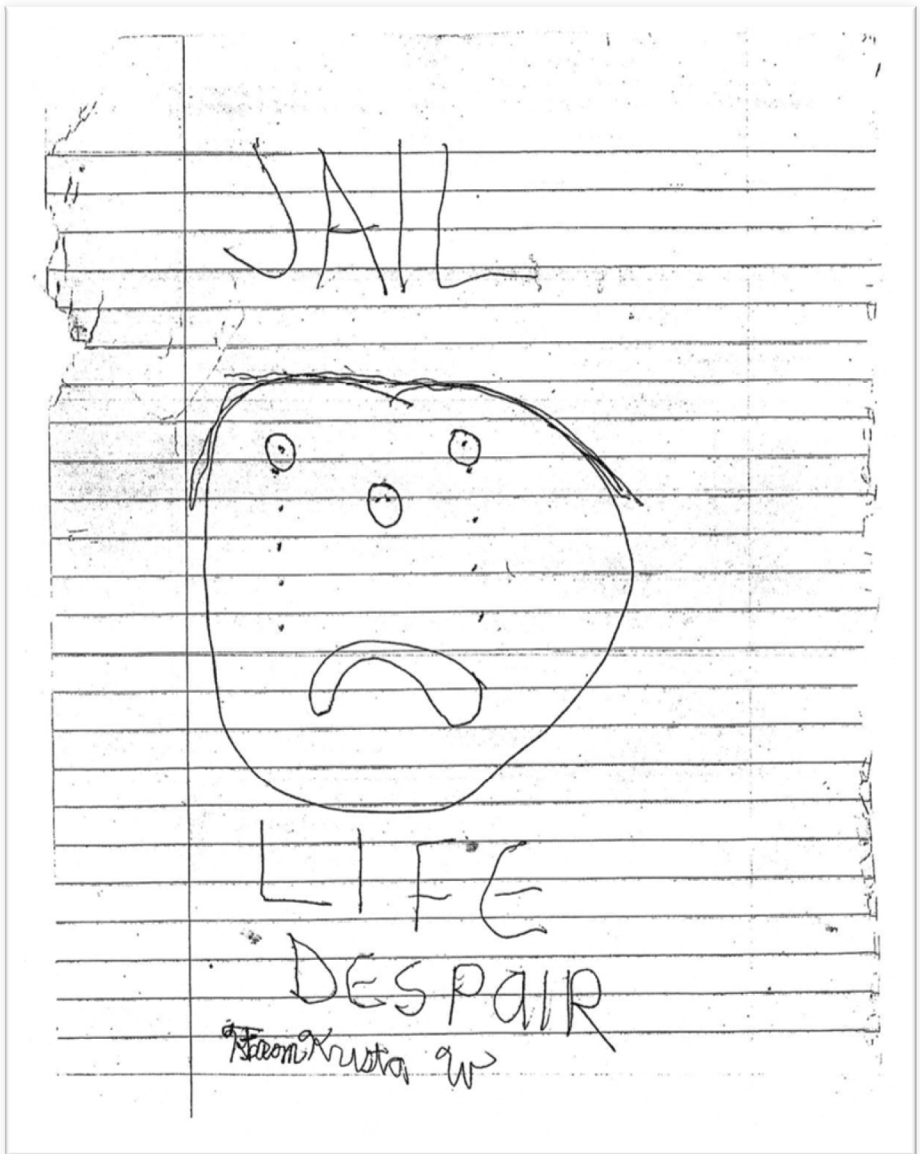


CLASS ACTION! NEWS



ISSUE 15 - FALL 2019

< Editor's Note >

It is Fall & Issue #15 of 'Class Action News'.

This magazine is by & for the Prisoner Class in Canada.



In every Issue we provide a safe space for creative expression and literacy development. These zines feature art, poetry, stories, news, observations, concerns, and anything of interest to share.

Health & Harm Reduction info will always be provided - Yes, Be Safe!

Quality & Quantity:

Items printed are those that are common for diverse readers, so no religious items please.

Artwork: Black pen (tat-style) works the best. Cover Artist will receive a \$25 donation.

Writings: only short poems, news, stories, ... Items selected are those that fit nicely & allow space for others (1/2 page = 325 words max). For author protection, letters & story credits will all be 'Anonymous'.

'Class Action News' is published 4 times a year & is free for prisoners in Canada. If you are on the outside or an organization, please send a donation. We do not have any funding so it really helps to get this inside!

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- The right of life, liberty and security of person (Section 7).
- The right not to be arbitrarily detained (Section 9).
- The right not to be subjected to cruel and unusual punishment (Section 12).
- The right to be equal before and under the law (Section 15).

