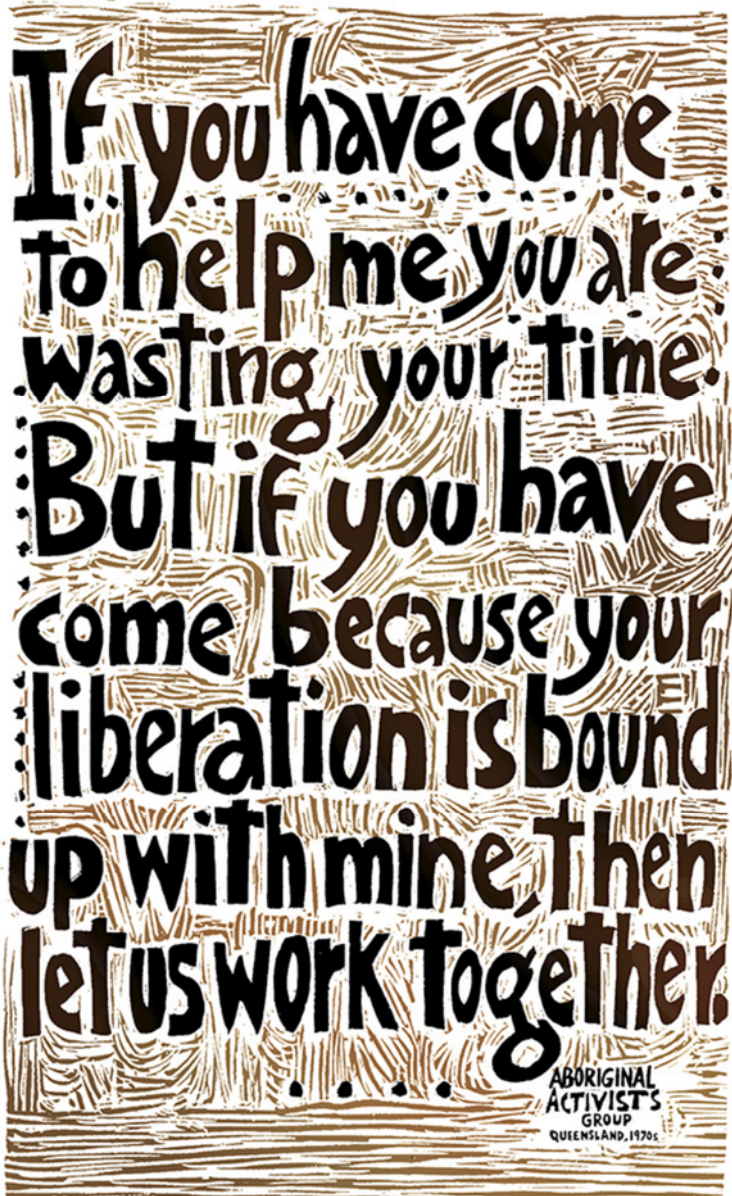


WOMEN'S PRISON NETWORK



ISSUE #13 – WINTER 2018/19

Editor's Note:

Welcome to Issue #13 of Women's Prison Network, a magazine by and for women, trans and youth prisoners in Canada.

This is a safe space to share art, poetry, news, thoughts, conversation, connections ...

We send copies into all Women & Youth prisons in Canada.

Send your art, poems, short stories, comments, articles, etc, to Women's Prison Network if you would like to be a part of the next Issue. – Thanks!

Women's Prison Network
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

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Cover Artwork:

Aboriginal Activists Group,
Queensland, 1970s

Artists:

Cover Artists will receive a \$25.00 donation. Thank you so much for your work!
Let us know how & where you would like the donation sent to & where you would like your art returned to.
Please note: this magazine is for women, trans and youth from all cultures, so please do not send religious imagery.
Thank you for your art!

Writers:

One column is only 300 words, so do choose your words carefully.
It must be short & to the point.
Poems that are tight & give space for others are the first in.
Thank you for your words!

Donors for this Issue:

Very special thanks to: Brenda L, GG & SD!

'Women's Prison Network' is produced 4 times per year.
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If you are on the outside or part of an organization, please consider a donation!!!

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Nov. 20 is Transgender Day
of Remembrance

November 20 marks Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDoR), an international event commemorating people killed due to anti-trans violence. In the last year, 369 trans or non-binary people have been killed globally.
And it's a Canadian problem too: 74 per cent of trans youth in Canada have been harassed at school, and 37 per cent have experienced physical violence.

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

Lawsuit over solitary confinement in Ontario jails certified as class action

The \$600M action includes inmates with severe mental illnesses

A lawsuit alleging the Ontario government violated the rights of inmates by placing them inappropriately in solitary confinement can proceed as a class action, a Superior Court judge has ruled.

The province did not oppose certification of the \$600-million action whose representative plaintiff maintains his already fragile mental health was exacerbated by stints in segregation.

The suit includes inmates diagnosed with severe mental illnesses such as schizophrenia or psychosis who served time in segregation in provincial facilities since Jan. 1, 2009. Other inmates put in the "hole" for 15 days or longer since that time are also included in the class.

"Every day, prisoners in Ontario's correctional institutions are subjected to conditions of torture, and cruel, inhuman or degrading punishment," the suit alleges in its amended statement of claim.

