

"The whole aim of practical politics is to keep the populace alarmed (and hence clamorous to be led to safety) by an endless series of hobgoblins, most of them imaginary."
-- H.L. Mencken In Defense of Women (1922)

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- ✓ Static-99 Timeline Tells the Tale
- ✓ Open Minds = SO Rehab Success
- & Many more to come!

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Yes!

Yes, We Are "Undeclared"! - NARSOL Responds to Attack Threat.

(NARSOL Editorial Board), "Undeclared," 18(4) *the NARSOL Digest*, pp. 1, (Aug/Sep, 2025).
Text Excerpts: "Ripples moved quickly through the advocacy community at the news that, with mere hours left, NARSOL's 17th conference in Grand Rapids had been cancelled by the hotel property. Ripples soon became shock waves, but those faded quickly as NARSOL leadership met and strategized.

We are not deterred. Our mission and commitment to advocacy remain steadfast. While understanding how disheartening this is, **we are standing strong and moving forward!**

Our resolve was strengthened by the support of our friends. Messages came pouring in, ranging from a simple email saying, 'I'm so sorry. Let me know if I can help,' to wise words of support and encouragement from our partner organizations...."

Shawn at United Voices for Sex Offense Reform said, 'We cannot allow fear to become the norm.' And we will not. We will; move forward with greater care and doubled resolve, and we will continue to join together to fight for rational sex offense laws and against public conviction registries.

We are grateful to those attendees who chose to contribute their conference registration fees and even made additional donations to us as we worked to recoup the non-refundable expenses of the conference - printing, advertising, and other professional services - and invest in added security measures for the future.

<http://tinyurl.com/2uz5k27x>

These and all the kind communications helped shore us up. Also helpful was the realization of what it meant on a deeper level. We were the target of a hate campaign from a group that threatened the hotel with disruptive protests if they allowed our conference to go forward; that is why the hotel cancelled at the eleventh hour.

We were reminded of an old saying: "First they ignore you. Then they laugh at you. Then they fight you. And then you win."

Friends, we are making progress! For years, we have publicly hosted conferences where few outside our movement paid attention. We have been mocked online, and occasionally leadership has been doxed to varying degrees. But now, they are FIGHTING us. They have engaged in a battle. This is a WIN! And we will not back down.

The combined boards of NARSOL and NARSOL's Foundation have elected to reschedule the conference for a future date and alternative location as quickly as possible. We are actively working to secure a new venue and will communicate details as soon as they are available.

You support is needed now, more than ever. Please stay with us on the road ahead."

Yes! Proud Boys Threat Blocked Presentation of a Crucial Truth That Would Prevent Sexual Abuse.

Daniel A. Wilson, "A Canceled Conference: Silencing the Truth," 18(4) *the NARSOL Digest* p. 4 (Aug/Sep 2025).

Text: "According to event organizers, the venue scheduled to host the NARSOL Conference in Michigan this year caved after being harassed by the Proud Boys, a right-wing radical group who seem to think NARSOL endorses pedophilia. But do the Proud Boys know what NARSOL really stands for?"

'Civil commitment: the truth of a broken system' is one of the workshops that was scheduled for the NARSOL conference. The workshop was developed by TITUS, A Minnesota-based non-profit organization that lobbies for the reallocation of funds from civil commitment shadow prisons to programs that actually prevent sexual violence. The first slide of their Powerpoint presentation states, 'Sexual violence is a problem that MUST be addressed.'

According to TITUS, survivors of sexual violence support effective prevention strategies over methods that merely punish offenders. After all, primary prevention programs are significantly more effective than civil commitment in reducing rates of sexual violence and preparing former offenders for living offense-free in the community. The problem, however, according to sources, is that largely non-effective civil commitment shadow prisons receive 98% more funding than effective primary prevention programs.

Minnesota Circles of Support and Accountability, for instance, was 88% effective in preventing sexual offense recidivism before the program was discontinued due to lack of funding.

<https://tinyurl.com/4czm4dcv>

MSOP [the state agency operating those commitment shadow prisons in Minnesota] received more than \$100 million in fiscal year 2024 even though it fails to live up to its claim to prevent sexual violence.

<https://tinyurl.com/5bedr397>

Ruby Brewer, founder of TITUS said, 'If you just look at the schedule for the NARSOL Conference, which is online for all to see, you'll see that it is focused on making everyone safer.' Pete Dross, Senior Advisor for External Relations at the Center for Victims of Torture and one of the presenters of the TITUS workshop, said:

I've been a policy advocate for over 45 years and I can say this is the most complex political challenge I've faced because of the toxicity of the issue. The truth is, these systems do not protect our most vulnerable citizens. Over the course of its thirty-year history, MSOP has had no discernible impact on the incidence of sexual violence. In fact, MSOP functionally starves proven and promising approaches to preventing sexual vio-

lence.
<https://tinyurl.com/mr44bt8>
<https://tinyurl.com/nhfu2jxd>

Because of the threats that caused the hotel to cancel the NARSOL conference at the last minute, TITUS will not have the opportunity to present this information in more detail to those who need it. The topics NARSOL is concerned with are controversial at first glance, but if the Proud Boys were to do their research, they might decide to work with NARSOL, not against them.

Support and resources will continue to flow unheeded into civil commitment programs across the nation, all the while barely effecting an iota of success in any of the areas that the public believes is happening in the way of safer communities."

Yes, NARSOL Says, We Will Continue as Long as Needed.

"Sandy", "As Long as We Are Needed," 18(4) *the NARSOL Digest* p. 3 (Aug/Sep 2025).

Text: "Everyone loves a good protest. Most of us can look back to younger days, college or early job perhaps, and recall the excitement of being part of something we believed in. The right to protest is enshrined not only in our memories but also in the Constitution.

'Congress shall make no law ...abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble....'

The wording in the Constitution explicitly requires that any assembling for the purpose of petitioning or protesting must be peaceful. When exercising the right to assemble and protest has the intent of destroying another's right to assemble, peacefulness is lost. Today's lightning-fast, mass communication system produces an environment where the intent to harm is weaponized a thousand-fold.

NARSOL has recently experienced this.

A known hate-group, using lies, fear, and vigilantism, persuaded a hotel to cancel our June conference space just days before it was set to begin, leaving no options to relocate in time to hold the conference as planned. NARSOL and NARSOL's Foundation teams planned that conference for more than a year. We lost it in a matter of days. We were, of course, shaken. **Temporarily.** Our supporters were also shaken, angry, worried.

To be clear - **NARSOL did not choose to cancel this conference.** The hotel venue called NARSOL staff and informed them they were 'cancelling our event booking,' closing access to the hotel venue to our nearly 200 attendees, caving to pressure from an 'American far-right, neo-fascist militant organization that promotes and engages in political violence.'

NARSOL has existed for 18 years. Through 2024, we have had 16 consecutive, peaceful conferences. Every day, we receive letters and emails from individuals on the conviction registry

thanking us for giving them hope for a better tomorrow. It will take more than an online hate campaign to deter us. There are six months left in the year. There are many thousands of conference venues.

What we do is too important to stop. We fight the lies and myths surrounding registrants with facts and truth. We fight repressive, unconstitutional laws and restrictions with legal action. We publish the *Digest*, a newsletter for registrants, the incarcerated, their families, and their supporters.

We have conferences, educational, collegial, and enjoyable.

We daily strive toward our vision: *NARSOL envisions a society free from public shaming, dehumanizing registries, discrimination, and unconstitutional laws. We live up to our mission: NARSOL opposes dehumanizing registries by working to eliminate the laws, policies, and practices that propagate them.*

<https://tinyurl.com/3rf9wea9>

We will move forward with greater care and doubled resolve, and we will continue to join together to fight for rational sexual offense laws and against criminal registries.

What we do won't be stopped or deterred. It will survive as long as it is needed."

Trump Executive Order Confines Homeless Registrants – and Others.

Derek Logue, Personal Correspondence with quotes (August 8, 2025).

"Bad news – the orange Fuhrer has decided the best way to deflect the Epstein backlash is by committing to civil commitment. If anything, civil commitment may be EXPANDED, not eliminated under tRump. ...[A] few conservatives I spoke to had this asinine notion that tRump and that DOGE meme program was going to cut civil commitment and I tried warning them this would happen [instead].

TRUMP EXECUTIVE ORDER TARGETS HOMELESS REGISTRANTS

Ever since the Trump administration announced they would not be releasing the controversial Jeffrey Epstein Client List, the administration has been desperate to divert attention away from the worst-kept secret in the U.S. (Spoiler Alert: Trump himself is on that list, but those of us who are exposed to more than right-wing media for the past several years know this.) One common tactic I've seen used by politicians in the past to try to divert attention from scandals of any type is to emphasize their track record of going after people accused or convicted of sex offenses.

On 7.24.2025, Trump signed an Executive Order (EO) titled, 'ENDING CRIME AND DISORDER ON AMERICA'S STREETS.' ...Part of this EO targets homeless Registrants as well as recommending civil commitment. In a corresponding 'Fact Sheet' for the EO on the White House website, ... the most disturbing parts of this EO as

mentioned in this fact sheet include the following, which are far beyond concerns limited to past sex offenders:

1) 'The Order directs the Attorney General to reverse judicial precedents and end consent decrees that limit State and local governments' ability to commit individuals in the streets who are a risk to themselves or others.' This could increase the use of civil commitment, which I presume includes indefinite detention for transient registrants for no other reason than for being forced to Register.

2) 'The Order directs the Attorney General to work with the Secretary of Health and Human Services, Secretary of Housing and Urban Development, and the Secretary of Transportation to prioritize grants for states and municipalities that ...track the location of sex offenders.' ...My concern with this section is increased harassment by law enforcement and even the use of GPS 'ankle monitors' to achieve this goal. Those who actually held out hope that Trump would oppose the registry should give up that hope as this EO is a reinforcement of SORNA. [Editor: This also shows that Trump is not a friend to those with sex offense convictions, but instead is an enemy.]