Anything less than the truth is a lie.
- Tamara Starblanket

< *Letters* >

Prisoners are paying the tab for staff to watch TV

I have recently completed a series of Access to Information Act requests across Correctional Services Canada (CSC) spectrum and found that without exception Canadian prison Inmate Welfare Funds (IWF) are paying for the various institutions' administrative and correctional staff cable TV service.

Bottom line, I want:

- 1) A full stop to the 'fraudulent practice' through the 'abuse of authority' by using IWF money to pay for 'television and cable/satellite services' that are used and enjoyed exclusively by CSC administrative and correctional staff at every prison institution across Canada.
- 2) A full audit by the Office of the Auditor General of Canada to review the administration of all prisoners' trust funds by the respective institutional program managers and AWOs.
- 3) An immediate refund to the IWF of every Canadian prison institution to cover the maladministration and misappropriation of funds; whereby, prisoners have been paying the tab for institutional staff to watch TV for over 40 years.
- 4) A Treasury Board inquiry into the breach of fiduciary trust and ethical code violations related to the maladministration and misappropriation of IWF being used for institutional staff's TV viewing pleasure.
- 5) Accountability, transparency, reprisals and repercussions in accordance with CD 001 Sc. 3 "adherence to the expected (Public Sector Values and Ethics) behaviours constitute a condition of employment for all CSC employees".

Thanks everyone for your kind consideration of the foregoing and understanding that 'playing the prisoners' for staff entertainment is beyond the pale of civility in this the 21st Century. It is also illegal!

George Fraser
Aug 10, 2019

Fighting crime by building more jails is like fighting cancer by building more cemeteries.
- Paul Kelly

3 more women join lawsuit alleging sexual assault at women's prison in Truro

Three more women have joined a lawsuit alleging they were sexually assaulted by a guard at the Nova Institution, a prison for women located in Truro, N.S.

They join three other women who launched the civil suit in May. The guard has resigned.

Truro police are conducting a criminal investigation into the allegations at the institute, one of six federal correctional facilities for women across Canada.

CBC is not identifying any of the women because of the nature of their allegations. They have the support of the Elizabeth Fry Society, an organization which provides help for women in conflict with the law.

In their suit, the women allege the assaults happened in 2013 and 2018. They name a former guard, Brian Wilson, as their attacker.

Guard claims he has been wrongfully accused

In an interview with CBC News in May, Wilson denied the allegations and said he has been wrongfully accused.

Correctional Service Canada told CBC News it began an internal investigation when it first heard of the allegations in last December.

The preliminary findings of that investigation were delivered on March 29. That's when CSC contacted police.

Wilson said he was suspended this January and resigned in April on the advice of his psychologist.

He has been diagnosed with post-traumatic stress disorder.

The allegations in the civil lawsuit have not been tested in court.

Blair Rhodes
CBC News
Jul 19, 2019

Doctor, you touched my vertebrae and you are touching my unpaid bills, touching my unmade marriages.

And you look at me and say, "Have you ever had shock treatment?"

And I say, "Doctor, life is a shock treatment."

- Karen Finley

< News >

Shunned by hospitals and given sub-standard treatment, prisoners need better health care

They arrive in the throes of a mental-health crisis, typically accompanied by two jail guards. And quite often, those Ontario inmates are refused a bed by outside hospitals, either because of stigma or a mistaken belief they'll get the help they need behind bars, an internal government report indicates.

The surprising phenomenon is just one example of the sub-standard health care prisoners in the province receive, despite suffering from sky-high rates of physical and mental ailments, says the document, obtained under freedom of information legislation.

As Ontario's Conservative government proposes a \$36-million cut to the overall corrections budget, the review by a panel of outside experts urges spending millions more to bring about "profound" changes in inmate health care.

Doing so would lessen the strain that sick prisoners impose on the outside medical and criminal-justice systems, and take advantage of a "unique opportunity" to treat marginalized members of society, says the panel.

"In Ontario, we seem to be reaching a tipping point," says the 57-page document. "We can further reduce the burden on our already stretched hospital capacity by providing proper care in custody ... (and) avoid costly future interactions with police, courts and the correctional system."

The report's specific, detailed recommendations were censored out before the government released it to the John Howard Society of Ontario. But unredacted parts laud decisions in Alberta and other provinces to put jail health care under health ministries, rather than corrections departments.

Though the review was commissioned by the previous Liberal government, the current administration is talking to members of the expert group about the issue, said Marion Ringuette, press secretary to Solicitor General Sylvia Jones. The minister recently visited the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to that end, she said.

"We are working on a correctional health care strategy, in consultation with the (Health Ministry) and other health system partners that

will improve the quality of care within correctional institutions and bring corrections in line with the broader health care system in Ontario," Ringuette said.

