



# LOUISIANA CURE

CITIZENS UNITED FOR REHABILITATION OF ERRANTS



## Late Spring Newsletter

### BILLS, BILLS, Bills

As is usual during a regular legislative session, the public is inundated with more bills than they (or the legislators) can reasonably follow. So far, 1,782 bills have been filed. One has to ponder how during the 85 days allotted, legislators are able to make an “informed” decision on each of these bills. CURE has chosen to focus on just a few of these bills though there are many others that we support or reject.



**HB 122** by Morrell and Leger provides parole eligibility for juvenile lifers – those convicted for crimes committed at age 16 or less – on reaching their 31<sup>st</sup> birthday. This bill does not free any offenders, but gives the parole board the opportunity to reevaluate their sentencing. People and situations change drastically from being a teenager and becoming an adult. CURE feels this bill should be written to include all of the 42 juvenile lifers currently housed at Angola, (some for 30 years or more).

**HB 760** by LaFonta provides for an extensive review of sentencing laws and practices and provides a report of the findings to the legislature. CURE supports this bill because current Louisiana laws are redundant and inconsistent; most Louisiana sentencing laws provide few alternatives to incarceration; Louisiana sentencing laws are the harshest in the country; and finally “*When the laws hurt and harm, rather than help and heal, it is time to change the laws.*”

**SB 515** submitted by Senator Amedee which increases the time a defendant may be held in custody without being charged with a felony is rejected by CURE because it forces a defendant to spend too much unnecessary time locked up resulting in personal losses (employment, housing, etc.); it costs the state funds which could be better directed and this bill mainly affects people who can’t afford to post bail.

**SB 86** by Senator Martiny provides for the VCAC to submit three names from which the governor must choose one to sit on the Pardon Board. CURE soundly rejects this bill because a law of this nature is unfair because of its impartiality; the philosophy of the Victims and Citizens Against Crime is to keep violators incarcerated, which has been shown during previous pardon board hearings, and finally because “*Any attempt to restrict appointment power of the governor by the legislator would amount to an attempt to exercise powers reserved to the governor by the constitution...*” (LSA-Cont. Art. 4 5 (H)(1).

**HB 706** submitted by LaFonta changes the number of votes required to grant parole from unanimous to two out of three. CURE supports this bill for reasons similar to why it rejects SB 86, which is because bias is allowed on the boards.

*If one group is allowed to choose board members, shouldn't other groups be allowed to follow suit?*

**“Fairness is what justice really is.”**

...Justice Potter Stewart

*Is it okay for legislators to promote unfairness???*

**CURE is a membership organization of families of prisoners, prisoners, former prisoners and other concerned citizens. CURE's two goals are to use prisons only for those who need to be in them and for those who need to be in them, to provide them all the rehabilitative opportunities they need to turn their lives around.**

## Developing a New Attitude

Checo W. Yancy, CURE President

*The one thing I am convinced of and that is that God has a plan and purpose for every life.*

Louisiana CURE began the year with our Legislative workshop and we had a couple of special guest, Charlie Sullivan, leader of International CURE and his traveling companion Brother Jose de Jesus Filho, O.M.I , Jose an attorney from Brazil. They were visiting chapters in the South and it was a real honor to have them visit us. In April we had another workshop to educate our members on the current bills filed for this session. Louisiana CURE presented bills we were monitoring, supporting and opposing.

I am looking forward to the day when attitudes change and education is first, not prison. Crime is still on the rise and we are still no further today then we were 30 years ago. We have gotten away from what worked years ago, when the entire neighbor had a hand in raising children:

- Old fashion home training is still the key to change.
- Spiritual training
- Education and
- Prevention

No, I am not an expert, but I can truly say, crime does not pay, after spending 7,309 days in prison (20) years, I did develop a new attitude, that I could be a different person, a better person and a productive member of society, no matter what barriers I faced. Developing a new attitude makes all of the difference in the world. I understand persons should be punished for breaking the law, but what happens when they return to society? We spend almost a billion dollars on the prison system, are we really getting the best for over money?