3) Generally, Registered Persons already cannot get most types of housing assistance. Those who are forced to register for life can't get federal Section 8 or HUD assistance. However, this might also [mean to] refer to the bill introduced earlier this year by South Carolina's Republican Representative Nancy Mace, entitled H.R. 1205 – To prohibit certain sex offenders from entering or using the services of certain emergency shelters, to authorize the Administrator of the Federal Emergency Management Agency to designate emergency shelters for such sex offenders, and for other purposes. Mace was inspired by certain counties in the state of Florida that prohibit Registered Persons from staying in emergency shelters with non-registrants; often, Registrants must shelter in segregated shelters or local jails/prisons.

Registered Persons are losing more rights than ever under this EO. Now, being homeless puts your very freedom in jeopardy."

Excerpt from the EO: Section 1. "... Shifting homeless individuals into long-term institutional settings ...through the appropriate use of civil commitment will restore public order. Surrendering our cities and citizens to disorder and fear is neither compassionate to the homeless nor other citizens." [Editor: Underlined and/or bold passages are by this editor for focus and/or emphasis.]

Editor's Comments: By invoking rationales based on mere slinging around words like "fear," "disorder," and "public safety," Trump here seeks to evoke fear, not to quell it. In reality, neither the presence of the homeless in any community nor their gathering for personal safety and mutual support produce any 'crime waves.'

In reality, although the circumstances of the lives of those who have become homeless (usually beyond their control) are truly

stark and desperate, almost all of them remain law-abiding and respectful of the rights of others. Only a tiny percentage of the homeless engage in criminal behavior. This is parallel to society in general. It is totally unfair to condemn all who become homeless based on the bad conduct of a very few exceptions. Even such illegal misconduct that occurs almost always in limited to shoplifting or other surreptitious petty theft (see "desperation" comment above).

In reality, Trump is pursuing an ulterior goal by this EO. He is aware of two trends that he doesn't want the populace of the country to be aware of, much less to focus on.

First, automation based on artificial intelligence and advanced robotics is about to make an enormous leap. This will happen soon because applying these technologies to every aspect of manufacturing and commerce will result in outperforming human workers at most assigned tasks. Pilot projects and initial, limited applications have already proved the dramatic savings to corporations that can be reaped through converting to AI-controlled robotics. This will also cost less – in some cases far less – than the cost of human labor. This competitive comparison of costs includes statutorily required costs beyond 'raw' wages (such as Social Security contributions, Medicare, unemployment insurance and workers compensation insurance, and Affordable Health Care Act costs). Considering wages and all this, getting work done by robots will win out every time.

As this imminent trend revs up, the rate of layoffs/terminations of workers will also increase exponentially. This is the second trend. The only jobs that humans can consider secure in this time will be those where human factors will still be required – and will be deemed useful enough to those at the top to continue to be funded.

These kinds of jobs will likely be those requiring sage application of judgment/discretion, especially where high tech procedures must be governed by such decision-making that may continue to elude the expertise of AI software. However, the shocking likelihood is that the AI and robotics 'revolution' could wind up displacing as much as 20 to 40% of the workforce of the US, and ultimately, perhaps even higher percentages in foreign countries – effectively resulting in the deepest and most difficult-to-end of all economic depressions in history. This will be yet another lesson for Americans: What is good for the profits of large corporations and the capitalists who own them is often very bad for the workers who devoted years of poorly paid labor to make those industrial-commercial entities the powerhouses they became. A pink-slip reward for such loyalty naturally inspires bitterness, when the cause of termination is only increased profits for the bottom line and financial windfalls to stockholders.

The most-likely-to-succeed way to avoid being rendered obsolete by robotics and particularly by AI decision-making is to gain education sufficiently technical and advanced to produce skills and applicable

knowledge that needed in this new age of heightened automation. Republican presidents and Republican Congressional majorities have drastically cut grants to colleges/universities. Now that approach will worsen this impact, since those funding cuts have put college learning out of financial reach for most would-be post-secondary students. This was an act of simple greed by the rich, who quietly wished to avoid the tax rates they would have to pay to fund higher education for the masses (i.e., their workers).

A second reason for Republican legislators to want to reduce college graduation is that college graduates tend to absorb ethics and values along the way that make them more compassionate to the less fortunate – in other words, producing Democrats. Making college unattainably expensive for the masses ensures that most who graduate from college (future leaders of our country) are scions of the rich or very well-off. Since both subjects of instruction and faculty in higher education are themselves subject to a kind of demand-supply economy, curriculum attention to socially concerned issues will wither away through lack of interest by wealthy future yuppies from families treating conservative attitudes like hallowed religious tenets. Indirectly, this will silence such social concerns.

At the same time, those same Republican decision-makers have been starving the American public school system of funding. This has been a deliberate effort to end public education, so as to stop the integrative effect of school busing, so that the form of apartheid in America held so dear by those who wish a return to race separation *à la* the 1920s can be restored. Public schooling will continue to exist, if at all, only by minimalist spoon-feeding of funding contingent on inclusion of heavy doses of conservative concepts and propaganda disguised as unassailable fact. With decision-makers like these in office, these goals will be assured, even at the expense of the generations of uneducated adults of all races, ethnicities and locales already being produced, incapable of filling any career positions beyond manual labor – manual labor that will be turned over to the lowest level of robots – cheaper than feeding such basic laborers and their broods. Thus, these educational cuts will badly exacerbate the depth and inescapability of the depression to come. I wonder what current schoolchildren would say if they realized that this was the bleak and mindless future being designed and implemented for them.

All this may well explain why Herr Trump and his minions, who represent only the ultra-rich, do not want the public to focus on the root causes for what is soon to occur. Instead, they want to continue the policy of distracting the public with fearful images of monsters supposedly among us, cast as supposedly hanging around in encampments of the homeless, for instance, suggested to be just waiting for an opportunity to predatorily pounce upon those seen as pure and innocent, and (most especially) as vulnerable and in need of protection.

Of course, this does not square with reality at all. Just as an apt illustration regarding

sex offenses, 95% are committed by family members or family friends/acquaintances, not by homeless strangers. Certainly, at infrequent occasions in this vast and populous country of ours, there have always been, and probably always will be an infinitesimal number of people with very bad motivations toward mistreatment of their fellow human beings.

However, becoming hypnotically focused on this tiny sliver of humanity will cause one to forget about the larger, potentially inescapable realities that imperil us all – including the situation just sketched out above. It also allows people to ignore that most in homeless encampments are simply re-enacting what occurred throughout the country in the early 1930s – “Hoovervilles”, and specifically in the form of the encamped protest in Washington, DC (the “Bonus Army”) in summer, 1932 – large encampments of people thrown out of work by that earlier depression. That’s why Trump is taking extreme measures to forcibly expel those homeless from Washington now. Things will get much worse as countless more lose their jobs to AI-driven robotics. Small wonder then that Trump intends more than simply evicting those in D.C.’s homeless-unemployed encampments – as called for by Section 1 of that EO, “Shifting homeless individuals into long-term institutional settings”....

If you are a true Trump loyalist or an undying optimist, you may choose to believe that this will be for magnanimous care and vocational retraining. However, you should thoroughly ponder the fact that right now, the Department of Homeless Security has started to build a network of giant detention facilities around the country that resemble the stark animal pens that unauthorized immigrants have already been subjected to indefinitely, far beyond any foreseeable need for occupancy by those of that status (source: *The Week*, Aug. 1, 2025, p. 5).

No forensic beds at any of these facilities? No problem, since this EO declares that those placed in them and claimed to have “serious mental illness” cannot be freed on that basis (Subsection 2(b) (iii)). When did loitering, camping, or squatting become bases for indefinite “long” detention? Thus far, constitutional law judicial decisions in this country have resolutely required both mental illness (or at least a serious mental “disorder”), plus danger of imminent violence, including an inability to resist any such violent impulse. Trump, however, is directing his MAGA Attorney General Bondi to overturn this requirement. Welcome to 1984 and *Minority Report*, both enacted in real life!

Who else are these new pens waiting for, if not jobless, homeless citizens feared by Trump to be potential troublemakers as he continues in his plan to become an absolute dictator? If you can’t smell this coming, you need to up your dosage of FloNase®.

– Let’s see if this helps clear things up for you: Subsection 2(a) of that EO directs the U.S. Attorney General to “take appropriate action to: ...seek reversal of ...precedents and termination of consent decrees imped

ing civil commitment of individuals ...who pose risks to themselves or the public or are living on the streets and cannot care for themselves” (for clarity and emphasis, this disjunctive is repeated in Subsection 2(a) (iv), in both places in the EO: without any mental illness or dangerousness required at all) in appropriate facilities, for, among other alternative reasons, merely to: “(ii) enforce prohibitions on urban camping and loitering or (iii) enforce prohibitions on urban squatting....” In this subsection, Trump dictates that the executive branch shall provide grants to State and local governments to implement “maximally flexible” civil commitment to cover those whose only attribute is being homeless and thus by implicit definition of this EO, being “unable to care for themselves.”

It doesn’t take an advanced college degree to realize that the language underlined here effectively empowers DHS captors or their local equivalents to keep those committed for as long as the captors want. As stated above, *The Week* magazine Aug. 1, 2025 edition reported that DHS is now creating a network of “massive” detention facilities throughout the country beyond the needs to house illegal aliens. Could this be to detain all those deemed to pose any vaguely defined “risk” to the public (for which read, to the totalitarian government to come)?

It was never just about commitment of several thousands of sex offenders who had completed their prison sentences, but who it was hysterically claimed decades after their crimes were just dangerous, although not mentally ill. That was just a fear-mongering wedge placed in the door for later. Now it is later, and the door has been flung open so hard it has broken off its hinges. How does it feel to be dangerous for opposing emerging tyranny? If it wasn’t time for you to wake up before, it surely is now!

When the Judicial System Is Rife with Bias, It’s “Immoral Vigilantism.”

Editor’s Current Introductory Note: The following commentary originally appeared at the close of a 3-part series of excerpts from an article about “moral vigilantism” [really, immoral vigilantism] in *TLP* editions 2:12, 3:1, and 3:2. Over time, and particularly considering the current presidential administration, the following theme appears more relevant than ever. Hence this reprint:

“Everyone hopes for justice. Justice helps us make sense of the world. A world without any justice would be chaotic, unpredictable, and frightening in its pseudo-anarchy.