Still, it seems unlikely the Conservatives will make the kind of cash commitment recommended by the report. It suggests at least a 40-per-cent hike in the system's current \$62-million budget for inmate health care is needed to make real change.

Yet spending estimates just issued by the government forecast a \$36-million cut in overall operating expenses for correctional services, part of the four-per-cent government-wide reduction promised by the Tories to tackle a ballooning deficit.

Safiyah Husein, a John Howard policy analyst, argued that improving the health of inmates - one of the sickest segments of society - would be good for the whole province.

"This can really create a more efficient health care system," she said.

Ontario jails handle 35,000 different inmates a year, a number that has shrunk by almost 20,000 since 2006. Most are on remand, waiting for court appearances, while only 28 per cent serve actual sentences of less than two years. Offenders handed longer terms do the time in federal prisons.

The report notes that various human-rights decisions, inquests, reviews and ombudsman's reports have previously raised concerns about jail health care.

Inmates are up to five times more likely than the general population to have serious psychiatric problems, have 20 times the rate of HIV, and close to 100 times the incidence of Hepatitis C.

But the province's 25 jails tend to provide a minimal level of care, responding to health crises and emergencies with little follow-up or prevention, says the committee. In the first six days after getting out of jail, inmates are 58 times more likely than Ontarians overall to end up in a psychiatric facility.

Individual corrections health workers are dedicated, but tend to be under-staffed and isolated from the broader health-care system, it said.

The committee says it's "not unusual" for hospitals to refuse to admit or to quickly discharge those mentally ill inmates who show

up with their guards, partly because they're convinced the jail will look after them.

But, the report says, "the reality is that correctional facilities are not designed, staffed or equipped to provide a full continuum of health care services."

Compounding the problem, said the document, some hospitals refuse to share health records when they discharge inmates, believing jail health workers are "correctional" staff and shouldn't see the private information.

Tom Blackwell

National Post - May 24, 2019

Prisoners' Justice Day vigil calls for better medical supports at OCDC

Dozens of advocates at a Prisoner's Justice Day vigil in Ottawa called for more mental health and other medical supports at the Ottawa-Carleton Detention Centre.

The vigil, held Saturday night at Major's Hill park, comes off the heels of a new report from the Jail Accountability and Information Line - a program launched in December as a way for inmates of the Innes Road jail to report concerns and seek help from a live volunteer.

This is the second such report that the hotline organizers have released, and shows many of the inmates' concerns revolve around inadequate medical and mental health care.

"The healthcare system is abhorrent, people living with mental and physical health conditions and not receiving care they need," said hotline volunteer Souheil Benslimane.

Prisoners reported a lack of medical confidentiality which deters some inmates from seeking medical attention, limited access to opioid substitution treatment and delays in being able to see a doctor or a dentist, the report states.

Inmates also complained that medications are often diluted in water in an effort to prevent hoarding and misuse, but doing so reduces the intended effects of the medications.

In a statement to CBC, a spokesperson from Ontario's Ministry of the Solicitor General, which oversees the prison, conceded that these are complex issues that are difficult to resolve, but that inmates have access to supports.

"All inmates have access to a variety of services and supports including health care, psychiatrists,

psychologists, and social workers, regardless of a diagnosis of a specific mental illness, and corrections officers are trained to detect possible signs of mental illness, and how to refer these inmates to health care or other professional staff that can provide the appropriate level of care they may require," the statement reads.

But Justin Piché, an associate professor of criminology at the University of Ottawa and volunteer with the hotline, said even if prisoners are meant to have access to proper supports as a matter of policy, it is not happening in practice.

"We've gotten 1,500 calls in the first six months that we were open. That volume of calls suggests there is something very wrong at OCDC," he said.

The report lists several recommendations in order to address the issues, including prohibiting dilution of medications.

But Piché said something as simple as allowing access to magazines purchased by the inmates could make a difference.

"That's not a big ask. Having access to information and things to keep your brain going inside shouldn't be an object of contestation," he said.

More issues than health

The report lists a number of other issues that inmates have been reporting, including access to legal aid and proper access to request and complaint forms.

But the prison's outdated phone system is another easy fix that can make a big difference, Benslimane said.

OCDC's current system only allows for collect calls to be made to land lines, but not cellphones.

"A lot of people don't have land lines, they're families don't have land lines," he said. "[It's] further isolating people who are already isolated."

Benslimane said there needs to be more investment in supports for inmates, but said there seems to be a lack of political will.

Prisoners' Justice Day started almost 45 years ago in memory of Edward Nolan, a Millhaven Penitentiary inmate who died in solitary confinement.