In this current legislative session, there were hundreds of bills filed to stiffen or create new laws, some make sense, and others just seemed to make elected officials feel good and/or be able to say, "*I am tough on crime*". Tough penalties have not deterred crime. If that was the case, again Louisiana would be the safest state in America. Maybe it time to change attitudes, starting at a young age, at home at school, it's a proven fact development starts early age. Just a thought.

Maybe, Mr. Rick Kern, director of the Virginia Criminal Sentencing Commission, states it best, "*The idea is to make a distinction between the people we're afraid of and the ones we're just ticked off at.*" It is costing over \$27,000 a year to lock people up.

Please don't forget the ongoing ETC Campaign (Equitable Telephone Charges) we need to improve and cut the high cost of the prison telephone systems. You can help by having your family to get in touch with your Public Service Commissioner or local legislator know how unfair it is for you to have pay such high costs to talk with your loved one.

**We cannot be hindered as long as we continue to work as a team**

### **PUBLICATION NOTICE**

This newsletter is a publication of Louisiana CURE. Louisiana CURE is a non-profit organization whose goal is to reduce crime through criminal justice reform.

The opinions and statements contained in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the Board of Directors of Louisiana CURE.

Contributions of articles, letters to the editor, notices, etc. are welcome, but may be edited or rejected for space considerations.

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### **WEB MASTER**

Mark Lubbock

State Louisiana CURE meetings are held at the Bishop Tracy Center at 1800 Acadian Thruway in Baton Rouge the second Tuesday of each month from 7-9 P.M.

Memberships and inquiries can be sent to:

**Louisiana CURE**  
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**Baton Rouge, LA 70821**  
[www.curelouisiana.org](http://www.curelouisiana.org).

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CURE is a volunteer organization. Letters are answered by volunteers. We appreciate the letters you send and do read them. We may not be able to answer them all, but we are interested in hearing from you and will do our best to address your issues and concerns, either by writing back, through our newsletter, or by taking other action.

**Please do not send legal documents to CURE. CURE does not offer legal services.**

# Two Separate Societies: One in Prison, One Not

By Marie Gottschalk - Tuesday, April 15, 2008

Forty years ago, the Kerner Commission concluded in its landmark study of the causes of racial disturbances in the United States in the 1960s: "Our nation is moving toward two societies, one black, and one white -- separate and unequal." Today we are still moving toward two societies: one incarcerated and one not. The Pew Center on the States released a study in February showing that for the first time in this country's history; more than one in every 100 adults is in jail or prison. According to the [Justice Department](#), 7 million people -- or one in every 32 adults -- are either incarcerated, on parole or probation or under some other form of state or local supervision.

These figures understate the disproportionate impact that this bold and unprecedented social experiment has had on certain groups in U.S. society. Today one in nine young black men are behind bars. African Americans now comprise more than half of all prisoners, up from a third three decades ago.

Sen. [James Webb](#) (D-Va.) held a remarkable set of hearings last October on mass incarceration in the United States. In his opening statement, Webb noted that "the United States has embarked on one of the largest public policy experiments in our history, yet this experiment remains shockingly absent from public debate."

The leading presidential candidates have not identified mass imprisonment as a central issue, even though it is arguably the country's top civil rights concern. Many of today's crime control policies fundamentally impede the economic, political and social advancement of the most disadvantaged blacks and members of other minority groups. Prison leaves them less likely to find gainful employment, vote, participate in other civic activities and maintain ties with their families and communities.

Congress recognized some of these barriers recently when, after years of delay, it approved and sent to the [White House](#) the Second Chance Act, which [President Bush](#) signed into law last week. This legislation seeks to ease the reentry of prisoners into society by providing modest increases in support for mentoring programs, drug treatment, job training and education.