"Segregation, or 'solitary confinement' as it is more commonly known, is grossly overused on a systemic basis throughout Ontario's correctional system."

At issue is administrative segregation in which inmates are isolated either to ensure their own safety or that of others in the institution. Critics allege that such isolation in which inmates are kept in tiny cells without human contact for much of the day can cause significant and lasting harm. The current lawsuit, similar to several others filed in Canada including one already certified against the federal government, alleges the provincial government has been negligent in its use of isolation by leaving prisoners for weeks, months or even years without regard to the consequences.

"The effects of segregation are significant and substantial," the statement of claim alleges. "Such damage is often irreversible and will have a substantial and lasting effect on that person's life."

The representative plaintiff, Conrey Francis, who has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress

disorder and suffers extreme panic attacks, has spent several stints behind bars since 1982, including stretches in solitary confinement, the suit says. In his latest incarceration, Francis, in his early 50s, spent time at the Toronto South Detention Centre from January 2015 until he was acquitted of robbery charges in April 2017.

His mental health in solitary worsened to the point such that he had suicidal thoughts and auditory hallucinations, he alleged.

The lawsuit was initially filed last year on the same day Ontario Ombudsman Paul Dube slammed the province's use of solitary, particularly with regard to those inmates who are mentally ill. In January, the Ontario government and province's human rights authorities announced an agreement to stop placing mentally compromised inmates in solitary barring exceptional circumstances.

The province, which has yet to file a statement of defence, had no comment on the certification decision but said Wednesday it would defend against the claim, which has yet to be tested in court.

However, in an expert opinion filed earlier this year, a psychiatrist hired by the province argues it is not possible to say at what point segregation might cause an inmate lasting harm. Nor is the literature conclusive about the harms solitary can cause to those with mental illness, Dr. Graham Glancy said in his affidavit. Some inmates, he said, might actually improve in isolation.

"One cannot conclude that segregation causes psychological harm," Glancy wrote.

Another court document indicates that Francis spent a total of 10 days in segregation in 2015 for refusing orders to move between units or institutions.

In his certification decision, Justice Paul Perell said inmates or former inmates had to have been alive on April 2015 - two years before the statement of claim was filed - to be included in the class.

"I am satisfied that all the criteria for certification are satisfied," Perell said.

The Canadian Press
Sep 19, 2018

The highest result of education is tolerance.
- Helen Keller

Prisoner says solitary confinement worsened mental health, files human rights complaint

A B.C. prison inmate who says he spent much of his incarceration in solitary confinement says the experience exacerbated his mental health issues and thus violated his human rights.

Justin Bjorklund, 25, filed a complaint against the province on March 9, 2018 with the B.C. Human Rights Tribunal. The province applied to dismiss the case, but that application was recently dismissed and the case was allowed to proceed.

"The issues engaged by solitary confinement within the prison system are among the most serious in society," tribunal member Devyn Cousineau said in her decision.

"Unique concerns may arise with respect to the confinement of people with mental illness or disabilities."

In January, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that indefinite solitary confinement in Canadian prisons is unconstitutional. Justice Peter Leask found that the practice discriminates against Aboriginal and mentally ill inmates in particular.

That ruling has been put on hold for a year as the federal government appeals the decision.

According to the decision, Bjorklund says he spent most of his adult life in prison. Of that time, he alleges that "most of his incarceration for the past four or five years has been in solitary confinement."

The decision from the Human Rights Tribunal does not state the reason for Bjorklund's incarceration or where he served time.

'Difficulty with prolonged isolation'

According to the Human Rights Tribunal case, Bjorklund suffers from several mental illnesses and disabilities, of which one of the effects is a propensity to self-harm.

Bjorklund said the risk that he may hurt himself was what caused him to be placed in solitary confinement, known legally as administrative segregation, for most of the time he has been incarcerated.

The B.C. Correction Act Regulation allows solitary confinement if an inmate is endangering himself or is likely to do so, or is at serious risk of harm. The prisoner can be detained for up to 72 hours, and then that can be extended to 15 days.

The tribunal's decision notes that mental illness was removed from the list of reasons for keeping a prisoner in solitary confinement in 2015.

Bjorklund said his propensity to self-harm is connected to his mental illness, which solitary confinement made worse. He said he was alone for up to 23 hours a day, with no human interaction or any resources to keep him occupied.

The tribunal decision says that, as early as 2015, Bjorklund's medical records show that "he is likely to have difficulty with prolonged isolation, that he is not coping well in segregation, and that he self-harmed to counteract the boredom and frustration of his segregation placement."

In a written statement, the Ministry of Public Safety and the Solicitor General said inmates in segregation are monitored by mental health support staff at least every 24 hours.

"[They] have access to many of the same services and activities other inmates receive, such as daily exercise, reading materials, mail, phone, personal visits, health care and hygiene facilities," the statement said.

"Inmates may participate in programs if the supervising staff determine the program is of benefit and their participation presents no risk to safety."

'Locking the door and throwing away the key' Jennifer Metcalfe, executive director of Prisoner Legal Services, represented Bjorklund at the tribunal.

"We're really concerned about this issue systemically that we don't want to see people in prison being put in solitary confinement where they could be at risk of death from self-harm," she said.

Metcalfe says her organization gets a lot of calls from prisoners who have been put in solitary confinement.

She points out that the United Nations has called for a ban on solitary confinement except in "very exceptional circumstances," and deems the practice as akin to torture or cruel treatment.