CBC News

Aug 11, 2019

Nova Scotia lifting restrictions to restorative justice to give more people 'a second chance'

The province is lifting restrictions to restorative justice so that more offenders and victims of crime can access the service.

Justice Minister Mark Furey announced changes to referral protocols, which he said will ensure all players consider sending cases to the restorative justice system more often and will allow them to do so earlier in the criminal process.

Police, lawyers, judges, correctional services, victim services and the province's eight community justice agencies committed to the protocols by signing a five-year memorandum of understanding with the province.

Restorative justice requires offenders to take responsibility for their actions and participate in addressing the damage done. Furey said that restorative justice has been proven to break the criminal cycle common in the traditional penal system.

"It gives people a second chance," Furey said at the announcement on Tuesday.

Furey said it also reduces the chance of reoffending and increases victims' satisfaction with the justice system.

The protocols were last updated in 2007 when the service was focused on young offenders. The same rules were extended to the adult restorative justice program when it was rolled out in Nova Scotia in 2016.

Some cases still won't be referred to restorative justice until after a guilty plea or conviction, including murder and manslaughter, child pornography, certain instances of abuse, firearms offences, impaired driving and perjury. But Furey said more cases can now be sent to restorative justice before entering the court system.

"We are lifting these restrictions to allow for an earlier and more responsive intervention to the impacts of crime," Furey said.

"A government sub-management committee has been established to provide oversight and ensure protocols are being applied, and that restorative justice is being used in all appropriate cases."

The only crimes barred from restorative justice are cases of domestic and sexual violence.

Furey said his department has "started a discussion" around those offences, keeping in mind the potential for re-traumatizing survivors.

He expects the new protocols to lighten the load on the traditional court system and increase the demand for restorative justice, but had no idea how much of an increase to expect.

He hasn't directly altered the capacity of the community justice agencies that run the service on behalf of the Justice Department, but he thinks reallocating probation officers to work with those agencies will help manage any increased caseload.

In the summer of 2018, caseworkers at the Halifax-based Community Justice Society (CJS) went on strike for five weeks over wages and their increased caseload, which had ballooned since the adult restorative justice program was introduced two years before.

The labour dispute ended with a wage increase, among other alterations to the collective agreement. Furey said CJS didn't receive any resources to increase capacity, but cases there "are being managed now."

The justice minister said he thinks agencies will "find efficiencies" to deal with the potential uptick in their caseload due to the new protocols, adding that his department will monitor changes in demand.

Jamie Van Wart, a Nova Scotia Crown prosecutor who spoke at the announcement, was pleased with the new protocols, especially removing the delays to referral.

He said early intervention allows people to "start addressing the underlying issues that lead to the conditions of their offence in the first place."

"That's such a different approach and a positive approach," adding that waiting for a conviction sometimes adds months to the process.

Brandon Rolle, a lawyer with Nova Scotia Legal Aid, added that by having the discussion around restorative justice more often and earlier, it will be easier for defence attorneys to seek that option for their clients.

"The onus has sort of shifted to the police and the Crown to tell us why can't this go to restorative justice, instead of us having to implore to get in," Rolle said at the announcement. "I see that as a very positive element."

Rolle advocates for restorative justice because he's found it more effective for marginalized and racialized offenders than the traditional justice system.

Taryn Grant

Star Halifax - Jul 16, 2019

Human Rights Commissioner slams EMDC as 'overcrowded, unsanitary and dangerous'

Ontario's human rights commissioner has slammed the Elgin Middlesex Detention Centre as an overcrowded, violent and unsanitary place where "warehousing" inmates is favoured over rehabilitation.

Chief Commissioner Renu Mandhane toured the provincial jail, located on Exeter Road in London, Ont., in March, and last week wrote a letter to Ontario's Solicitor General, Sylvia Jones.

"The conditions at EMDC are amongst the worst I have seen in Ontario. Fourteen prisoners have died at EMDC in the past decade. The institution is overcrowded, unsanitary and dangerous," Mandhane writes.

"Prisoners' mental health, addictions and creed-related needs are not being adequately accommodated. Correctional officers do not have adequate training or support. The conditions are dehumanizing, antithetical to rehabilitation and reintegration, and pose a serious risk to the health and safety of prisoners and correctional officers alike."

Conditions at the jail fall "well short" of the UN minimum standards for treating prisoners, Mandhane writes.

The Ministry of the Solicitor General is aware of the problems but hasn't done enough to resolve the issues at the jail, she added.

