

(503)757-7762 Will and Corinne

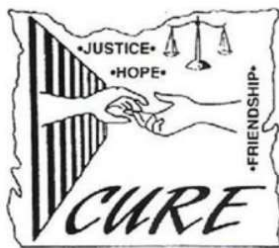
### **Eugene Support Groups**

1st Thursdays and 3rd Tuesdays: 7:00-9:00pm

Please call to confirm location.

(541)344-7612 Dave (541)342-6817 (Don)

Oregon CURE  
7805 SW 40<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
PO Box 80193  
Portland, OR 97280



#### Publication Notice

This newsletter is a publication of Oregon CURE. Oregon CURE is a 501 (c)(3) organization whose goal is to reduce crime through criminal justice reform.

The opinion and statements contained in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of Oregon CURE.

Contributions of articles, letters to the editor, notices, etc. are welcome, but may be edited or rejected for space. Articles may be copied in their entirety with credit to the author or to the publication.

Oregon CURE is an all-volunteer organization that is not a service organization. Do not send us any legal documents, we are not a legal service. We are not qualified to assist you with legal matters.

Renew your membership to Oregon CURE today!

Send your member donation to: Oregon CURE, PO Box 80193, Portland, OR 97280

Website: [www.oregoncure.org](http://www.oregoncure.org) Email: [oregoncure@gmail.com](mailto:oregoncure@gmail.com)

Please fill out the member donation form in this newsletter.

Type of donation: Adult in custody: \$3/ Individual: \$15/ Family: \$25/ Sustaining: \$50-\$100/

Sponsor: \$100-\$250/ Benefactor: \$250+