Hence, when we perceive an injustice, frustration and anger are understandable reactions. However, what is the definition of an injustice? In the Old West, before widespread civilization set in, hanging cattle rustlers on the spot of apprehension was regarded as justice. Certainly, those who

carried out the lynching in *The Oxbow Incident* thought themselves morally justified and effective agents of summary justice — until, that is, they learned that their conclusion of guilt of the ones they hung was incorrect.

Thus, in modern times instead, we assign determination of what constitutes justice to law and courts. Everyone has some complaint with at least one judicial decision. As an innocent man in my own latest conviction, I certainly do.

Yet even I know that the system of laws and judicial dispensation that we have, flawed though it is, remains the only thing that separates us from roaming lawless bands making life and death decisions about what displeases them and effecting those decisions with murder that they will call ‘justice.’

Almost immediately — probably when it dawns on members of such a gang that justice not based on law and a system of trying facts is just personal emotional reaction, such a gang devolves into seeking personal wants and satisfactions at gunpoint, becoming criminally anarchic. One has to wonder about the true motives of those who, in advance, would advocate for such so-called vigilante justice.

The three-installment article-excerpts just completed address a uniquely insidious form of vigilantism (‘shadow vigilantism’) that infests or pressures the formal justice system itself, from police who are ‘sure’ of a suspect’s guilt, but cannot prove it beyond a reasonable doubt except by ‘testilying’ (simply, perjury) to those who, in judicial reelection politics, threaten to unseat judges whose decisions they dislike.

In some cases, shadow vigilantism takes the form of individuals taking the place of police in investigating crimes. They even entice those they are ‘sure’ would commit a contemptible crime, such as trying to arrange to meet juveniles for illicit sexual interaction.

For example, Perverted Justice did exactly the latter, digitally posing as teens to entrap pedosexuals into accepting seeming offers to meet up with the ‘teen.’ When the pedosexual would show up, he would be arrested by police, who had been tipped off by Perverted Justice in advance.

Had police themselves arranged such stings without any advance indication that the pedosexual would have set up such meetings on his own, the sting operation would be deemed ‘entrapment,’ and the resulting charge of luring a minor could not have been sustained. Only because the sting was conducted by private citizens were such charges upheld.

Yet this was simply a legal ‘dodge’: In many cases Perverted Justice vigilantes worked hand-in-hand with police detectives, who guided every step vigilantes took to progressively escalate their campaign of temptation of the pedosexual. Police simply stood by in the wings, as it were, to seem to minimize their involvement in this scheme in order to get a sustainable arrest.

All of this was defended on the justification that ‘he would have eventually done it anyway.’ However, as much of the scientific

inquiry appearing in the pages of almost every issue of *TLP* has repeatedly proved, there is no way to know that; in fact, statistical evidence shows that the odds of even the most flagrant pedosexuals actually attempting such a crime are very low, not high.

It serves to emphasize the intensity of the problem that shadow vigilantism about or within the justice system comprises to re-quote a passage from the article here:

‘Shadow vigilantism is generally unseen. Jury nullification, improper exercise of discretion in charging, sentencing and other criminal justice decisions, and support in the voting booth for unjust punishment policies go unseen.

‘Further, the level of shadow vigilante action in any given case is unpredictable, dependent as it is on a wide variety of factors, such as publicity and public reaction. That introduces arbitrariness and disparity among cases that can only contribute in the long run to the system’s reputation as being less predictable, more arbitrary, more unreliable, and thus less just. In other words, shadow vigilantism only serves to exacerbate the system’s moral credibility problem that triggered it.

‘Thus, ...the system’s insensitivity to the importance of doing justice invites a downward spiral. The system’s poor reputation prompts shadow vigilantism, which further degrades the system’s consistency and predictability, which further undermines its reputation, making it that much easier for people to be provoked to undermine and subvert it.’

Even prosecutors engage in abuses of discretion and overtly improper acts sometimes, partly explained in this later passage:

‘...[T]o some it may make sense to try to get more liability and punishment than an offender deserves for the case at hand because, given the gross ineffectiveness of the system, the offense at hand is probably just the tip of the iceberg of the offenses he has actually committed.’

Again, however, there is no proof or any particularized reason to suspect such undiscovered additional past offenses; the suspicion is merely based on generalized suspicions that criminals generally, or even more alarmingly, criminals of a particular kind, have a high tendency to recidivism. Of course, in actual fact, as statistics for sex crimes prove beyond question, even that much-maligned subset of past offenders turn out to be among the very lowest in likelihood of later re-offense.

The article’s summation of the current situation engendered by all of these biased views and their resulting, justice-derailing actions is shocking to all but the most jaded: ‘...[T]he criminal justice system is no longer about justice. It is simply a system of mutual combat between defense counsel and prosecutors, with winners and losers, the goal of which is always to win and never to lose.’

Those of us who have experienced the sex-offender commitment process are all too keenly aware that playing fast and

(Continued on page 4)

loose when defendants' lives are on the line is not limited to criminal law.

Sex offender commitment as it is actually practiced is simply a means of disposal of humans so extremely disdained as to cause some people to believe that a past sex offender simply cannot live a crime-free lifestyle, and hence, is unfit for life in open society. We who have been relegated to commitment facilities of this type know full well that this is a lie (although sincerely accepted by many).

We also witnessed so-called experts who had never met us hold forth hysterically, predicting that, for cherry-picked unscientific reasons, we supposedly were guaranteed to recidivate sexually at some future time.

Even when our lawyers were adept enough to prove to the court that such lies were actually contrary to known science, we heard judges adopt those lies as a supposed basis to chuck us into these modern-day black holes simply as an expedient means to get rid of us and to play to the electorate they hope will re-elect them.

The term 'psychopathic personality' was rejected as a term of art by the psychiatric profession in 1885."

Dr. Erickson, MCCTA Task Force Hearing, August 25, 1994

Then in turn, we are later informed that such rolling travesties of justice are upheld by appellate judges as supposedly within the 'discretion' of the trial judge, even though any honest person would know upon sight that such judicial decisions are nothing more than rank exercises in bias as the true basis to lock one away — presumably for life.

Using the civil commitment system to confine people like Linehan who are not mentally ill, not incompetent, who are fully accountable of their actions, and should be held fully accountable of their actions, is unconstitutional preventive detention. A law authorizing such detention would in essence establish a 'dangerousness court' authorized to lock people up indefinitely based upon the predictions of mental health professionals about what they think these people might in the future do. Applied to people like Linehan, who have served their criminal sentences, where the law requires that they be released, this is double jeopardy. Preventive detention, dangerousness courts, double jeopardy - these are, in my opinion, anathema to our democratic way of life." —

Prof. Eric Janus, MCCTA Hearing, August 24, 1994

Finally, after landing in one of these facilities, we watch as each of them proclaims loudly and long to the public and their administrative overlord agencies and legislators that they are treating us so as to make us 'safe for release.'

However, in fact, the inapposite gobbledygook they foist upon us as a false façade of treatment is really just aimed at shaming us and making us more considerate and polite individuals. If this is the stuff of why sex crimes are committed, then such instruction and practice at such social skills is some-

thing that could be done anywhere, including during the parole that each of us is deprived of through such commitments. And it certainly does not take the 20 years and more that, at a minimum, we remain confined in these facilities to impart those lessons to us.

They do this because, even though they assume that we are 'sick,' they haven't the foggiest how to construct a treatment program that would actually fit their "theory" of why we committed one or more sex crimes all those decades ago, much less their revulsed bias about us that claims that, if released, we would immediately begin a chain of recidivistic sex crimes that we simply could not resist an impulse to do.

Every word in that bias is scientifically baseless; it proceeds from nothing more than the crime(s) we committed so long ago, augmented only by various non-criminal current behaviors that are baselessly ginned up into a claim that, because we do such things, we must be heading toward future sex crimes. That is a pure non sequitur, a pure excuse for the ears of those who stand as arbiters in the doorway to release who really just want to hear such a convenient excuse to never let us go — whether from genuine fear, personal disgust, or just political expedience (or usually, all of these).

While all this goes on in the back rooms, commitment captors utter lies to us about a supposed intention of doing their best to see that we get released in reasonable time, but really by this they actually just send us round and round the 'treatment merry-go-round' *ad infinitum*, until we get old and die.

Collectively, those first subjected to this disguised system of additional punishment and pure preventive detention (not even justified by the tiny statistics of actual recidivism by sex offenders) fell for it in ignorance or in patient willingness to play along to see where things would go.

But now, some thirty years later, this has gone absolutely nowhere. Throughout the various jurisdictions that employ this fake-civil commitment as a means of adding further incarceration after our prison terms have ended, the rates of release, on average, from these insidious systems of confinement-for-its-own-sake are minimal at most, and in some cases, are almost nonexistent.

Thus, in countrywide 'commitment' confinement, sex offenders are no longer fooled by such empty lies of intention. We know that such captors do not intend to release us, and we know that they know we know. And none of us can afford to continue to accept this abuse of our rights and this deliberate destruction of our humanity.

We must speak loudly and incessantly to all who will listen about this immoral wrong that is inflicted upon us, this permanent incarceration by means of nothing more than sheer character assassination of us.

We will recite the science that this infliction silently but deliberately defies. We will expose what is really being done, citing each death in confinement that is arranged

by vicious detention of old men, under malignant medical neglect.

We will seek to defrock all such faux 'experts' from whatever allegedly professional status they have, but which they do not deserve; their anti-scientific frauds demand that they be permanently barred from the helping professions.

We will share among ourselves the true scientific knowledge, upon which our freedom should turn, and we will meet our captors in court to demand that freedom and to demand just recompense for the years of our lives that they have deprived us of.

We will politically expose and delegitimize all political sponsors of this disingenuous, fraudulent commitment misuse and to seek to unseat them for their part in this crass and knowing conspiracy. Know that the days of such permitted 'testilying' have ended. Those former sponsors will not come to the defense of such character assassins now. Having taken their political gains long ago, they have moved on to other things.

These charlatans never had the right to the 'moral vigilantism' that they have heaped upon us at every turn. All of them were, from the beginning, motivated by their hatred for what they labeled us as representing.

But no one has the right to dehumanize any other person by such hate-speech and such extremist lies. Their days at this are done.