Among the problems she outlines:

- The jail is overcrowded, with cells built for one holding three to five people.
- Although the jail was cleaned for Mandhane's visit, there was a "noticeable smell" throughout the institution and there was poor air quality and concerns about mould.
- Every prisoner spoke about "the near constant threat of violence," including for not bringing in contraband drugs into the jail. "A prison subculture has taken root where more dangerous prisoners are able to control the range and prey on weaker individuals."
- Correctional officers report high levels of violence and abuse from prisoners, which the ministry has done little to address.
- "Warehousing" is favoured over rehabilitation, and correctional officers don't get adequate training on de-escalation techniques or how to respond to people with mental health challenges.

- It's easy to get illegal drugs within the jail and there's concern about overdose-related deaths.
- There are months-long waiting lists to see doctors, dentists and psychiatrists.
- Access to smudging is not available on a regular basis, there is no full-time Native Inmate Liaison Officer, no Muslim Imam and spiritual guidance is not offered.
- Some prisoners have been in segregation for "a couple of years" and there's no plan to address the problem.

Reaction

London lawyer Kevin Egan has been speaking out about conditions at the jail since 2011. He's also leading a class action lawsuit against the provincial government over conditions at the jail.

Egan said it is vindicating to have someone of Mandhane's stature back what he's been saying for years.

"I knew what was going on in there and have been screaming from the rooftop in the hope that someone would listen," he said. "Every time someone comes out in a body bag I hope this is the one that makes a difference."

Egan couldn't agree more with Mandhane's assessment that EMDC is failing to meet minimum standards for the treatment of prisoners.

"It's supposed to be a correctional facility. It's supposed to be an environment to allow people to rehabilitate and reintegrate," he said. "Instead, as she said, it's a warehouse where people aren't helped. They're actually made worse."

Egan said he's looking forward to hearing what solicitor general, Hon. Sylvia Jones, has to say in response to Mandhane's letter, although he doesn't have high expectations for anything beyond what he called doublespeak.

"But, we'll continue to fight this until things change," he said. "I hope the last person who died at EMDC is the last person who died at EMDC."

CBC News
May 21, 2019

If you are silent about your pain,
they'll kill you and say you enjoyed it.
- Zora Neale Hurston

< *Recycled* >

Update from the Tunnelling Committee

All of you are aware of the tunnelling project started a while back. There are three separate tunnel locations named 'Tom', 'Dick' and 'Harry'. This was following the example of the WW2 project of Stalag 17.

The enthusiasm at the beginning of the effort has gone through rising and falling cycles. We seem to be at a low ebb currently. It has been quite discouraging to keep running into shortages of necessary tools and materials and the waning enthusiasm currently prevailing in the institution. Remember, this is your project, and the willing participants will be the ones to reap the rewards.

Where the locations of the tunnels are is still a well-kept secret. How well kept a secret is yet to be discerned. We will presume the locations are a mystery and will maintain a sincere effort to keep them that way! The light-hearted attitude of the staff towards 'Tom', 'Dick' and 'Harry' is still puzzling. We have been led to believe on several occasions that they are aware of mysterious shale deposits throughout the institution, along with concern over the tremors from the blasting.

Now that the security problem has been addressed, I'll turn my attention to the lack of TNT. A cornerstone of the tunnelling philosophy was the supposition that TNT would be readily available. We have had to close two tunnels as a result of shortages in that commodity.

Residents unwilling to carry a thousand kilograms of shale away is another headache. This stone MUST be integrated in the track, walkways and driveways on a daily non-stop basis. Lack of manpower may jeopardize the whole project.

Completion of the exit tunnels was targeted for May 1st. This would have allowed participants to spend their summer in a relaxed atmosphere. The whole philosophy of tunnelling out of Bath Inst. has been debated on several occasions. There are several who have argued against the wisdom of the project. They fail to understand the satisfaction experienced both physically and psychologically from an endeavour of this magnitude.

It is the belief of the committee that an urgent meeting should be held to rekindle the

enthusiasm and seek new recruits. Please contact your committee member on your range for times and locations of recruiting and organizational meetings.

Again, remember that this project was designed for everyone at Bath. Your committee is distressed at the thought of having to exclude some who may wish to use the tunnel but have not participated. Please do not force us to make these choices!

Tunnelling Committee

The Bath Times - Feb 1993

The Ghosts of Kingston Penitentiary

Kingston Penitentiary has closed its doors at last
Though some believe the ghosts remain

From its evil and sordid past

Built in the 18th century, a marvel of its time

A sadist's ingenuity meant for the heinous of crimes

Its concept demanded pure punishment

And the gaoler's hand was fierce

A society within itself reduced the hardest man to tears

Violence was acceptable as 'tools of the trade'

No mercy for the prisoner as the gaoler's point was made

The convict's role, subservient, their punishment was declared 'humane'

They broke their spirits and their minds

And drove many a man insane

Amidst all of the chaos, the inmates took a stand

A time for prisoners justice against their keeper's evil hand

Some men lived, some men died

Their legacy lived on in their memory,

August 10th 'Prisoners Justice Day' was born

Now the doors are closed at Kingston

But within the walls remain

The ghosts of Kingston, doing time

Forever, there detained

- Kenneth Whitman

In memory of the men and women who have lost their lives while in the custody of prisons.