Bruce Western of [Harvard](#) soberly concludes in his landmark book "Punishment and Inequality in America" that mass imprisonment has erased many of the "gains to African American citizenship hard won by the civil rights movement." Sen. [Barack Obama](#) glancingly made some similar points in an address at [Howard University](#) last

September. But he generally has not focused on the perils of mass incarceration. Neither has Sen. [Hillary Clinton](#), though the \$4 billion anti-crime package she unveiled last week did call for elimination of the federal mandatory five-year sentence for minor crack cocaine violations. As for Sen. [John McCain](#), civil rights and criminal justice policy are not among the 15 issues the Republican nominee highlights on his Web site. But America's space program did make the top 15.

At the hearings last fall, Webb underscored a basic truth sidelined in most discussions of crime and punishment: The explosion of the prison population wasn't driven so much by an increase in crime as by the way we chose to respond to crime. Even former president [Bill Clinton](#), whose administration was an accomplice in the largest prison buildup in U.S. history, conceded in a keynote address at a [University of Pennsylvania](#) symposium in February commemorating the Kerner anniversary: "Most of the people who went to prison should have been let out a long time ago."

A change of heart by Bill Clinton and other public figures will not be enough to reverse the prison boom. In rare instances, public officials have been moved by strong personal beliefs to empty their prisons. During his brief tenure as [Britain's](#) home secretary early in the 20th century, [Winston Churchill](#) expressed deep skepticism about what could be achieved through incarceration, and he began releasing prisoners. Political leadership has been critical for major reductions in incarceration in other countries. But in many cases, the public and experts on criminal justice had to push politicians to begin emptying their prisons and jails.

It is a national disgrace that the U.S. incarceration rate is five to 12 times that of other industrialized countries as well as being the highest in the world. As Churchill once said, "The mood and temper of the public in regard to the treatment of crime and criminals is one of the most unflinching tests of the civilization of any country."

*Marie Gottschalk, an associate political science professor at the University of Pennsylvania, is author of "The Prison and the Gallows: The Politics of Mass Incarceration in America."*

## 2008 LOUISIANA LEGISLATIVE SESSION

By David Aceves

This has been a busy legislative session. The session opened with 37 bills filed that affect CURE interests. According to our board recommendations they are mostly good: 24 to support (5 with amendments), 2 to monitor, 3 that needed further clarification, and only 8 that to oppose.

As of this midpoint of the session the results have been mixed. All but one (HB 110 excluding those convicted of armed robbery from parole eligibility) of the bills opposed have advanced, with a few having been passed to the other house. Probably the worst of these is SB 86 requiring that one member of the Pardon Board must be appointed from a list provided by the group Victims and Citizens Against Crime, Inc. Unless HB 706 (see below) also passes, this would essentially put an end to all but political pardons in Louisiana. Contact your representative TODAY and request they vote against SB 86! Contact Governor Jindal TODAY and ask him to veto the bill if it comes to him.

Most bills supported are stagnated in committee, but some have advanced and none have been killed. Among those stagnated are HB 323 to abolish the death penalty, HB 706 to reduce the number of votes to grant parole from unanimous to a majority, and HB 760 to review Louisiana's sentencing laws and practices. Among those we favor that are moving ahead are HB 121 improving "good time" credits (nearing final passage in both houses), HB 122 improving parole eligibility for juvenile offenders and companion bill SB 400 (both nearing final passage), and HB 778 extending the time period to file for post-conviction relief DNA testing.

Contact your state senators and legislators and ask them to support HB 35, HB 67, HB 117, HB 121, HB 122, HB 130, HB 242, HB 246, HB 317, HB 323, HB 324, HB 340, HB 491, HB 602, HB 613, HB 661, HB 706, HB 760, HB 777, HB 778, HB 1011, HB 1359, HR 1, SB 400, and SB 642. The subject matter of each is on the list CURE sent out at the beginning of the session. The full text and other information is available on the Legislature's website:  
<http://www.legis.state.la.us>

Jay Jackson, CURE Member

Okay, one more thing to get involved with...like I have the time!