We demand that our lives be legally restored to us. Now."

Your First Amendment Rights in SOCC Facilities

Under the First Amendment to the United States Constitution you, like every American, have a wide array of rights that center on communication and freedom of mind. The First Amendment also guarantees certain rights with regard to religion. However, those rights are beyond the topic at hand.

Most notable among the First Amendment rights regarding expression, receipt or expression by others, and freedom of thought and emotion are the following:

1. The right to correspond and to use telephones and other modes of communication, including digital communication;
2. The right to receive, read and possess publications;
3. The right to communicate with media personnel and to write for publication;
4. The right to access non-print media;
5. The right to interact with other individuals, including by visitation;
6. The right to petition government entities and officials for redress of grievances;
7. The right to assemble, to complain, and/or to protest;
8. The right to think whatever you want and to experience any emotions you may have or encounter.

Notwithstanding the foregoing, some utterances, by their very nature are outside of the protection of the First Amendment, for instance: "fighting words"; threats of violence or other criminal action; or incitement to riot or other crime.

Conversely, even utterances that might be said to be inherently without peril to anyone can still be constitutionally regulated as to the time, place and manner at/in which the utterance is made if any of these three factors might inflict harm or unreasonable inconvenience on the government or the public.

Prisons, and to a lesser extent mental health confinement facilities may, consistent with the First Amendment, restrict expressive content and regulate the exercise of the first seven of these rights (but not the last one). Three U.S. Supreme Court decisions (*Procunier v. Martinez*, *Turner v. Safley*, and *Thornburgh v. Abbott*) and later rulings by courts pursuant to these three set the circumstances and the limits of such regulation and censorship by prisons.

However, it is important to bear in mind that, since those confined in mental health facilities are not there for punishment, the extent of such restrictions and censorship is more limited than is allowed to prisons. See comprehensively: *Tanya Kessler*, "Purgatory Cannot Be Worse Than Hell": The First Amendment Rights of Civilly Committed Sex Offenders," 12 *N.Y. City L. Rev.* 283 (Summer 2009). See also *Noble v. Schmitt*, 87 F.3d 157 (6th Cir. 1996) (which, although not concerning sex offenders as such, stands for the principle that those under civil commitment do not lose their rights under the communicative arm of the First Amendment any more than under its religious arm).

There are different levels of critical review of institutional limits on exercise of First Amendment rights. The most lenient standard (as against the facility) is usually called the "rational" standard, that is, as long as the limiting institutional rule can be said to have a rational connection to the goal of such limitation and the need for the rule and its means by which it is carried out are rational, the limit will be found to be permissible under the First Amendment.

The next higher standard is simply whether, all relevant circumstances considered, the rule and its enforcement are "reasonable." In cases where this standard is not deemed by a court to adequately protect substantial First Amendment interests, the court may choose to require that the restriction/regulation be needed to protect a "compelling" governmental need.

Finally, the highest standard is reserved for First Amendment interests that are deemed to be of paramount importance that the restriction/regulation does not appear to leave any other meaningful option for those who seek to exercise a First Amendment right. In such circumstances, a court probably will apply a demanding standard of satisfaction by the institution of "strict scrutiny" of the restriction/regulation.

A key factual question is whether the conduct sought to be restricted or regulated

is 'pure' speech, or instead is a mix of both speech and non-speech conduct aspects. To clarify this, see, e.g., *McCraw v. City of Okla. City*, 973 F.3d 1057, (10th Cir. 2020). This, for example, has been used to uphold rules limiting protest activities. On protests generally see: *Collins v. Jordan*, 102 F.3d 406 (9th Cir. 1996). The questions involved are the level of threat to institutional safety and security by a given kind of protest activity, and whether the rule goes farther than needed to protect those institutional needs.

Censorship has always been a specially vulnerable form of restriction under the First Amendment. See, for example, *Largent v. Texas*, 318 U.S. 418, 63 S. Ct. 667, 87 L. Ed. 873, 1943 U.S. LEXIS 890 (1943) (Any regulation which makes dissemination of ideas depend upon approval of its distributor by an official constitutes administrative censorship in an extreme form, and, subject to certain exceptions, any regulation which subjects communications to license infringes right of free speech.)

First Amendment rights are deemed especially protected against vague and over-broad restrictions and regulations. In other words, even if a given institutional rule might otherwise be sustained against a First Amendment challenge, if it is vague, such that it cannot be determined with at least near-certainty whether or not it would apply to the circumstance at hand, or if its coverage of the circumstance at hand is beyond the limit of what is needed to protect a compelling governmental interest, for instance, it will still be ruled constitutionally invalid.

First Amendment case law is full of distinctions often based on seemingly small factual differences. Nonetheless, by starting with the foregoing general considerations, you should be able to determine whether you would likely be granted protection of your First Amendment rights by a court in a given circumstance. Govern yourself accordingly and proceed with confidence when you have objectively considered your speech and related conduct (if any) and believe you are within the protections of the First Amendment as listed above.

The foregoing is not legal advice nor is this writer a licensed attorney. The foregoing are just general observations that any layperson of average intelligence can easily derive from commonly available books and articles about the expanse of First Amendment protections. If you feel you need such advice or representation in any legal issue about your rights or lack thereof, consult a licensed attorney with particular knowledge about First Amendment rights. The ACLU and law schools are good sources to start your search for referrals to attorneys specializing in First Amendment rights.

The Library Bill of Rights Protects Our Rights

by Cyrus Gladden, Editor
Among the rights listed by the American

Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" are these with some pertinence to those with atypical sexual orientations/attractions and, in particular, those with past convictions for crimes of a sexual nature:

"...V. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

VII. All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. Libraries should advocate for, educate about, and protect people's privacy, safeguarding all library use data, including personally identifiable information." [as amended July 1, 2014 and January 29, 2019; source: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill>.]

The more lengthy document, "Interpretations of the Library Bill of Rights," explains how these rights apply to those in our position:

"...Prisoners' Right to Read: ALA asserts a compelling public interest in the preservation of intellectual freedom for individual of any age held in jails, prisons, detention facilities, juvenile facilities, immigration facilities, prison work camps, and segregated units within any facility, whether public or private.

Privacy: All people, regardless of origin, age, background, or views, possess a right to privacy and confidentiality in their library use. The American Library Association affirms that rights of privacy are necessary for intellectual freedom and are fundamental to the ethical practice of librarianship.

Rating Systems: Rating systems are tools or labels devised by individuals or organizations to advise people regarding suitability or content of materials. Rating systems appearing in library catalogs or discovery systems present distinct challenges to intellectual freedom principles. The American Library Association affirms the rights of individuals to form their own opinions about resources they choose to read or view.

"...Restricted Access to Library Materials: Libraries are a traditional forum for the open exchange of information. Attempts to restrict access to library materials violate the basic tenets of the Library Bill of Rights.

"...Universal Right to Free Expression: Freedom of expression is an inalienable human right and the foundation for self-government. Freedom of expression encompasses the freedoms of speech, press, religion, assembly, and association, and the corollary right to receive information."

[source: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations>.]

Most specifically to those in SOCC confinement facilities, the "Prisoners' Right to Read: An Interpretation of the Library Bill of Rights" states the following of note:

"The American Library Association asserts a compelling public interest in the preservation of intellectual freedom for individuals of any age held in jails, prisons, detention facilities, juvenile facilities, immigration facilities, prison work camps, and segregated units within any facility, whether public or private.. As Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall wrote:
"When the prison gates slam behind an

inmate, he does not lose his human quality; his mind does not become closed to ideas; his intellect does not cease to feed on a free and open interchange of opinions; his yearning for self-respect does not end; nor is his quest for self-realization concluded. If anything, the needs for identity and self-respect are more compelling in the dehumanizing prison environment."

Participation in a democratic society requires unfettered access to current social, political, legal, economic, cultural, scientific, and religious information. Information and ideas available outside the prison are essential to people who are incarcerated for a successful transition to freedom. Learning to thrive in a free society requires access to a wide range of knowledge. Suppression of ideas does not prepare people of any age who are incarcerated for life in a free society. Even those individuals who are incarcerated for life require access to information, to literature, and to a window on the world.

That material contains unpopular views or even what may be considered repugnant content does not justify its censorship.² Censorship is a process of exclusion by which authority rejects specific viewpoints....

Correctional libraries, librarians, or library managers may be required by federal, state, or local laws; administrative rules; or court decisions to prohibit material that instructs, incites, or advocates criminal action or bodily harm or is a violation of the law. Only those items that present an actual compelling and imminent risk to safety and security should be restricted. Although these limits restrict the range of material available, the extent of limitation should be minimized by adherence to the *Library Bill of Rights* and its interpretations.

These principles should guide all library services provided to people who are incarcerated or detained, regardless of citizenship status or conviction status:

- Collection management should be governed by written policy, mutually agreed upon by librarians and correctional agency administrators, in accordance with the *Library Bill of Rights* and its interpretations.
- Correctional libraries should have written procedures for addressing challenges to library materials, including a policy-based description of the disqualifying features.³
- Correctional librarians and managers should select materials that reflect the demographic composition, information needs, interests, and diverse cultural values of the confined communities they serve.
- Correctional librarians should be allowed to acquire materials that meet written selection criteria and provide for the multi-faceted needs of their populations without prior correctional agency review. They should be allowed to select from a wide range of sources in order to ensure a broad and diverse collection. Correctional librarians should not be limited to acquiring or purchasing from a list of approved materials or vendors.

- ...Equitable access to information should be provided for people with disabilities.⁵
- Media or materials with non-traditional bindings should not be prohibited unless they present an actual compelling and imminent risk to safety and security.
- Material with sexual content should not be banned unless it violates state and federal law.
- Correctional libraries should provide access to computers and internet content, permitted by the correctional facility's library policies.
- People who are incarcerated or detained should have the ability to obtain books and materials from outside the prison for their personal use.

When free people, through judicial procedure, segregate some of their own, they incur the responsibility to provide humane treatment and essential rights. Among these is the right to read and to access information. The right to choose what to read is deeply important, and the suppression of ideas is fatal to a democratic society. The denial of intellectual freedom – the right to read, to write, and to think – diminishes the human spirit of those segregated from society."