The vast majority of prisoners have addiction and/or mental health issues, Metcalfe says, making solitary confinement problematic in most circumstances.

More recently, Metcalfe said, Bjorklund was held in a complex needs unit at the Surrey Pre-Trial Centre, which she says provided the kind of one-on-one attention and humane care that prisoners with mental disabilities require.

>>>

"We want to see a lot more investment in helping people heal instead of just locking the door and throwing away the key," she said.

Maryse Zeidler
CBC News
Sep 02, 2018

'It changes you': Ex-inmates launch class action over use of solitary confinement

Around-the-clock electric light, even at night. Mats on the floor in place of beds. Robes instead of clothing.

These are some of the conditions that former inmates say exist in solitary confinement at Nova Scotia's jails, conditions that have prompted them to file a proposed class-action lawsuit against the province.

The claim alleges that the use of solitary confinement for more than 15 days at a time constitutes cruel and unusual punishment, breaching the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

"They never turn the lights off, and so there's no windows, you never see the outside, you never go to yard, you never get a breath of fresh air," Robert Bailey, one of two plaintiffs involved in the class action, told CBC's Information Morning. "It changes you."

Bailey, who has been incarcerated in provincial institutions at different points for charges including breach of conditions, said he was first placed in solitary confinement at the Burnside jail because he was found in possession of a controlled substance.

Every subsequent time he went back to jail, he said he was put in solitary confinement. The nature of solitary confinement makes it difficult to say how long he spent there, he said.

"You lose track of time," he said. "I [went] into a different state of mind."

Bailey said he was placed in solitary confinement without anything to occupy his mind, such as a pencil or book, and was given a robe designed to prevent a suicide attempt, instead of his own clothes.

"[You're] completely left with nothing and ridiculed."

Michael Dull, the lawyer for the proposed class action, said the focus on the case is to shine a light on what's happening in Nova Scotia's jails -

including the way that practices around the use of solitary confinement constitute torture, according to the U.N.'s definition of confinement exceeding 15 days.

Nova Scotia's Correctional Services division does have policies dictating the allowable limits for some kinds of solitary confinement. A report in May by Auditor General Michael Pickup found that in nine of 47 cases, offenders were placed in solitary confinement longer than allowed by department policy.

But Dull said that since "administrative segregation" - solitary confinement that's not for disciplinary purposes - can be extended indefinitely, even the allowable limit for the use of solitary confinement violates the charter.

"Corrections has a policy that the auditor general found is not being met, so that speaks to negligence," said Dull. "But if the policy in and of itself is in breach of the charter - then the policy should be changed."

Solitary confinement counterproductive
Bailey said at the moment, the way solitary confinement is being used is putting inmates' well-being at risk.

"People that I've met, you know, at one time and then talked to them three months later, after they've been [in solitary confinement], they're not the same person."

"If there's no threat to anyone, and no violence, I don't believe putting [offenders] in such a severe, traumatizing situation is going to help them in any way."

In May, the Department of Justice agreed to all 12 recommendations made by Pickup.

As part of that, Nova Scotia's Office of the Ombudsman was to do regular review and audits to make sure the use of "close confinement" is properly approved and that inmates have access to recreation and showers.

In a statement, Justice spokesperson Heather Fairbairn said "close confinement is a measure of last resort. It is utilized in situations that protect inmates and staff."

She said once the province is served with the legal action it will consider what to do next.

CBC News
Oct 03, 2018

Solitary by another name is just as cruel

Government legislation billed as eliminating the damaging and dangerous practice of administrative segregation - better known as solitary confinement - is in reality, a cynical exercise that merely rebrands this cruel treatment.

I am shocked by the linguistic trickery in Bill C-83: An Act to amend the Corrections and Conditional Release Act and another Act.

Rather than ending segregation, Bill C-83 rebrands administrative segregation as "structured intervention units." It allows the Commissioner of the Correctional Service of Canada to designate any unit or penitentiary as a structured intervention unit without imposing restrictions on the nature or number of cells. This creates the risk that an ever-increasing number of prisoners will be segregated - an all-too-easy answer to managing mental-health issues and other needs that should be addressed through community supports rather than by restrictive confinement.

These measures fly in the face of the recommendations of the jury in the Ashley Smith inquest, which said prisoners should not be segregated and those with mental health issues should be in community-based mental-health facilities, not prison.

The government has also boasted that Bill C-83 will see prisoners in these new units spend a minimum of four hours a day outside their cell, an increase from the current two-hour-a-day requirement. The premise is that 22 hours of isolation per day meets the definition of segregation of a prisoner and attracts certain, far too limited constitutional protections - but that 20 hours of isolation per day under the same torturous conditions does not. This should make clear why we need a true end to segregation and separation, by any name.

Medical experts have long recognized that segregation has permanent negative impacts, from anxiety and paranoia to severe psychological pain and suffering, as well as permanent psychiatric disability.

Courts have also found that segregation's harmful effects can begin almost immediately and have ruled that segregation is unconstitutional and discriminatory against Indigenous people and those with mental health

issues. These groups are just two among many, including women and visible minorities, that are unjustly and unjustifiably over-represented in segregation.

While proponents of Bill C-83 have argued that imposing a minimum of four hours outside of cells will allow for meaningful access to programs, health care and human contact, this simply replicates the current situation in maximum security units for women, where prisoners are segregated in small, isolated cells.