We must not allow ourselves to become like the system we oppose.

- Desmond Tutu

Prison Visits

In April the Penitentiary in New Westminster, B.C. held an Open House tour for the Public. The newspaper stated that 6,000 people had passed through the gates. Six thousand people on the first day. Where were those 6,000 people on 'Prison Justice Day' last August 10th and the years before?

I can vividly remember lying alone - frustrated, feeling hopeless and forgotten in Solitary Confinement in B.C. Pen. Hearing footsteps outside my steel door, I got up to peer through the screen in my door to see what the commotion was. I observed approximately eight civilians staring in at me as if I were some strange primitive creature. All I could think to say at the time was, 'Nice to meet you people. Next time you come could you please bring some peanuts.'

I was bitter and twisted at the sheer ignorance of it all, but at the same time I realized that these people represented 80 per cent of all society. They had never been left alone, shackled and handcuffed, gassed and beaten. They had never experienced complete boredom or suffered months of frustration, bitterness and aggravation and insane anger that time behind these walls does to human beings.

If just one out of every hundred of those persons who made the tour were to take the time to write or to make an odd visit (even once a month) and show a bit of decency towards just one prisoner then perhaps prisoners per se wouldn't become objects of amazement and fascination to be seen as museums or unfortunately but realistically, as zoos.

Rod Camphaug
Archambault Pen.
Bulldozer - Aug 1980

There are no dangerous thoughts;
thinking itself is dangerous.

- Hannah Arendt

We work on ourselves in order to help others, but also we help others in order to work on ourselves.

- Pema Chodron

You may encounter many defeats, but you must not be defeated.

In fact, it may be necessary to encounter the defeats, so you can know who you are, what you can rise from, how you can still come out of it.

- Maya Angelou



Canada's new solitary confinement bill makes it easier to put inmates in isolation, senator says

A Canadian senator who has spent four decades advocating for the rights of vulnerable people in Canadian prisons says a new bill that purports to end solitary confinement should be scrapped. Sen. Kim Pate says the Trudeau government's Bill C-83 only offers a cosmetic rebranding of the practice of separating inmates from others in isolated cells for administrative or disciplinary reasons.

Pate was the executive director of the Canadian Association of Elizabeth Fry Societies, which work with women in the criminal-justice system, before Prime Minister Justin Trudeau named her to the Senate as an independent in 2016.

Currently, inmates in segregation are restricted to two hours a day outside their cells and do not have access to meaningful interactions with others, nor do they benefit from programming or mental-health supports. According to recent numbers released to the parliamentary budget office, the number of inmates in segregation at any given time has varied from 360 to 434. Nearly all are men.

"Over four decades, I have spent countless hours kneeling on cement floors outside segregation cells, pleading through meal slots in solid metal doors as someone's loved one - someone's child, sibling, parent or partner - smashed their heads against cement walls or floors, slashed their bodies, tied ligatures or put nooses around their necks, tried to gouge out their own eyes, mutilated themselves in sometimes unimaginable ways, or smeared blood and feces on their bodies, windows and walls," Pate said in a speech in the Senate on Thursday. "I have heard indescribable sounds of torment and despair that reverberate and haunt me."

Last October, Public Safety Minister Ralph Goodale announced Bill C-83 would end the practice of isolating prisoners who pose risks to security or themselves - changes aimed at addressing recommendations from the coroner's inquest into the 2007 death of Ashley Smith.

Smith, who was 19, strangled herself in a segregation cell at Grand Valley Institution in Kitchener, Ont., as prison guards looked on. She had spent more than 1,000 days in segregation before her death.

An Ontario coroner's inquest in 2013 ruled her death a homicide and made 104 recommendations, including the banning of indefinite solitary confinement.

Under Bill C-83, prisoners transferred to structured intervention units will be permitted to spend four hours a day outside their cells, during which time they would be guaranteed a minimum of two hours to interact with others. Inmates in these units are also supposed to be visited daily by health professionals and see patient advocates.

The bill was adopted by the House of Commons and is now before the Senate.

Pate says the fine print of the legislation does not deliver on Goodale's promises. Provisions and procedural safeguards in the current law are being "watered down," she says.