[source: <https://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/prisonersrighttoread>.]
Notes:

- ¹ *Proconier v. Martinez*, 416 U.S. 428 (1974).
- ² 28 CFR 540.71(b): "The warden may not reject a publication solely because its content is religious, philosophical, political, social, or sexual, or because its content is unpopular or repugnant."
- ³ "Challenged Resources: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*," adopted July 3, 1971 by the ALA Council....
- ⁵ "Services to People with Disabilities: An Interpretation of the *Library Bill of Rights*," adopted January 28, 2009, by the ALA Council under the title "Services to Persons with Disabilities"

Like in Minnesota, You Might Be a Protected "Whistle Blower."

by Cyrus Gladden
Last Spring, the Minnesota administrative agency known as "Direct Care and Treatment" (DCT) instituted a whistle blower policy (#105-1052). As of July 1, 2025, the Minnesota Sex Offender program (MSOP), the agency administering civil commitment confinement and treatment for sex offenders, was put under the exclusive oversight of DCT. Because the new whistle blower policy is "DCT-wide," it encompasses MSOP now.

The general aim of this new policy is to "protect[] any DCT employee who engages in good faith disclosure of alleged wrongful

(Continued on page 6)

conduct by another DCT employee from unlawful retaliation and discrimination." However, the policy also covers "clients of DCT (including MSOP clients). It provides a confidential "webform" that can be used by a client, among others, to report wrongdoing. This provision is exceptionally broad, declaring its applicability to:

"a breach of client confidentiality or other violations of client privacy. The hotline is there to provide a confidential method outside of the normal administrative structure for any DCT employees, students, volunteers, contractors, clients, or customers to report actual, possible, or potential violation of law, regulations, institutional policies and procedures. Individuals using the hotline, who are acting in good faith, are protected against retaliation. All legitimate concerns received by the hotline will be investigated confidentially."

Further, the policy provides for "feedback transparency" to the whistleblowing client, thus:

"Individuals may request progress reports and a final response regarding their report..."

Also interesting is that this policy makes reporting by employees of wrongdoing by other employees mandatory, whether by the confidential reporting process established by the policy itself or by more traditional, non-confidential channels, including to direct superiors. Given the importance of the policy's protections, it is anticipated that most employees will choose the whistle blower procedure.

This will create a record. Generally, state open-records law bars release of data if the investigation clears the employee cited for wrongdoing. However, in cases where the allegation of wrongdoing is found substantiated, the record becomes open to anyone (in this case, importantly, to MSOP clients). Hence, a backdoor now exists that previously did not to expose unethical practices by MSOP clinicians and other MSOP employees, including leading administrators.

In sum, this is a very helpful administrative policy.

Because mental health law throughout the country is generally evolving toward more protections to clients of governmental mental health programs, especially those involving confinement, it is a distinct possibility that those in SOCC systems in other states having them could find that similar legislative or administrative provisions may provide similar protections and discovery possibilities to them. Attorneys seeking to help the confined should also check into this.

Your Right to Petition or Communicate with Courts, Legislators, Government Bodies, and Journalists.

All MSOP confinees should note MSOP Policy #215-5001, PROCEDURES: A.

[excerpt]; which unequivocally concedes: "...Nothing in this policy should be construed as preventing or attempting to prevent any client or group of clients from petitioning or communicating with government bodies, courts, legislators, journalists..." This concession simply reflects U.S. Constitutional law under the First Amendment. However, it's nice to know that our captors won't try to fight over it.

PPI Explains How:

Organizing Legislative Testimony from Confined People

Emmett Sanders, "In Their Own Words: Organizing Legislative Testimony from Incarcerated People: Incarcerated people around the country are using legislative testimony to speak out about prison condition and the need for change. Here's how advocates are helping them do it," *Prison Policy Initiative (PPI) White Paper* (July 3, 2024).

Editorial Introduction: The *Prison Policy Initiative (PPI)*, one of the most effective advocacy organization for the rights of all incarcerated/confined people, has recently prepared the following guide for confined people seeking to give articulate and persuasive legislative testimony about the various plights of those in that circumstance, in the hope that such exposure and publicity will build a political movement for change and will convince legislators to act to remedy bad conditions of confinement and to make release from indeterminate confinement an attainable goal for the confined. While this advisory white paper is written in words referring to prisoners, its advice applies equally aptly to all who are confined outside of prison sentences, notably including those who are being held under so-called civil commitments based on past crimes of a sexual nature. For this reason, we present it in its entirety within *the Legal Pad*. One of the reasons for its utility is its detail, which results in its length. For the latter reason, we present it in three parts, corresponding to its original organization. Note: Wherever this document refers to prisons or prisoners, simply mentally substitute "sex offender commitment confinement facility and "confinee".

Text: [p. 1:] "In the United States, millions of incarcerated people are routinely denied the right to speak in the legislative hearings on laws and policies that directly impact every aspect of their lives. This denial of one of their most basic rights is also a poor way to make policy decisions because it deprives policymakers of critical insights, like the devastating consequences of long-term solitary confinement. The societal illness of mass incarceration in the U.S. cannot be cured while silencing those who shoulder most of its symptoms and have hard-earned knowledge of what needs to change.

Building power

Advocates nationwide are using remote

communications technologies, which have become more widespread since the [COVID-19] pandemic, to help people in prisons testify before legislative committee hearing, public commissions, and agencies. Incarcerated people have been central to developing and passing impactful reforms, aimed at ending the use of solitary confinement, ending life without parole, reducing mass incarceration, and more. These testimonies are a powerful reminder that incarcerated people are not voiceless; they are silenced. There is a difference. We spoke with advocates behind these efforts in Massachusetts, Washington state, and Connecticut to learn useful strategies for organizing legislative testimony from incarcerated people in their states. In this toolkit, we share key tips from these organizations on how to coordinate the right partners, educate incarcerated people on how to engage the legislative process, and ethically and effectively facilitate remote testimony from people in prisons.

COORDINATING PARTNERS

The advocates we interviewed told us that identifying and building strong relationships with the right partners was the first step in getting legislative testimony programs for incarcerated people off the ground. Advocates need to bring together partners who can help facilitate access to incarcerated folks, build trust with them, navigate logistical issues, and gain buy-in from Departments of Corrections. Here are some important partners to consider and examples of roles they can play:

- **Incarcerated people:** People in prison are much more than just the recipients of reform efforts; they are valuable partners and leaders. Their insights into the workings of various prison hierarchies can be crucial in identifying potential obstacles from the Department of Corrections, as well as developing strategies to overcome them. Their knowledge of how written policies are implemented in prisons allows them to provide vital feedback on legislation and identify practical flaws during the drafting process. They are also essential partners in developing strategies to reach and educate incarcerated testifiers and can provide peer-to-peer civic education and empowerment. Authorized prison organizations such as cultural affinity groups can also facilitate peer-to-peer education and help folks in prison engage in the legislative process.

- **Community-based organizations:** Organizations that work at the state or local level and have strong ties to the communities many people in prisons come from are key partners in building bridges between stakeholders. This is particularly important given that unexpected hurdles or restrictions in the testimony process may damage trust or leave people in prison feeling misled. Jazmin Borges, a formerly incarcerated organizer with the Massachusetts Bail Fund and Families for Justice as Healing, a community-based organization led by impacted people and their families are two prime examples of why these groups are im-

portant. Not only did their work on an earlier prison moratorium bill initially pave the way for legislative testimony from incarcerated people in Massachusetts, but they also played a crucial role in rebuilding trust between advocates and incarcerated testifiers when committee hearing participation was unexpectedly cut in half right before the hearing, limiting speakers to just 30 incarcerated people after nearly twice that number had signed up to testify. Their efforts here smoothed the way for people to testify at the following hearing.

[p. 2.]

- **Legal-aid organizations:** Organizations that offer legal services to incarcerated people, like Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts, Disability Rights-Washington, and Civil Survival, an organization led by formerly incarcerated people, have been central partners in putting together legislative testimony from incarcerated people. Their status has helped facilitate access to people in prisons to learn what issues are most important to them and to help them to prepare to deliver testimony. These allies can help navigate legal issues that arise and are vital in connecting incarcerated people with legislative allies.

- **Allies within the legislature:** Advocates have relied heavily on strong working relationships with progressive, reform-minded policymakers to help organize and prepare people on the inside to give testimony. They can also help facilitate communication and coordination between partners (in particular between the Department of Corrections and the legislative committee) to help overcome logistical hurdles. Allies within the legislature also bring political legitimacy and political connections to the table, which can help gain buy-in from Departments of Corrections often headed by politically appointed directors. Most importantly, lawmakers generally draft and sponsor the bills on which people in prison will testify.

- **Department of Corrections:** The Department of Corrections may or may not be an actual 'partner' in facilitating legislative testimony from incarcerated people, and in fact may be actively opposed to the process. Nevertheless, very little can happen without gaining some buy-in from prison administrations. Advocates should therefore seek to develop a working relationship with the offices. Massachusetts' Executive Office of Public Safety Director of Legislative Affairs, for example, has been critical in facilitating the movement of incarcerated people within prisons, organizing access to technology, and helping coordinate simultaneous participation across multiple prisons."

[p. 2:] **"EDUCATING INCARCERATED TESTIFIERS**

Advocates need to make sure potential testifiers are armed with knowledge of how the legislative process works and what's at

(Continued on page 7)

stake. Here, we look at some methods advocates have used to communicate with people in prisons about legislative testimony and what information is important to communicate, as well as general tips for potential testifiers and the dangers incarcerated people may face for speaking out.

How to communicate information about legislation:

- **Tablets:** Many state prisons allow for reentry guides and other education materials to be uploaded to tablets. These same devices could be used to upload information on upcoming bills and materials on the legislative process.

- **Peer-to-Peer Education:** Look 2 Justice, an advocacy organization in Washington state, uses a curriculum developed and administered by incarcerated people to guide others in prison through each step of the legislative process.①

- **Mail:** Educational materials, newsletters with legislative updates, bill text or summaries, and advice for preparing oral and written testimony can all be sent via institutional mail. The California Citizens Redistricting Commission, for instance, conducted a massive mailing campaign to get incarcerated people's input on redistricting.