It just so happens that the Louisiana State Legislature started their session recently and I've been encouraged by CURE to pay closer attention to what's going on with our state government. The questions I have are "when and where am I going to find time to pay attention to what the legislature is doing"? It happens that I work during the day, so I can't just show up at the State Capitol and follow the legislative process...or, can I?

Well, thanks to CURE, I have found out that it's not nearly as difficult or time consuming as I first thought. Thanks to CURE, I've discovered the Louisiana Legislature's website, [www.legis.state.la.us](http://www.legis.state.la.us) which, by the way, is a very comprehensive and informative website!

I now can get on my computer and follow the process, particularly issues that interest me - like issues pertaining to the Department of Corrections (*at my convenience*). And by using the website, I can also click on links that will allow me to view videos of different committee hearings held earlier - *at my convenience*! How cool!

If you're like me and don't have the opportunity to leave your job, drive down to the Capitol, find a place to park, and look for whatever you're looking for, try going to the state legislature's website! Just point and click a few times and see what our legislators are talking about!

P.S. By the way, be sure to send your senator and representative an email (you can also get their email addresses from the legislature's website) and let them know that you've been watching them!

**A Case for Community Defense**  
By Heather H. Hall  
Director, Louisiana Justice Coalition (LJC)

It is a new day for public defense in Louisiana. Never in Louisiana's history has the state been better poised or more committed to improving the quality of legal representation for criminal defendants accused of a crime who cannot afford to hire private counsel. Given the state's highest-in-the-nation rate of incarceration, the growing number of Louisianans proven factually innocent of crimes for which they were wrongfully convicted and the widespread recognition of injustice in the public defense system, the "new day" is not a moment too soon.

In August 2007, the Louisiana Legislature approved the Louisiana Public Defender Act (Act 307), a comprehensive, state-wide indigent defense reform initiative. With nearly 100 co-authors on the legislation, this bill reflects strong recognition of Louisiana's public defense crisis and broad commitment to improve fairness and accountability for defendants in Louisiana.

The legislation gives additional authorities to the Louisiana Public Defender Board to better supervise, discipline and promote initiatives in districts across the state. The legislation also provides for the hiring of newly-created key staff positions, including: a State Public Defender, adult and juvenile compliance officers, as well as budget, training and technology personnel. The 2007 legislative session also resulted in a significant increase in funding for the delivery of public defense services. For FY 2007-8, funding will exceed \$28 million, up from just \$7 million in 2004. Districts will continue to collect local court surcharges, but with the state investment, Louisiana can happily shed its distinction as the only state in the nation that attempts to fund the majority of its constitutional obligation to provide public defense services through local court costs.

The passage of the Louisiana Public Defender Act creates a tremendous opportunity to finally create a high-quality public defense system in Louisiana and ensure equal access to justice for poor defendants in Louisiana. The foundation for this system is the American Bar Association's *Ten Principles for a Public Defense Delivery System*, which are universally regarded as the national standards for public defender offices across the country. With the time, training and resources to satisfy these national standards, LJC believes that Louisiana should further embrace the community defense model because it is the most efficient and effective way to improve court outcomes for clients, protect public safety and make responsible use of tax dollars.

Community defense is both a practice and an ideology. Community defense models recognize that an individual's first contact with the criminal justice system offers a rare moment in which to address many of that individual's most salient needs, including those that lie outside of the immediate realm of the legal system. Crime is almost always caused by or related to an unmet social need. Lack of education, unstable housing, drug dependency and mental illness are among the most frequent social issues of clients represented by a public defender office. By shortchanging all social service providers – including the public defender – jails have increasingly become the centers of communities, housing individual's who have been unable to get the assistance that they need to avoid becoming court-involved. Community defense seeks to replace the inevitability of incarceration with effective alternatives achieved through a strong collaboration between community service providers and the public defender office.