Under Bill C-83, segregation cells are just renamed as "structured intervention units," Pate says. With no hard time limits on isolation or separation of inmates, which the current law has, the new legislation makes it easier to put someone in segregation, she argues.

She and other legal experts who have provided feedback on the bill say it would not withstand a constitutional challenge.

"I think it needs some very significant amendment. Otherwise all parliamentarians who vote for this bill as-is would be doing a major disservice to the country, because we would be knowingly passing unconstitutional legislation."

Goodale was not available for an interview this week but his spokesman Scott Bardsley says the minister will discuss the bill with senators when it goes to the Senate committee on social affairs for further review.

As for constitutional concerns that courts have raised about the current system regarding a lack of oversight and a lack of meaningful human interaction for inmates in segregation, Bill C-83 directly addresses both, Bardsley says.

"The new system created by Bill C-83 will strengthen procedural safeguards by implementing binding external oversight, as well as regular reviews by the warden and the Commissioner (of corrections). And unlike with the current system, these oversight mechanisms will be enshrined in law."

Pate and other senators have been visiting federal prisons as part of a broader study by the Senate human-rights committee.

Last week, Nova Scotia independent Sen. Colin Deacon published photos from a visit he made to the Nova Institution for Women in Truro, N.S. One showed a map given to the visiting senators by government officials indicating an outside yard for inmates that included a “garden and spirituality area.” The reality the senators encountered was a bare concrete pad.

“The objectives laid out by (Correctional Services Canada) and its staff are great. Their ability to consistently act (to) achieve those objectives seems constrained,” Deacon wrote.

Pate produces more photographs showing institution after institution she has visited where segregation cells have been re-categorized as “structured intervention units” with minimal changes.

“I’ve literally been chasing around saying, ‘Where are these new units?’ There’s no new units, just new names.”

A recent parliamentary budget office report Pate commissioned found that the operating costs for the structured intervention units would be \$58 million annually.

Pate asked for costings of three alternatives. Placing profoundly mentally ill inmates in psychiatric hospitals would cost \$900 a day per inmate, the PBO found. Placements with correctional services on First Nations would cost \$300 a day per inmate. A national anti-gang program in prisons would cost about \$200,000.

Determining whether those moves would save money is difficult, the PBO report says - that depends on how well they work.

Pate wants the government and her Senate colleagues to take a closer look at alternative measures rather than passing Bill C-83 in its current form.

“The minister says he wants to get rid of segregation. I fully support that and think that’s fantastic. But the pretext that this bill is going to do it ... if he actually believes that, I don’t think he has actually gone into any of the prisons to see what they’re now going to call structured intervention units.”

Ottawa has committed \$448 million to the new system to pay for 950 new staff and building renovations.

Teresa Wright
Canadian Press
May 5, 2019

Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP)

“Reading aloud is the single most important thing a parent or caregiver can do to help a child prepare for reading and learning”

“Reading is the gateway to future success in life and in school”

BCFI’s commitment to the successful re-integration of inmates and to stronger, healthier communities includes the development of Children of Inmates Reading Program (ChIRP). The mandate of ChIRP is to build and enhance a healthier parent/ child relationship, develop literacy and listening skills, increase vocabulary and attention spans for children and promote a love of learning in children through the consistent presence of a parent and books.

For the past 10 years, Carla Veitch, a children’s educator, has been successfully developing and operating a parent/child reading initiative. Twice a month, Carla, along with another volunteer, enter the institution and offer men the opportunity to select a book for their child and then read that book into a recording device. The book and recording are then mailed to the child.

This initiative provides a direct connection for the child with his or her incarcerated parent. In addition to the opportunity of hearing a parent’s voice, the reading initiative underscores the value of reading and the importance of books. For a number of the participants, reading aloud to their child has not been part of their pattern of parenting, nor was it modeled for them as part of their early childhood years.

Children are never responsible for their parents’ choices. At the same time, they are the hidden victims not only in the justice and correctional system, but also within our larger community.

Book Clubs for Inmates
720 Bathurst St.
Toronto, ON, M5S 2R4
www.BookClubsForInmates.com

For the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.

They may allow us temporarily to beat him at his own game, but they will never enable us to bring about genuine change.

- Audre Lorde

New women's healing lodge to give offenders option to stay in Manitoba

Indigenous women serving federal prison sentences now have the option of going to a new healing lodge in Manitoba.

Correctional Service Canada announced the signing of an agreement on Tuesday that will see the Eagle Women's Lodge, in Winnipeg's West End, converted from a community residential facility into a healing lodge.

"We're pretty happy about this opportunity," said Annetta Armstrong, executive director of the Indigenous Women's Healing Centre (the former Native Women's Transition Centre). The organization has 40 years of experience working with Indigenous women and will be managing the facility.