- **Phone:** Advocates can set up collect call blocks or hold open 'office hours,' during which incarcerated people can call in with questions about current legislation or speak directly with advocates about upcoming testimony. Make sure to set up blocks of time on multiple days of the week to accommodate phone access times, which can vary widely within a prison or even within a cellhouse.

[p. 3.]

Key points to communicate to testifiers:

- **Basic overview of the legislative process:** Make sure people know what steps are involved in the legislative process, including how bills are drafted, sponsored, and introduced; how legislative committees and/or public commissions work; and what is required to pass legislation.

- **Basic overview of the testimony process:** Ensure that incarcerated people know what to expect when delivering testimony. This includes logistical issues, such as how long they should expect to be able to speak and how to address the committee.

- **Summaries of bills on the table:** Make sure that incarcerated people know exactly what legislation is being discussed, what it does, and what debates are being had around how the language might change during the legislative process.

- **Legislative and logistical updates:** Keep incarcerated people up-to-date on unexpected legislative or logistical developments such as bill modifications, potential caveats or concessions, or unforeseen limitations on speakers or time.

- **Best Practices:** Make sure people in prison are confident in their ability to draft and deliver compelling testimony by offering them tips and examples of testi-

mony from other incarcerated folks. Organizations like the ACLU and Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts have compiled many useful resources for preparing incarcerated people to draft written and oral testimony. You can see Prisoners' Legal Services tips for testifying by clicking the image to the right [sorry: only in the original].

Reasons NOT to testify: Risk, Power, and the importance of informed consent

Facilitating testimony from incarcerated people requires their full awareness of the risks of testifying. Incarcerated people, unlike the general public, face unique risks when speaking out on prison conditions or sharing their experiences publicly. It is important to be transparent about these risks at every stage and to safeguard their physical, emotional, and legal well-being. Here are a few challenges incarcerated people may face, as well as some suggestions on what to discuss with potential testifiers to help them make a more informed choice:

- **Opposing testimony from victim advocacy groups/families of survivors or pushback from the Department of Corrections' victims services:** Some states have powerful survivors' advocacy groups that strongly oppose any sentencing reforms or new avenues of relief for people in prison. Be sure to inform people ahead of time of this possibility so that they can make an informed decision.

- **Opposition from corrections officer unions citing logistical or security issues:** As incarcerated people are well aware, 'security' is often used as a blanket excuse to deny people in prison their rights when the underlying issue is more about holding onto methods of punishment and control. It may be useful to point out to legislators how corrections officers are also detrimentally affected by poor prison conditions and might benefit from policies that reduce stressors such as prison crowding.

- **Opposition from prison administrations:** As we've mentioned, getting buy-in from prison administrations is a vital but precarious step that may well be met with opposition. This could look like departments limiting the number of speakers due to 'security' or logistical concerns, or impeding incarcerated people's ability to communicate by limiting movement or implementing restrictive policies. To combat these tactics, remember that buy-in comes from the top. Getting legislative allies to apply political pressure can help make things run more smoothly.

- **Retaliation from the Department of Corrections:** As Chris Blackwell, incarcerated journalist and co-founder of Look 2 Justice, has pointed out, incarcerated people may face retaliation for speaking out. This retaliation can be difficult to prove as it can come in the form of 'normal' prison activities such as cell searches, retaliatory transfers, disciplinary reports, or solitary confinement.

Make sure people are aware of the possibility of retaliation, as well as what your organization can and cannot do to help them if it happens. Organizations should maintain contact after testimony so that incarcerated people can report retaliation. They should also help bring major retaliation issues to legislative allies, who can apply pressure on the Department of Corrections to investigate these claims.

- **Potential impact on open cases:** While the right to a fair hearing should never be derailed by engagement in legitimate political activity, this is unfortunately not always the case for incarcerated people who have open cases or upcoming parole hearings. Advise people with active court cases to consult with their lawyer before submitting testimony."

[p. 4:] "FACILITATE TESTIMONY

You've coordinated your partners and identified what information and methods to use to educate potential testifiers. What's next? Here we discuss what it means to ethically facilitate testimony from incarcerated people, explore some logistical challenges to this facilitation in the form of common arguments, and offer examples and suggestions for potential responses.

Advocacy is leveraging your power to ensure silenced voices are heard – not telling those voices what to say.

Helping to lay the groundwork for incarcerated people to exercise their voices through legislative testimony is an important recognition of the rights and dignity of people in prisons. However, advocates need to take their lead from incarcerated people and serve as facilitators and connectors rather than as agenda-setters or gatekeepers. Inserting your organization's agenda or only facilitating testimony that supports your position is morally dubious at best. For instance, Colorado's Department of Corrections brought in eight incarcerated people to testify on behalf of a bill they supported. Yet no currently incarcerated person seems to have had an opportunity to comment on both equally. Producing prisoners to testify on bills on behalf of the prison systems that hold them captive raises serious questions about issues of consent, coercion, and gatekeeping. This is why organizers in every state we spoke to stress the importance of using surveys, mailers, and in-person group discussions led by incarcerated people to ensure their advocacy follows incarcerated leadership rather than directs it.

Logistical challenges and responses to common arguments

The advocates we interviewed shared several common counter-arguments they have heard from Departments of Corrections, legislators, and other stakeholders. Below, we list some of those arguments, and how advocates can respond to them.

- **'The technology doesn't exist'** This argument may have been more valid before the COVID-19 pandemic, but it's much weaker now. State legislatures in at least 26 states now have some measures for remote participation in the legislative process. Likewise, prisons have drastically expanded their technolo-

gy for remotely accessing court hearings, medical visits, and other purposes. Video calling capabilities in prisons exploded from just 15 states in 2014 to at least 48 prison systems by 2024, often through the use of tablets.② Moreover, in places without the technological infrastructure or with restrictions on remote testimony, people can still submit written testimony or, as people in Connecticut prisons did with the help of Stop Solitary CT and students in a legal clinic at Yale Law, write their testimony and have it read into the record by volunteers.

- **'Scheduling is too difficult.'** Legislative hearings often happen on short notice, and incarcerated people have limited time windows to access video calling and other means of participation. Work with legislative allies to see if it's possible to schedule hearings early in the day to allow for more time, or to split up multiple relevant bills into multiple hearings or days. Ask legislative allies to keep everyone up-to-date on the latest developments. Allies can also work with the Committee to ask them to take testimony from incarcerated people out of order to better help Departments of Corrections arrange and maximize blocks of technological access.

- **'We can't let everyone speak!'** The advocates we interviewed shared multiple instances where committees or the Department of Corrections unexpectedly limited the number of speakers. While it is important to point out to stakeholders that the public generally faces no such restrictions, these limits may be a reality of remote testimony by incarcerated people. It is important to be upfront with incarcerated people about the potential for unexpected developments that could restrict their participation. Prepare people to not be called and work with them to develop written testimony that can be submitted or read into the record if they are not given a chance to speak. To the extent that it is possible, it can also be helpful to encourage incarcerated people to work together to coordinate testimony and select spokespersons to make particular points. This can help overcome limitations on speakers and avoid repeating testimony. Additionally, Prisoners' Legal Services of Massachusetts suggests advocating that incarcerated people who were not afforded a chance to speak, but who supported the speaker, be allowed to sit in the room with the speaker while they testify to show their support.

[p. 5.]

- **'You can't speak with people in solitary!'** Though access to incarcerated people may vary between or even within prisons, advocates should try to hear from every demographic on the inside to ensure equal representation. For instance, implementing policy reforms on reproductive health or mental health treatment without consulting incarcerated women or people with mental health

needs would miss a valuable opportunity to learn from incarcerated people's lived experiences. The same is true for people in solitary confinement. Advocates should stress to stakeholders that people who are experiencing these issues are best suited to speak on them. Where physical access is available, mail can be used to distribute information and collect written testimony.

"CONSTITUTIONAL RIGHTS DON'T END AT THE PRISON GATE."

Ultimately, allowing people to have a say in issues that directly affect their lives is not just the right thing to do, it's also exceedingly practical. Incarcerated people have firsthand expertise on prison issues that those who make the laws usually never see. Listening to what folks in prison have to say about prison conditions is the bare minimum of recognizing them as full human beings, and can even open the door for incarcerated people to author legislation of their own. The infrastructure is there, the need exists, and incarcerated people know the importance of real justice reform better than anyone. As Charles Longshore, an incarcerated person who authored a bill providing judicial discretion to review and modify long sentences in Washington state noted, "Constitutional rights don't end at the prison gate. We need to respect those rights."

Footnotes:

① Look 2 Justice also conducts a monthly 101 Series workshop and weekly Session Questions during the legislative session to educate and inform incarcerated people's loved ones and allies on the legislative process and to keep them up to date.

② Though generally referred to as 'video visitation,' we use the term 'video calling' here to stress that these calls are no substitute for in-person visits with loved ones. In a review of prison policies, we found mention of video calling capabilities in every state prison system except for Mississippi and Tennessee. It's important to note that this expansion is by no means a replacement for in-person visits, and has given rise to a host of negative consequences such as predatory pricing schemes. Nonetheless, for the purpose of facilitating legislative testimony, it is important to know that video calling infrastructure is widespread.

New Jersey's SOCC Program Uses Made-Up Treatment with No Validity and Releases Very Few.

Jordan Michael Smith, "They Served Their Time for Sex Crimes. The State Won't Let Them Go." *The New York Times*, Aug. 1, 2025, <https://www.nytimes.com/2025/08/01/nyregion/nj-sex-offenders-civil-commitment.html>.

"New Jersey's secure treatment center for detaining sex offenders is supposed to keep the public safe. Critics say it violates civil liberties.

Russell Tinsley had a long history of committing serious crimes, including rape and assault with a deadly weapon, in other states by the time he was imprisoned for car theft in New Jersey in 2008....

But when his two-year sentence was up in New Jersey, officials in the state attorney general's office petitioned to have him confined for more time under a state law that allows for the civil commitment of dangerous sex offenders — even though he had never been convicted of a sex crime in that state. That was in 2010.

Two doctors who never interviewed him concluded that he lacked skills to function safely in the community and that he should be locked in the state's Special Treatment Unit until he was rehabilitated.