Despite progressive-sounding requirements about access to services, individuals in those units are severely limited in their access to programming and health care. They experience psychological harm practically indistinguishable from segregation.

Nor will Bill C-83 change the current lack of effective external oversight of correctional decision-making. All decisions about when and for how long prisoners are to be segregated would be made by a correctional services administrator alone and without the review of any third party. This represents another step away from former Supreme Court justice Louise Arbour's recommendation that judicial oversight of corrections is necessary to prevent the abuse of segregation.

Bill C-83 may also reduce the ability of Indigenous prisoners and parolees to transfer to their communities, a measure included in the current law to address the over-representation of Indigenous people in federal prisons. Nor will the bill address chronic failures on the part of corrections staff to ensure prisoners have access to these transfers - a failure noted by the Office of the Correctional Investigator in its recent annual report.

The government described Bill C-83 as ending the practice of segregation by the Correctional Service of Canada and providing the government's response to the recommendations of the jury regarding the death by homicide of Ashley Smith after she spent months on end in segregation cells. Bill C-83 does neither.

Ottawa cannot declare that segregation has been eliminated, while failing to address the horrors associated with this practice and gutting what minimal restrictions courts have placed on its use. The public response to Bill C-83 has demonstrated that there is interest in meaningful change. We must end segregation and ensure

judicial oversight of corrections, not merely change the labels on doors and further limit correctional accountability.

Kim Pate
Globe and Mail
Nov 13, 2018

Province's prison peer support program garnering national attention

A one-of-a-kind peer support program for federal prisoners in Manitoba is attracting attention as part of a national study on prison conditions.

The Peer Offender Prevention Service (POPS) has been running at Stony Mountain Institution since 2010, and currently involves seven inmates serving life sentences who are on call 24/7 to help other inmates in crisis. They've responded to 23,000 incidents within the prison over the past eight years, and they were recently spotlighted during a Senate visit to the penitentiary.

Sen. Wanda Thomas Bernard, chairwoman of the standing Senate committee on human rights, is studying prison conditions in Canada and expects to release the committee's final report next year. She said the POPS program should be evaluated to see if it can be expanded to other prisons across Canada.

The committee noticed "structural issues" with the program that could be improved, she said, but visitors were impressed with the peer support program, which doesn't exist elsewhere.

"I'd love to see a review of POPS about looking to, you know, how do you standardize something similar across the country, because there are some very serious mental health issues that people are experiencing while in prison. And we've heard from people across the country that there are not enough mental health supports, not enough mental health services available 24/7," she said in an interview with the Free Press.

POPS was the brainchild of a correctional officer who formalized a peer support network within the institution, allowing trusted, long-term inmates to sign up as mentors and be paid a minimal wage as they would earn for any other job within the prison, said J.L. Meyer, assistant warden of management services at Stony Mountain.

"The way it works is if an inmate is having some difficulties, he can ask for a peer (from POPS) to come and see him, and that peer will go down and just talk to him. Anything from whether an inmate is feeling suicidal or they're in some kind of crisis, some kind of an issue that they don't want to talk to a staff member about, they can request to see a peer and we'll facilitate that," he said.

POPS runs in addition to mental health services offered inside the institution, but the inmates working in POPS can be called upon any time, including to talk to an inmate who is in segregation, and they can draw on their own life experiences.

"I can go and talk to an inmate and listen to them and try and understand what the situation is like, but I've never been there, so how do I really understand it, right? So I think the lifers that have actually lived it and been through those issues, they understand it more than anybody," Meyer said.

Meyer said the institution doesn't track whether POPS has led to a decrease in prison suicides or security incidents, but, "The inmates utilize the program, so it must be helpful to them."

The Senate committee wrapped up its cross-country tour in Winnipeg earlier this month with the visit to Stony Mountain and a public hearing that delved into concerns about solitary confinement, "overwhelming" over-representation of Indigenous and other visible minority inmates, restorative justice and a lack of post-sentencing support for offenders who are being released back into the community.

POPS was one bright spot amid the prisoners' concerns senators heard during their time in Manitoba, Bernard said.

"For all of those positives, we still saw and heard despair - a sense of hopelessness - from not having enough opportunities for education and for training in trades, just not enough opportunities for those," she said.

Katie May
Winnipeg Free Press
Oct 17, 2018

Writing saved me from the sin and inconvenience of violence.
- bell hooks

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

Words for Bullies

B – bad character, evil person

U – unloving person

L – lousy person

L – lonely person (someday they'll be)

You should be ashamed of yourself

- Anonymous

I Am

Have you ever walked through the valley of the shadow of death? I have.

Have you ever lost your values, your morals, your conscience? I have.

Have you ever isolated yourself, so much that you pushed away everyone that cared? I have.

If you went missing, no one would be looking, 'cause nobody knows where you are? I have.

Have you ever felt so shamed & guilty that you couldn't even call your own kids to say, 'Goodnight'?

Maybe, if you're lucky like me you might even know where they are.

Have you ever seen death walking in the streets, lost souls wandering aimlessly?

Maybe you didn't go as far as me.

I sold my mind, body & soul, just for a rush, that was never the same.

You see my enemy is not kind, he tries to make me believe he's not there.

Even when I'm staring him straight in the face.