In February 2008, LJC hired a social worker to assist the Caddo Parish Public Defender Office (Shreveport area) in its transition to a community defender office. Jamie Griswold Scoggin works as the Community Defense Liaison in Shreveport. Her project is funded primarily by a grant from the Charles T. Beard Foundation.

Jamie's role is to build relationships between area social service providers and the public defender office in order to better help the clients they often both serve. By looking at the client's needs holistically, Jamie can address the social service needs of select clients so that they do not cycle back and forth through the criminal justice system. By aggressively addressing unmet social service needs, the community defense model increases public safety and decreases criminal justice costs while supporting individuals and their families to become healthy members of our community.

Since February, Jamie has conducted a randomly selected assessment of 100 adult prisoners in the Caddo Correctional Center in order to have a data-supported profile of the extra-legal needs of indigent clients. Significant numbers of defendants have documented mental health histories and unmet treatment needs. Many others struggle with addiction but are unable to qualify for affordable treatment programs. Homelessness, illiteracy and developmental disability also affect a significant number of prisoners. Many have violated probation as a direct consequence on unmet needs, and re-enter the system to face more severe penalties and increasing obstacles for successful community re-entry. This data supports the need for a community defense model and directs our activities to the specific needs of clients in Caddo Parish.

Jamie has also done extensive outreach to area service providers and coordinated the sharing of expertise and written resources with the public defender office. Attorneys are not mental health experts or advocates for individuals with developmental disabilities. However, through training and networking, Jamie's outreach is bridging the gap to serve the client's best interest. Often times, a holistic approach not only is the best remedy for the client, but it reflects the best outcomes for the community. Addressing root problems of crime and supporting the efforts of individuals to contribute positively to the community serves all of us.

Jamie also provides limited direct service to certain clients by facilitating evaluations and treatment plans. For example, through an attorney request, Jamie arranged for client J.R. to receive 30 days of mental health treatment in a local hospital. With this treatment plan in hand, J.R.'s attorney was able to secure probation for her client and connect him to the services he needed and wanted. In this way, the public defender office interrupted the cycle of incarceration for their client and saved tax dollars both by diverting him from jail and hopefully decreasing the likelihood that he will need to be represented by the public defender office again.

By integrating the role of a social worker into the defense team, Caddo Parish has taken an incredibly progressive first step in transforming defender culture. The Public Defender Reform Act finally allows this culture change to finally take place by providing resources and support for high quality advocacy. Caddo Parish and Orleans Parish are the first two public defender offices in the state to utilize a social worker in their public defender office and to promote holistic advocacy for their clients. This advocacy is critical for aggressively serving clients, reducing recidivism, increasing the impact of scarce resources among all service providers and finding long-term solutions to community problems.

In a community defense model, public defenders not only advocate for individual clients, but, through advocacy and systemic reform, attempt to improve the social standing of the community from which many of their clients come, and to which many return. Community defense programs that comply with national and state standards are the definition of 'quality public defense'. Far from diminishing everyday legal representation, community defender advocacy augments it.

As the implementation of the Public Defender Reform Act moves forward, LJC is excited to assist offices around the state to shed the shameful hallmarks of Louisiana's past public defense system and create an effective and efficient community defense system for all.

The website for the Louisiana Justice Coalition is: [www.lajusticecoalition.org](http://www.lajusticecoalition.org)

The website for the Louisiana Public Defender Board is: [www.lapdb.org](http://www.lapdb.org)

The complete text of the Louisiana Public Defender Reform Act (Act 307) is online at: <http://www.legis.state.la.us/billdata/streamdocument.asp?did=449902>

## LOUISIANA CURE Houma Chapter

The Houma group has been moving and promoting being involved in supporting or opposing legislative bills concerning prison reform and crime. It seems at times our efforts do not make a lot of impact on the outcome, but we must continue putting our energy into this effort and one day we will have a larger impact in helping prisoners.