Over the next 15 years, Mr. Tinsley's treatment was overseen by doctors who repeatedly failed to show that he had an uncontrollable 'mental abnormality,' as required by law, and his care proceeded at a glacial pace, advancing him no closer to freedom, a judge would eventually rule. Still, he remains in the unit today, having turned 70 in March....

Bradford Bury, a former New Jersey State Superior Court judge who once oversaw the program, said it held some sex offenders to a standard that no other criminals had to meet, not even those convicted of horrifying crimes.

'We let people who intentionally murder a child out on parole,' said Judge Bury, who retired in 2023. 'There's a total inconsistency of the application of the rules, common sense, and fairness.'

...Interviews with more than 30 current and former employees of the New Jersey center and a review of more than 1,000 pages of court documents and other records reveal a dysfunctional system that fails to achieve its stated aims.

The state evaluates people for commitment based on unscientific criteria, and the evaluations themselves occur with almost no transparency.

And unlike other states, New Jersey requires no trial before ordering someone held in civil commitment — only a petition from the attorney general's office and the consent of a judge.

Among the people who have been confined to the Special Treatment Unit is a man who was wrongfully imprisoned for a rape he never committed....

Of the 750 people who have been committed since the unit's creation in 1999, just 57 have been fully discharged....

Records show that detainees who enter the unit are almost twice as likely to die in custody as to be fully released, leading current and former detainees to mordantly refer to it as a 'pine box program.' The best chance of getting out, they say, is 'in a coffin....'

One researcher, Cynthia Calkins, a psychologist at John Jay College of Criminal Justice who co-wrote a paper on the unit, said that it seemed to accomplish little despite its cost.

'We spend a lot of resources,' she said, 'and the overall benefit appears to be very small.'

Committed, Then Exonerated

In 1996, Rodney Roberts was working two jobs, ...and living in a Montclair, N.J. apartment with his young son, when a teenager was assaulted in Newark.

Seventeen days later, Officers with the East Orange Police Department arrested Mr. Roberts, who, as a younger man, had been convicted of conspiracy to commit rape....

Prosecutors charged him with rape and kidnapping. His public defender advised him to plead guilty to kidnapping, saying he would serve less prison time than if he went to trial for both crimes and was found guilty. Mr. Roberts followed the advice, and the sex assault charge was dropped. He received seven years in prison.

Still, when asked, he maintained his innocence, and the parole board denied him early release in 1998, 2000, and 2003, saying he refused to take responsibility for the crime.

By 2004, he was about to be reunited with his family when the attorney general's office petitioned to have him committed to the Special Treatment Unit. Records show that the doctor who evaluated him determined that he did not have any particular urge to commit sexual assault. But the doctor recommended him for the unit anyway, saying he was likely to reoffend because of his arrogance and refusal to accept responsibility for the crime.

Mr. Roberts spent the next 10 years at the center, receiving no treatment, he said. Still, once a year, a panel evaluated him and ruled that he was too dangerous to go free.

Then a DNA test of evidence in his case showed that Mr. Roberts had never committed the rape in the first place. In 2014, New Jersey set aside the finding that he was a sexually violent predator and released him from the unit.

Mr. Roberts sued the state the following year for the wrongful conviction and commitment. More than a decade later, his case is still pending.

The same deficiencies that led to Mr. Roberts's commitment have persisted, current and former staff members of the unit said.

In 2022, doctors working for the state acknowledged in court that making determinations about who was 'highly likely to reoffend' defied mathematical precision.

The New Jersey chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union filed papers the next year saying that the admission demonstrated the arbitrariness but also the unconstitutionality of civil commitment.

'If "highly likely" has no replicable meaning or measure or fixed floor,' wrote Liza Weisberg, the A.C.L.U. lawyer who filed the brief, 'this means that the statute that you used to civilly commit people and keep them civilly committed is without constitutional guardrails.'

In 2001, a group of the unit's residents filed a class-action lawsuit against the center, accusing it of failing to provide the minimum treatment for them to be released. The case led to a period of oversight by a federal monitor who was supposed to en-

sure that the program improved. [However, reports article writer Smith, this monitoring gave much deference to the treatment unit.]

A Sense of Hopelessness

...The center's operators have told them that the key to getting out is progressing through phases of treatment. But in practice, as the federal monitor noted, the program can make doing so difficult, if not impossible.

In one report, the monitor noted that the program was advancing residents through treatment even more slowly than it had before the federal oversight began. In another, the monitor said that the program appeared not to be following its own guidelines by holding residents in some treatment phases for three to four times longer than they were supposed to be.

The employees have some clinical experience but might never have run group treatments, ...[and] have never worked with offenders before ...[and] the treatment they are in charge of administering is questionable at best, residents and former employees said.

'They did a treatment program that was never validated — somebody made it up,' said Dr. Vivian Schnaidman, a psychiatrist who worked at the center for three years in the mid-2000s. 'There was no research to back it. And they just made everybody do these specific things that they invented.'

Heather Ellis Cucolo, an adjunct professor at New York Law School focused on sex offender law, said treatment in New Jersey's program is offered only sporadically.

'Treatment is used as a way to keep persons longer than what may otherwise be constitutionally appropriate, and treatment has not been shown to be effective by any real criteria in reducing risk, said Ms. Cucolo, a former public defender who worked with the center's residents. 'It's just a way to keep these people indefinitely.'....'

Florida's SOCC Facility – Ineffective Treatment, Pointless Punishment, but a GREAT Contractor's Moneymaker!

"Gary," Florida Civil Commitment Center – Treatment, Punishment, or Money Maker?, 18(4) *the NARSOL Digest* pp. 2, 11 (Aug/Sep 2025).

Text: "The Florida Civil Commitment Center [FCCC] is located about twenty miles east of Arcadia, Florida. If you read the propaganda related to this facility it is touted as a 'state of the art treatment facility' for 'sexually violent predators.' But the reality calls that description into serious question.

Individuals who have been totally confined, be it in a Florida jail or Florida prison, and are due to be released but have been convicted of a sexually violent offense

(Continued on page 9)

(which can range from urinating in public to rape with a deadly weapon) can be referred for civil commitment if it is determined by psychologists that they suffer from a mental abnormality or personality disorder which would make them likely to engage in sexual violence if not confined in a secure facility for long-term care, control, and treatment. Once committed, a person is reviewed for release at least annually. The psychologists are paid \$200 per hour to review records, do in-person evaluations, testify in court, and travel.

Driving down the long entrance to the FCCC, it is readily apparent that the FCCC is a prison.

In fact, the request for proposal to build the facility called for the FCCC to be built to the specifications of a Level 4 Florida Department of Corrections prison. Even the certificate of occupancy for the FCCC lists the construction type and use as a 'Correctional Facility.'

Two twelve-foot-high chain link fences with electronic sensors and high definition color cameras set atop concrete poles completely surround the FCCC. A gun truck constantly patrols the perimeter of the facility looking for any attempts to escape by those detained within. Cameras also monitor the inside of the facility.

Once inside the FCC, the surroundings are a stark reminder of what a Florida prison consists of. Solid concrete walls and solid steel doors with small security windows run throughout the facility. Bare concrete floors line the dormitories. The facility is painted in the same colors as Florida prisons.

Inmates of the FCCC are referred to as 'residents.' They are allowed to wear their own clothing and can purchase their own portable television and certain game systems. Those who cannot afford to purchase their own clothes are furnished clothing by the facility.

The Florida Department of Children and Families has always contracted the operation of the FCC to private, for-profit corporations, the latest of which is Recovery Solutions. Recovery Solutions is paid approximately \$122 per day each for 650 beds, regardless of how many men are actually in the FCCC. Estimates put the current population at approximately 540 men. Staffing shortages are the norm at the FCCC. The understaffing creates yet more profits for Recovery Solutions, which pockets the payroll not paid out.

FCCC residents are subject to the same disciplinary infractions as their FDOC prisoner counterparts, including administrative and disciplinary confinement and, additionally, a loss of level – which can result in the confiscation of personal televisions and game systems for six months.

When residents are transported from the facility grounds for any purpose, they are handcuffed, shackled, and 'black-boxed,' which severely curtails the movement of their hands and wrists. Residents can spend hours trussed up like this.

Residents are coerced by Recovery Solutions into working as kitchen workers, maintenance workers, recreation aides, and

in other positions for the whopping wage of \$1.00 per hour for up to twenty hours of work per week. Paying residents \$1.00 per hour means Recovery Solutions can pocket yet more savings in payroll. Residents can spend their wages at the FCCC Keefe canteen, where they can purchase food items at highly inflated prices. An 8-ounce bag of Folgers coffee costs \$13.15. A pint of ice cream is \$6.55. Ramen soups are \$1.45. Candy bars are \$2.25.

The medical care provided to these 'civil' detainees can be described as subpar. Some FCCC residents have waited years to see an outside medical specialist. Sometimes, by the time the resident sees an outside medical specialist, the medical problem has progressed to the point that the prognosis is bleak. The private corporations that have operated the FCCC know well that most residents are simply incapable of litigating a successful claim of medical negligence or any claim of violations of their constitutional rights. Courts turn a blind eye to what occurs behind these shadow prison walls, routinely dismissing resident lawsuits. Media coverage is almost non-existent.

The mental health 'treatment' provided to these residents can take years to complete. In most cases, those individuals providing the up to ten-and-one-half hours of treatment per week are not licensed psychologists or psychiatrists. And no one, including judges, legislators, and the private corporations that operate the FCCC are in a hurry to let anyone out.

In 2013, a study was completed on the efficacy of the treatment provided by the FCCC. The study determined that there is virtually no difference in the rates of recidivism between those who spend years in treatment at the FCCC and those who are released without treatment.

So the question remains: Is the FCCC treatment, punishment, or a money maker? You decide."

[Editor's note: Gary is confined in the FCCC.]

Washington State Fires SOCC Ombuds for Critical Report re Health Care on McNeil Island.

Rebecca Moss, "McNeil Island CEO, Watchdog Removed after Critical Internal Report," *Seattle Times*, July 31, 2025, <https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/times-watchdog/mcneil-island-ceo-watchdog-removed-after-critical-internal-report/>.