My enemy don't care if you're young or old, rich or poor.

My enemy doesn't care if I go to church, it will bring me to the devil.

My enemy destroys families and ruins lives.

My enemy turns me against myself.

Slowly committing suicide.

My enemy is my addiction.

'I AM AN ADDICT'

- Julie Ann Pyke

In Memory of Jeannie Bishop

We live on the leash of our senses.

- Diane Ackerman

EMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOE

Untitled

A lover's touch burns my skin

Why is our love such a sin

Why is something that feels so good to me

Is something so wrong when others see

People who sit and judge their peers

Are really led by misguided fears

Judgment should come from heaven above

And why is it sinful - when there's so much love?

Is lust the evil that brings on the sin?

Then it's a game I will never win

For being in love is a wonder to the heart

Giving of love - knowing the hearts will not part,

Together as one - blended in love

Must surely bring a smile, from heaven above.

- Anny Oyster

Embrace

Embrace myself, because I come first

Embrace my childhood, for all its good, for all its bad (C.A.S.)

Embrace the years, from age twelve to now

Embrace the years of my addictions -

Because they can't hurt me anymore

Embrace who I became in life -

Because I like who that is

(my change from Erik to Shawna)

Embrace all of that which is in my past & future

All that has happened to me

All that I've done & things still to come

Embrace the present

Because this is where I'm at right now (jail)

Embrace all of my gifts, they're all from god

Embrace the world in my own way

Because we are all not the same

Embracing all that hurts in the world

And all of its miracles

And with all that we embrace

Don't forget to love ourselves

- Shawna Taylor

You can't turn back the clock.

But you can wind it up again.

- Bonnie Prudden

POEMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPO

EMSP OEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOEMSPOE

Feelings

Some feelings I have
 Just cannot be told
 For they are the ones
 I will always hold
 Can't open my heart
 To see ...
 'cause I know in the end
 It will only hurt me
 I hope you understand
 And realize it's for the best
 To let these feelings die
 And be put to rest

- Anne Kellar

Untitled

Freedom lost, freedom gained
 A world of chaos, who's to blame
 Them against us, who do we trust
 Silence endures, day after day ...
 Secrets withheld ...
 Darkness takes over, a life of shame
 Is it them who put it to us!
 It doesn't seem fair, liars everywhere
 Another time, another place
 Only time will tell
 If I'll finally be rid of the hell ...

- Amanda Stewart

Is There Life After Love?

Every road had a rainbow
 And every wish had a star
 Every tear had a shoulder to cry on
 And every night had guitars
 But every fool's a lonely fool
 And such a fool am I
 Cause every night I think of you
 And every night I die
 Is there life after love?
 Some things aren't certain
 But some things I'm sure of
 Like angels in heaven
 And god up above
 But is there life after love?
 You gave me forgiveness
 But you could not forget
 No, I should never have told you
 What I've lived to regret
 The truth lies between us
 And I can't take it back
 No, it's too late for Iyin' now
 It's too late for that
 Here I am, there you are
 We're so far apart
 I miss you babe
 Our love will never part

- Sherry Simic

HELL

I don't want to spend my time in hell
 Looking at the walls of a prison cell
 It's no life for a woman who's been free
 You'd have to experience it, then you'd see
 Living like this is slowly dying
 After a while you give up trying
 Bitter and hateful is how you turn out
 Yelling at someone in a whispered shout
 Violence breeds violence it's a proven fact
 Especially in a world where everything's lacked
 No family, no friends, no one to love
 No sun, no moon, no stars up above
 There's only one thing a woman looks for in jail
 Her one link to freedom, that link is mail
 It's proof to herself that she's not all alone
 Someone is with her if not in flesh and bone
 They too are hurting, knowing what she's going through
 They can give you a hand in whatever you do
 When you are free you have someplace to go
 Money in your pocket, something to show
 They'll give you their love, trust and understanding
 While you re-shape your life to some understanding
 Unless of course you decide to shun
 Their love & trust to live by the gun
 And return to that place that I call HELL!
 Looking at the walls, of your own private CELL!

- Debbie Hazel

NEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWSNEWS

New prisons boss gets to-do list: better programs, better food, email access

Canada's new prisons' boss has been tasked with improving outcomes for Indigenous, LGBT and other inmates, while improving the quality of food and email access behind bars.

For the first time, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale has made public the mandate letter for the new commissioner of Correctional Service Canada, Anne Kelly - and her marching orders mark a sharp departure from the CSC's direction under the previous Conservative government.

The letter instructs Kelly to address the needs of different groups of offenders, including black Canadians, women, young adults and seniors.

"It is important that services, interventions, assessment tools and correctional approaches be tailored to address the full diversity of CSC's population, and that this diversity be reflected in CSC's staff and management," it reads.

Along with ensuring inmates have access to the programs and treatments they need to return to society, the letter tasks Kelly with ensuring employees have a workplace free of bullying, harassment and sexual violence. It also states that crime victims are to be treated with compassion and respect.

Noting that family and community ties are both vital to successful reintegration, Goodale is asking the new commissioner to safely minimize institutional barriers to prison visits and communication with the outside - and to explore options for giving inmates supervised use of email.

"By providing ways of maintaining contact with the outside world, offenders' friends and family can, in a sense, also be partners in effective preparation for release," Goodale wrote.