The chapter meetings have been changed from the 4<sup>th</sup> Tuesday to the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday, hoping it will be more convenient and increase attendance. Meetings are held at the First Baptist Church Family Life Center @ 7382 Main Street, Houma, La.

Louisiana CURE is also networking with the support group, Shoulders to Lean On, Inc. This group is also encouraging members to become involved in the legislative process with information on bills and what to do. Also, the group provides birthday and holiday cards to inmates. 245 Christmas cards and 275 Easter cards including 30 to the hospice at Angola were mailed to inmates. If your loved one who is incarcerated is not receiving these cards, you can contact the Houma Chapter at the above address.

### **WE CAN DO IT!!!**

Having been part of Louisiana CURE from its origin over twenty years ago and involved in Prison Ministry for the same time period, I would like to see us actively engaged with members of the Louisiana Legislature. At this opportune time of enactment of “Term Limits” with many new members, we need to educate individual Legislators on prison reform.

“Lock ‘Em Up and Throw Away the Key” mentality has not reduced crime in any fashion. It has only created a new “Economic Growth Industry”. Louisiana prisons have boomed and grown creating expanding and new prisons! It also results in a financial drain on the State’s resources.

Only by actively engaging new members of our Legislature with us can we educate them in the need for reform. I challenge Louisiana CURE members to openly debate how this can best be achieved. My suggestion is we have a different member of the Legislature with us at each of our monthly CURE meetings.

As a Louisiana CURE member, I challenge each of you to consider one member of the Legislature whom you know or who represents you. Engage this Legislator to attend & speak at a CURE monthly meeting. Be persistent. We Can Do This!

In educating members of the Legislature on the need for prison reform one thing will occur. They will consider Legislative reforms if only to get “CURE off their backs”!

I recommend that this unified action be the number one item on the agenda of the next CURE Board meeting. At the following CURE monthly meeting, hopefully, members will commit themselves and actively engage in contacting their member of the Legislature to attend a CURE meeting.

We Can Do This! Let’s get it done!

By: Justine McCarty

## “Because the gun was there...”

By Kathy Gess

In 1998, CURE printed an article with the above title after Baton Rouge had experienced several shootings. At that time “Handgun Control, Inc, a national lobbying group that evaluated states by examining gun-related issues gave Louisiana a grade of F for its laws meant to protect children from guns. LA received this flunking grade because the state lacks a child-access prevention law, lets residents with permits carry concealed weapons, doesn’t have a juvenile possession law and doesn’t let cities overrule state laws by adopting their own gun control measures.” (*Times-Picayune* 2-7-97)

Currently, the Brady Campaign, formed after the shooting attempt on President Reagan’s life, gave Louisiana only 4 points out of 100 for their common sense restrictions. Those points are 2 because guns are not allowed in the workplace and 2 more because colleges are not forced to allow firearms on the campus. Louisiana will lose 2 of those points if HB 199 by Wooton passes the legislature. This bill will **force** all universities and colleges to allow virtually anyone to bring guns onto campus, into classrooms, and into dorms – this in spite of opposition by campus security.

Trained policeman often make mistakes in desperate situations – how would one expect a young, untrained student to react?

Guns appear to have become a normal part of life – especially in Louisiana, owning a gun seems to be the “macho” thing to do. Low self-esteem can swell in seconds when one is carrying a gun.

More from 1998: “Professor Cecile Guin, director of the Office of Social Service Research at LSU’s School of Social Work reports in talking to death-row prisoners: ‘Seventy-five percent of the people I interviewed had no intention to shoot anybody with their gun. But it happened because their gun was there.’” One of the biggest problems in Louisiana appears to be **“because the gun was there”**.

## Death Penalty Resumes

Kathy Gess

Hours after the U.S. Supreme Court rejected a challenge to lethal injection – *Baze v. Reese* – several states restarted the process of scheduling executions. Louisiana was no exception, setting July 15 as the execution date for former police officer, Antoinette Frank.