Editor's Introduction: Washington State's "Special Commitment Center," exclusively for committed persons with past sexual offense convictions who are thought likely to reoffend sexually, currently contains 127 residents in total confinement, plus others on a provisional release status also restricted to the same isolated island as the total confinement facility island.

Text excerpts: "Washington's largest state agency has moved to weaken oversight of the Special Commitment Center, even as an internal report describes potential medical neglect and McNeil Island residents now have fewer ways to report it.

Civily committed residents, who are excluded from the rest of Washington and entirely dependent on the state for care, told the facility's ombudsperson that they lived for years with hernia pain, were blocked from having necessary surgeries, and went months with kidney stones or heart issues, often being provided care only when issues became life-threatening.

These details are listed in an internal report, obtained by *The Seattle Times*, following a yearlong investigation by the ombudsperson for the Special Commitment Center, where people are detained on the basis of their history of sex crimes, psychiatric disorders, and potential to reoffend."

But after the ombuds, Kayla Elladae, shared the findings in April with the leadership of the Department of Social and Health Services, they disputed the findings and Elladae was blocked from accessing information on the island, then was laid off. Two other staff in advocacy roles, who work closely with the ombuds, were also reassigned off the island, according to interviews and documents reviewed by *The Times*.

The same day Elladae was laid off, DSHS rewrote its rules for external oversight, eliminating the independence of the ombudsperson's position....

After *The Times* and state lawmakers asked DSHS about the rule-making and the ombudsperson's removal, the agency on Monday informed staff of significant leadership changes, including removing Special Commitment Center CEO Keith Devos, who will now be acting executive officer of Maple Lane, a psychiatric facility near Centralia. The new acting CEO will be Daniel Davis, who was CEO of the Olympic Heritage Behavioral Health facility....

If DSHS continues to limit scrutiny, [Braden] Pence [a Seattle civil rights attorney who formerly worked in public defense on civil commitment cases] said, it could potentially violate residents' civil rights and cause the state to backslide in to conditions that led to a sprawling federal lawsuit in the 1990s. The lawsuit, brought by several civily committed residents, placed the state under years of court supervision and cost millions of dollars to comply with civil rights requirements. As part of that case, DSHS was court-ordered to hire an ombudsperson and provide adequate mental health treatment, among other reforms, including creating a resident advocate position.

Attorneys, residents and agency staff who spoke with *The Times* say DSHS appears to be regressing on earlier compliance. In the past six months, the Special Commitment Center has offered just two hours or less of sex offense treatment per week – well below state standards.

State Rep. Dan Griffey, R-Allyn, said in an interview that DSHS' recent steps are part of significant problems evident at the Special Commitment Center. The ombuds must

be 'completely independent of the agency, as all ombuds should be,' Griffey said. 'We have tried to do internal ombuds and they have been abysmal.'....

Dr. Brian Waiblinger, chief medical officer for DSHS's Behavioral Health and Rehabilitation Administration, ...said he reviewed the cases [alleging inadequate care] cited on the ombuds report and said most issues came own to residents' faulty memories or expectations for care.

'How the individuals perceive that treatment is something we probably need to work on,' he said, 'and that is not something that is unique to DSHS.'....

The medical director for the island – and sole physician – was paid just under \$300,000 in 2023 but spent less than 90 minutes each month caring for patients that year... That's 1% of the time that a primary care provider typically spends with patients, the report said, citing national statistics from the American Association for Physician Leadership and a study in the *Journal of the American Medical Association*.

The medical director, Dr. Deborah Havens, resigned in April...."

Just a Meeting, but What a Difference!

B4QR Review: Heron, R.L., Schwiekert, L. & Karsten, J., "Meeting a Person with Pedophilia: Attitudes Towards Pedophilia among Psychology Students: A Pilot Study", (*Current Psychology*, <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-021-01384-5> [2021]), *B4U-ACT Quarterly Review*, Vol. 1, No. 2 (Spring 2021), pp. 12-14.

Review Excerpts: [p. 12:] "This article reports on a pilot study carried out to determine whether it is possible to change people's attitudes towards MAPs by attending a lecture and having personal contact with an MAP. A premise of the study is that most people are ignorant of the nature of attraction to minors and therefore strongly prejudiced against it. The resulting stigma, which exists even among mental health professionals, prevents MAPs from seeking counseling and support that would reinforce their determination to remain law-abiding.

...[T]he authors stress the importance of helping the general public understand that a 'person with pedophilia' (PWP) does not necessarily act on the attraction, and that the attraction itself is not chosen by the individual but is rather a type of permanent sexual orientation....

The pilot study was carried out with 162 psychology students at a Dutch university who volunteered to take part; the group was 81% female, and most of them were in their late teens or early twenties. The participants were first administered the 30-item Imhoff scale, which measures beliefs about MAPs as regards their dangerousness, their intentionality, and their deviance; the scale also measures punitive attitudes toward MAPs. The Imhoff questionnaire asks participants to express their agreement or disagreement (on a 7-point scale) with statements such as these: 'Pedophilia

sooner or later always leads to child sex abuse' (dangerousness); 'People can decide whether they are pedophilic or not' (intentionality); 'Pedophiles are sick' (deviancy); and 'Known pedophiles should be sentenced for life as deterrence' (punitive attitude).

When the questionnaire was administered the first time, the students manifested strongly punitive attitudes towards PWP's, mainly because they considered them highly deviant (mentally ill) and very dangerous. However, the students were inclined to believe that their condition was not voluntary (intentionality).

[pp. 12-13:] The students then heard a 45-minute lecture in which they learned to distinguish between persons who are simply attracted to minors and those who engage

sexually with them. They were also informed about the influence of media in promoting misconceptions and biases against MAPs. After 15 minutes of questions and a break, the students attended a 50-minute presentation by a 34-year-old MAP, who provided them information about 'his childhood, the realization of his sexual attraction, his struggles to incorporate being a PWP into his identity, his attempts to find appropriate coping strategies, and his overall experiences.' After the presentation, the students were given 30 minutes to ask the MAP questions.

[p. 13:] After hearing the lecture and attending the presentation, the students were again asked to take the Imhoff test to see whether their beliefs and attitudes had changed. The study found that significant change had

taken place on all scales, but especially on those measuring perceptions of dangerousness and deviance. The perception of intentionality, which was already low, descended further. Punitive attitudes lessened but did not disappear. The study suggests that punitive attitudes persist because they are thought to be 'socially desirable.'

[pp. 13-14:] The results also indicated that the students deemed the combination of the lecture and the meeting with a PWP as effective in changing their attitudes (77.8%), while 16% mentioned the meeting alone and only 0.6% the lecture alone. The study concludes that 'direct contact yields the strongest effects compared to other anti-stigma interventions.' Even indirect contact with an MAP (via a video, for example) could yield positive results.

[p. 14:] The article presents a research model that makes effective use both of educational instruction and of direct encounter with an MAP. Such a model, adapted and applied to other social settings, could be a valuable instrument for combatting the intense social stigma that makes the lives of MAPs more complicated than they already are."

the Legal Pad

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"You're So Dangerous..."

by Russell John Hatton

You're so dangerous . . . you participate in sporting events.

You're so dangerous . . . you go to education classes.

You're so dangerous . . . you donate to sexual abuse primary prevention programs.

You're so dangerous . . . you play Xbox games with others.

You're so dangerous . . . you make sure to call home when you say you will.

You're so dangerous . . . you speak about how happy you are after family visited.

You're so dangerous . . . you expressed concern for the starving children in Gaza.

You're so dangerous . . . you took the time to listen to my concerns.

You're so dangerous . . . you put on weekly movie nights.

You're so dangerous . . . you save money to send home to family.

You're so dangerous . . . you accepted an overtime shift when someone didn't show up.

You're so dangerous . . . you shared a joke that made people laugh.

You're so dangerous . . . you shared photos that you received from family.

You're so dangerous . . . you spent time listening to an old timer as you both worked on a puzzle.

You're so dangerous . . . you asked if I wanted to sit down to enjoy a meal together.

You're so dangerous . . . you shared your hope that you'll get out of here one day.

You're so dangerous . . . you asked how my family is doing.

You're so dangerous . . . you asked if I'd go to the music room and sing for your group.

You're so dangerous . . . you bought ice cream for the fellas to enjoy on a hot summer day.

You're so dangerous . . . we spent time talking about our favorite music.

You're so dangerous . . . you shared with me your future goals when you get out of here.

You're so dangerous . . . you asked for help when you were confused with how to solve a problem.

You're so dangerous . . . you were vulnerable and trusting with something very personal.

You're so dangerous . . . you asked if I'd come and see your beautiful painting in the craft room.

You're so dangerous . . . you enjoyed a game of soccer with a group of a dozen others.

You're so dangerous . . . you shared ideas to solve some of our biggest problems.

You're so dangerous . . . you took the time to clean up after others made a mess.

You're so dangerous . . . you sat and watched nature, enjoying all the sights.

You're so dangerous . . . you care about your family and friends.

You're so dangerous . . . you were happy when you saw a little rabbit in the flower garden.

You're so dangerous . . . you sing along to all your favorite songs.

You're so dangerous . . . you aren't afraid to show others your dancing skills.

You're so dangerous . . . you helped push another in a wheelchair to get to his destination.

You're so dangerous . . . you offered your time to listen to others when they needed someone to vent to.

You're so dangerous . . . you exhibit a selfless attitude every moment of everyday.

You're so dangerous . . . I don't know why you're still here.

The truth is . . .

You're really not dangerous,

Just frustrated and disappointed that

You're sitting here alongside all of us,

Who just want to go home to our families and loved ones.

The truth is . . .

You're really not dangerous,

Because you live by the Platinum Rule:

To listen to others so you know how they want to be treated,

Rather than assuming they want to be treated the same as you do.

The truth is . . .

You're really not dangerous.

Past behavior is not always a predictor of the future;

People are capable of change just as you have demonstrated.

The truth is . . .

You're really not dangerous,

Just because they want to say that you are.

Throughout the years we've been incarcerated together,

I've gotten to know you

And you've gotten to know me.

We've broken bread together and talked about being free. . .

A bond so strong we've talked about meeting each other's families.

The truth is . . .

You're really not dangerous.