Prisoner advocates have said Canada is lagging behind some other countries by denying prisoners access to email, the internet and in-cell tablets.

The four-page letter asks Kelly to ensure Indigenous offenders find real, culturally appropriate opportunities to turn their lives around, and to increase the number of community-run healing lodges and community-supervised releases.

Indigenous people make up a disproportionately high percentage of inmates in Canada. As of last year, Indigenous offenders represented 23 per cent of the total CSC custody population, up from 17 per cent a decade earlier; Indigenous Canadians make up less than 5 per cent of the total population.

In the mandate letter, Goodale asks for a review of CSC's governance structure to ensure the needs of Indigenous offenders are considered in system decisions.

Goodale also directs the commissioner to ensure that prison meals are adequate in quality and quantity. That directive comes in the wake of reports that small portions and low-quality food are driving heightened tensions and a black market economy behind bars.

Other directives in Kelly's mandate letter include:

- Improving educational and educational opportunities, including exploring options for distance learning and supervised use of information technology.
- Enhancing prevention, early diagnosis and treatment of acute and chronic medical and mental health conditions.
- Ensuring that addiction is viewed and treated as a medical problem.
- Partnering with community organizations and volunteers to provide alternative programs related to the arts, along with programs involving animals and peer mentoring.
- Regularly reviewing policies and operations to identify what works through a "culture of ongoing self-reflection" that draws on internal research and international approaches.
- Continuing to reduce the use of segregation, also known as solitary confinement.

A release from Goodale's office says the mandate letter is in keeping with the government's vision for the prison system and its belief "that the safety of the public is best protected by effective rehabilitation and safe reintegration of people serving a federal sentence."

Federal Correctional Investigator Ivan Zinger said the mandate marks a dramatic shift away from the direction set by the previous Harper government.

"We are moving from an approach that was dogmatic and based on rhetoric rather than proven and effective correctional practice," he said.

Zinger said the new direction appears to recognize that better outcomes come from strong rehabilitation and ensuring the needs of offenders are met in terms of schooling, vocational programs and substance abuse programs.

The mandate letter promises the necessary policy changes and funding to follow through on the reforms. Zinger himself called for fundamental reforms that reallocate resources, such as housing mental health patients in psychiatric facilities rather than prisons.

Catherine Latimer of the John Howard Society of Canada said that, instead of focusing programming on particular groups, the government should be targeting the needs of individual prisoners, regardless of gender, race or ethnicity. She also said there must be a regime in place to track whether the reforms are working.

"I think the real challenge will be to get information and to establish measurements to ensure that progress is being made against the mandate letter," she said.

Heidi Illingworth, executive director of the Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime, called the new commissioner's mandate great news ... for federal offenders.

She said giving them access to email could be "risky," especially in cases involving partner violence or criminal harassment.

"How closely can they actually be monitored? Seems to me this could get out of control very quickly," she said. "While the minister is keen to make big changes at CSC, crime victims seem to be an afterthought."

Illingworth said regional victim advisory committees rarely meet anymore and noted the federal victims' ombudsman's position has remained vacant for nearly a year.

Conservative Public Safety critic Pierre Paul-Hus said the letter raises questions about the Liberals' priorities.

"This is yet another example of the Liberals putting criminals ahead of victims. Instead of appointing a victims' ombudsman to make sure that victims have the support they need, the

Liberals have chosen to prioritize access to better email service and arts programs for criminals," he said in a statement.

In a media statement, Kelly said the mandate letter will help her prioritize commitments. She said she will publicly report on progress.

"Ensuring offenders have opportunities to turn their lives around and return to the community as law-abiding citizens remains the cornerstone of CSC's mission," she said. "Creating and maintaining a safe, healthy and respectful workplace for our employees, offenders, and visitors alike is at the top of my agenda."

Thousands of prisoners across the U.S. have joined strike action since Aug. 21, refusing to work and going on hunger strikes over poor working and living conditions.

Some Canadian inmates, including those at the Central Nova Scotia Correctional Facility in Dartmouth, N.S. - a provincial facility also known as Burnside jail - have joined that strike action.

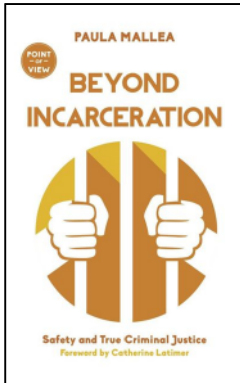
Kathleen Harris
CBC News
Sep 05, 2018



Our humanity rests upon a series of learned behaviors, woven together into patterns that are infinitely fragile and never directly inherited.

- Margaret Mead

Beyond Incarceration



Mallea argues inmates, society both suffer under current approach to justice

Paula Mallea knows a thing or two about the Canadian prison system.

A former criminal defence attorney with practices in both Ontario and Manitoba, she spent more time inside provincial and federal institutions than most people outside the inmate or guard populations. And she doesn't like what she sees.

Mallea has been writing about criminal justice reform for the better part of two decades - both data-laden reports on specific justice-related government policies and social issues, and several recent book-length arguments against our most ill-advised policy, including the book *The War on Drugs: A Failed Experiment*.

In *Beyond Incarceration*, the insightful legal thinker makes a clear and compelling argument that our fundamental approach to justice is counterproductive for a majority of inmates and society as a whole.