Thirty-five states and the U.S. government use lethal injection as their primary method of execution. Nebraska’s use of electrocutions was recently struck down by the Supreme Court.

The vote to lift the 7-month moratorium was 7 to 2 with Justice Ginsberg and Souter dissenting and Justices Alito, Kennedy, Roberts, Scalia, Thomas, Breyer and Stevens supporting. Justice Stevens, however, in spite of his vote, called for the abolition of the death penalty stating that, “I have relied on my own experience in reaching the conclusion that the imposition of the death penalty represents the pointless and needless extinction of life with only marginal contributions to any discernible or social public purpose. (Such a penalty) is patently excessive and cruel and unusual punishment violative of the Eighth Amendment.”

Former Justice Harry Blackman made this dissenting opinion in *Callins v. Collins* Feb 22, 1994: “I shall no longer tinker with the machinery of death. For more than twenty years I have endeavored – indeed, I have struggled – to develop procedural and substantive rules that would lend more than the mere appearance of fairness to the death penalty ... (I recognize) the problem is that: “The inevitability of factual, legal and moral error gives us a system that we know must wrongly kill some defendants, a system that fails to deliver the fair, consistent, and reliable sentence of death required by the Constitution.”

The United States is one of the few civilized nations to still use the death penalty.

*(The above information was from USA Today, the Advocate and Nat Hentoff’s column of 5-7-08)*

Lawmakers in Austin will hold a Summit on Wrongful Convictions to determine the causes of mistaken convictions in Texas and how to prevent them. Last week, James Woodard was freed after serving 27 years for a murder he didn’t commit. A week earlier, Thomas McGowan was freed after 23 years.

*USA Today 5-8-08*

## THE LIVING DEAD

Ed & Paulette Barras

Most people we know really do not know much about our lives personally. They do not know that our family lives the lives of the “living dead”. We feel that way because we have a family member in prison in Louisiana because he is suffering from an addictive disorder, alcoholism. He was sentenced in St. Tammany Parish to 28 years in prison without benefit of probation or parole because he was a repeat DWI offender.

No, he did not have any accidents. No, he did not injure anyone. No, he was incarcerated because he COULD POTENTIALLY DO HARM! No mandated treatment, no home incarceration, no hope for him or for his family.

At least twice a month we spend an entire day driving to his prison, visiting, saying goodbye and driving back home. My husband and I are seniors and it is very hard on us both emotionally and physically. We are watching our son age in confinement without ever getting treatment.

You see, alcoholics and other addicted individuals do not always recognize their addiction! Even when the walls come tumbling down on them, they still believe that they are not addicted. That is why we approached Rep. Ken Odinet with a bill that would MANDATE treatment for repeat alcohol offenders. With mandated treatment they would be FORCED to face their addictions. With this law, there was a 65% SUCCESS RATE, which reduced recidivism rates in Louisiana ex-inmates.

That, unfortunately was not good enough for the Legislature, so with Senator Joel Chaisson’s endorsement, (THE SON OF A LOUISIANA JUDGE), they changed the law a couple of years after it was instituted. They allowed the judges to make the decisions and so went mandated treatment! Now it is a “political” hot potato and in conservative

9/5/2009

Parishes, like St. Tammany, the judges are reluctant to sentence a repeat offender to mandated treatment!

There are presently over 1,200 human beings incarcerated in Louisiana prisons serving from 10 to 30 YEARS as repeat DWI offenders. These people are serving longer sentences than those guilty of negligent HOMICIDE. Louisiana prisons take the HUMAN out of the BEING.

Therefore, our lives, our entire family’s, are in limbo. Our loved one is not dead, but lives day to day in a prison, not in treatment. We live our lives as the living dead, no life to look forward to because the Louisiana justice system knows no other way to treat those suffering from addictions other than prison.

Maybe one day, they will realize that there are too many sick people in prisons when they could be returned to their families to live full and productive lives. Maybe one day we can live again.



**LOUISIANA CURE**

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