According to Mallea, criminal incarceration is supposed to achieve a number of different ends, including restitution to and retribution for the victims, rehabilitation of the offender, deterrence of the offender or other would-be criminals from future crime and incapacitation. In fact, very few of these are actually achieved by throwing more and more people in prison for longer and longer sentences in worse and worse conditions.

Data show that deterrence is related not to the harshness of the sentence but to the likelihood of getting caught. Our recidivism rate is high compared to other countries, and even incapacitation - the idea that throwing a person in prison cuts back on crime by getting them off the street - is untrue.

For one thing, criminal violence continues behind bars (and Mallea warns us of the moral quagmire of writing off the rights of inmates).

For another, any small gain for those of us outside the prison walls of having a few more criminals off the street for longer periods is more than wiped out by the hyper-criminalization of offenders by the time they are released, with non-violent offenders being made violent by their long and hellish prison experience and initially violent offenders becoming more bitter and angry.

This is the opposite of rehabilitation, and we all pay the price when inmates must ultimately be released to offend again.

How did it get so bad? Mallea blames the Harper government's tough-on-crime agenda for setting us back decades.

Positive criminal justice reform had been moving recidivism and crime rates in the right direction through the late 1980s and '90s.

Metrics in the prisons themselves were also improving, with fewer suicides, violent assaults on other prisoners or guards, lockdowns and riots.

Previous justice ministers were solving a problem that had been at its boiling point in the 1970s by looking around the world at the programs that did the most to demonstrably promote public safety and human rights. And as good, evidence-based ideas were implemented, prisons became more effective at doing what they are mandated to do - reintegrating offenders and improving public safety.

Revealingly, during Harper's decade-plus in power, the head of the prison guards' union (hardly a liberal group) lamented the increasing violence and misery in prison for guards and prisoners alike, calling the Conservative prime minister the most dangerous person in politics.

Mallea is not convinced that change will come quickly with a new government. Yet the problem is an increasingly urgent one in terms of fiscal responsibility, public safety and basic Canadian values.

Solutions exist, and the author describes them in detail. For everyone's sake, one can only hope they are implemented.

Joel Boyce
Winnipeg Free Press
Dec 02, 2017

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This magazine is only sent into women's prisons. Ads are not on internet version.

NOT
AVAILABLE
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Penpal Program for
Gay, Queer, Trans Prisoners

The Prisoner Correspondence Project runs a penpal program for gay, lesbian, bisexual, transsexual, transgender, and queer prisoners in Canada, pairing them up with gay and queer and trans people outside of prison for friendship and support.

We also coordinate a resource library of information and resources related to health, sexuality, and prisons - get in touch with us for a list of resources we have, or for details.

If you want to be paired up with a penpal, please send a short description of yourself & interests to:

Prisoner Correspondence Project
c/o QPIRG Concordia
1455 de Maisonneuve W.
Montreal, QC, H3G 1M8

Please indicate French or in English. Veuillez svp nous indiquer anglais ou en français.



Night time is really the best time to work. All the ideas are there to be yours because everyone else is asleep.
- Catherine O'Hara

We don't have a clue what it is to be male or female, or if there are intermediate genders. Male and female might be fields which overlap into androgyny or different kinds of sexual desires.

But because we live in a Western, patriarchal world, we have very little chance of exploring these gender possibilities.

- Kathy Acker

If you do not tell the truth about yourself you cannot tell it about other people.

- Virginia Woolf

Just because everything's different doesn't mean anything's changed.

- Irene Porter

Facts about HIV and HCV

With some exceptions, HIV and HCV infection is generally more prevalent among women than men in prison, particularly among those who have a history of injection drug use.

In a study of provincial prisons in Quebec, the HIV and HCV rate among incarcerated women was, respectively, 8.8 and 29.2 percent, compared to 2.4 and 16.6 percent among male prisoners.

In a study of female prisoners in British Columbia (B.C.), self-reported rates of HIV and HCV were 8 percent and 52 percent, respectively.

In a 2007 nationwide survey by CSC, the HIV and HCV rate among federally incarcerated women was 5.5 and 30.3 percent, compared to 4.5 and 30.8 percent among federally incarcerated men. Aboriginal women reported the highest rates of HIV and HCV, at 11.7 and 49.1 percent, respectively.

While the majority of women in prison are voluntarily tested for both HIV and HCV, the provision of pre- and post-test counselling has been reported to be poor, and in some cases, non-existent.

Women in prison are more likely than women in the general population to have faced violence and abuse; therefore, counselling accompanying HIV diagnosis is particularly important. Women in prison have concerns about the privacy and confidentiality of their HIV status.

Women have reported being forced to draw unwanted attention. Women (37.0%) reported being HCV-positive. Aboriginal women were identified as a particularly high-risk group because they reported the highest rates of HIV (11.7%) and HCV infections (49.1%).

These data highlight the need to ensure that culturally appropriate, effective interventions that decrease risk-behaviours and increase utilization of harm-reduction measures are offered to meet the needs of Aboriginal women.

Important Hep C Update!

New treatments with excellent success rates are now available!

These are in pill form and have little or no side effects. The downside is the cost of course: \$1000+ per pill.

Vosevi is a combination of sofosbuvir, velpatasvir and voxilaprevir. These three drugs are combined into one tablet. It is taken once a day with food for 12 weeks.

Federal Prisoners: Great news, now you can start your treatment while inside!

Provincial/Territorial Prisoners: Only BC & ON provide treatment. Elsewhere, you will have to wait till you get out.

- When released, get right on welfare or disability.
- Federal health care programs like NIHB & IFH may cover costs.
- Go to a Clinic and get your blood test done so you can get into a Treatment Program at no cost to you.

There are 2,700 with chronic hep C in Federal prisons.

There are 4,380 with chronic hep C in Prov/Terr prisons.

All Federal prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

BC & ON Prov prisoners with hep C are now eligible for treatment.

Hep C = 18-30% of prisoners
HIV = 1-5% of prisoners

Do Not Share or Re-Use:
needles, ink, ink holders, rigs,
- anything in contact with blood! -

**BLEACH DOES NOT
KILL HEP C**



F.E.A.T. - Family Visitation

F.E.A.T. for Children of Incarcerated Parents was founded in 2011 to support the needs of the over 15,000 children in the Greater Toronto Area that have a parent in the criminal justice system.

F.E.A.T.'s Family Visitation Program provides weekend transportation from Toronto to correctional facilities in Southern Ontario for children and families to visit imprisoned loved ones.

During our trips, F.E.A.T provides free snacks and refreshments, offers a variety of games and activities, and plays movies.

Our bus is a place where youth and families have a chance to talk about their experiences of having a loved one inside and receive support from mentors and other riders.

Our Family Visitation Program is free for anyone 18 years old and younger. If you are interested in participating in our program, please call or email F.E.A.T. to register today.

For more information or to book a seat on the bus please contact Jessica or Derek Reid:

info@featforchildren.org
416-505-5333

A Child of an Incarcerated Parent

The Reality

- Every year over 150,000 adults are remanded into custody which results in approximately 180,000 innocent children who suffer from the traumatic effect of parental incarceration
- Over 5,000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increased with the passing of the Crime Bill C-10

The Need

- Despite the growing prevalence of these innocent victims the resources available are minimal
- The cost and lack of accessibility to correctional facilities restrict child-parent visits. Consequently, some children can never visit their incarcerated parents

The Impact

- Children of incarcerated parents grieve the loss of their parent
- These children are four times more likely to be in conflict with the law
- Social stigma of incarceration causes some families to avoid discussing the absence of a parent

Research suggests that parental incarceration has a detrimental impact on children. These innocent children suffer the traumatic experience of being separated from their parent. Following parental imprisonment, children are faced with a myriad of challenges including:

- feelings of shame, grief, guilt, abandonment, anger
- lowered self-esteem
- economic instability
- social stigma and isolation
- disconnection from parent
- insecurity in familial and peer relationships
- school absenteeism, poor school performance
- difficulty in coping with future stress & trauma
- compromised trust in others including law enforcement

featforchildren.org ~ 416-505-5333

Prison Radio

- Halifax – CKDU 88.1 FM
Black Power Hour – Fri 1:30-3 pm
Youth Now! – Mon 5-6:30 pm
- Montreal – CKUT 90.3 FM
PRS – 2nd Thurs 5-6 pm & 4th Fri 11-noon
- Guelph – CFRU 93.3 FM
Prison Radio – Thurs 10-11 am
Call-in 519-837-2378
- Vancouver – CFRO 100.5 FM
Stark Raven – 1st Mon 7-8 pm
- Kingston – CFRC 101.9 FM
Prison Radio – Wed 7-8 pm

This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio and Vancouver Co-op Radio's Stark Raven programs.

The last Wednesday of each month, CPR features 'Calls From Home', sharing letters, emails, voice messages and music requests by and for prisoners and their loved ones.

Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lower Carruthers Hall, Queen's University, Kingston, ON, K7L 3N6
Email: CFRCprisonradio@riseup.net
Call: 613-329-2693 to record a message or music request to be broadcast on-air.

PRISONERS JUSTICE DAY

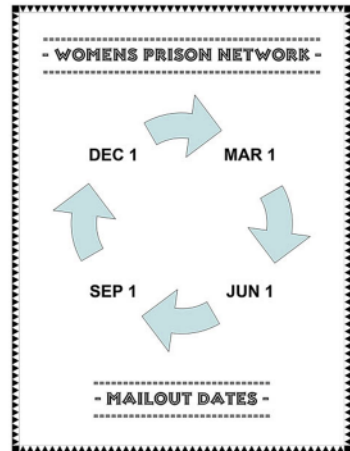
☞ In Remembrance ☞
- August 10 -

There are more than 200 Unnatural
Prisoner Deaths in Canada.
- Each and Every Year -

We maintain a PJD 'In Remembrance' page on our website for Prisoners who have died in Federal and Provincial Prisons, Remands, Lock-ups and Parole in Canada.

If you wish to have someone remembered there, send us a note or email and we will honour your request.

PJD@PrisonFreePress.org



Women's Prison Network
Winter 2018/19 - Issue #13

PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

info@WomensPrisonNetwork.org

visit, download, print, donate!
WomensPrisonNetwork.org

Send in your work
before Feb 1, 2019
Spring Issue #14 is sent
out Mar 1, 2019

Women, Trans & Youth Prisoners:
Wish to receive 'Women's Prison Network'?
Contact us & we will add you to the mailing list!
Please let us know if you move.
This magazine is by and for you.
Thank you for sharing!