"It's a good step for women who have been incarcerated to have this as a resource," said long-time advocate and grandmother Leslie Spillett.

The multi-level healing lodge at 667 Ellice Avenue will have enough room to accommodate up to 30 people, including offenders' children.

"Like all federal women's correctional institutions in Canada, it will have the capacity to safely house women with young children as deemed appropriate to foster relationships between babies and toddlers and their mothers," Correctional Service Canada said in a news release.

According to Statistics Canada, Indigenous women represented 42% of admissions to territorial and provincial adult female prisons in 2017-2018.

Healing lodge first in Manitoba

Spillett has visited other healing lodges in Canada and said that Indigenous women need better alternatives to incarceration.

She said the Eagle Women's Lodge is the result of years of collaboration between Indigenous community organizations in Winnipeg, which have been working to transition Indigenous women out of the criminal justice system.

Up until now, Indigenous women in Manitoba sentenced to federal time have had to serve their sentences out of province. The Eagle Women's Lodge will be the first of its kind in Manitoba, allowing inmates to serve their sentences much closer to home.

Spillett is hoping that it will give Indigenous women a chance to connect with land based activities.

She also acknowledges the expertise of the Indigenous Women's Healing Centre Inc. the group running the lodge.

"If any organization has a chance of doing it right, it's the [Indigenous Women's Healing Centre]," said Spillett.

"They've had so many years of experience of working with women who are trapped in those kinds of systems."

Closer to community and culture

Back in 2008, Candace Abdilla was sentenced to 30 months in prison. She grew up in Winnipeg and was separated from her children when she had to serve her time out of province.

She spent ten months at the Okimaw Ohci Healing Lodge for Aboriginal Women in Maple Creek, Sask, and learned how to bead while she was there.

"That was the first time I was regularly exposed to culture," said Abdilla, who now works at a women's centre in Winnipeg's West End.

She said a new facility in Winnipeg will allow more than just the women to heal in their community.

"[The healing lodge] will help their families as well, because then you're not so far away from your children," said Abdilla

The Eagle Women's Lodge will be the 10th healing lodge run by Correctional Service Canada, six of which are managed by Indigenous communities.

According to Armstrong, the West End facility will be the second healing lodge in Canada geared specifically for Indigenous women.

In a press release, Correctional Service Canada said that research from 2015 found that out of 40 women released on parole from a healing lodge in Edmonton, only one was convicted of a new charge.

The healing lodge is hoping to accept minimum security women beginning in the fall of 2019.

Lenard Monkman

CBC News

Sep 04, 2019

Regret is an appalling waste of energy; you can't build on it; it is good only for wallowing in.

- Katherine Mansfield

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% in prison
HIV = 1-5% in prison

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

BLEACH DOES NOT KILL HEP C

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.



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.

☞ **Respect** ☞

Incarcerated in Ontario? Need Information?

Write On! is a new volunteer group whose goal is to support Ontario prisoners by researching the information you need, such as:

General legal info, prison rules & policies, resources, programs, services, etc.

Write to us at:

Write ON!
234-110 Cumberland St,
Toronto, ON, M5R 3V5

Prison Visiting Rideshare Project

The Prison Rideshare is an ongoing project of Bar None to connect people with rides to visit their friends and loved ones who are in prison in Manitoba.

If you or someone you know is interested in getting a ride to visit one of southern Manitoba's prisons, if you are interested in volunteering, or for more info contact: barnone.wpg@gmail.com

Rides can also be arranged by phone or text message: 204-599-8869
(It's ideal to request a ride at least 5-7 days in advance).

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

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 in Canada
- Over 5000 children are impacted by parental imprisonment in the GTA
- The number of children affected by parental incarceration only increases 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



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 by email at:

info@featforchildren.org
or by phone at: 416-505-5333



PRISON RADIO

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

CPR: This program features content produced by CFRC volunteers and by other campus and community radio broadcasters, including CKUT Montreal's Prison Radio & 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.

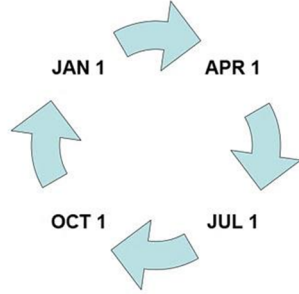
Prisoners and their loved ones are invited to contribute music requests, messages and suggestions for the program.

*Write: CPR c/o CFRC, Lwr 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 is Aug 10** ☞

- CLASS ACTION! NEWS -



- MAILOUT DATES -

☞ **Issue #15 - Fall 2019** ☞

Class Action News
PO Box 39, Stn P
Toronto, ON, M5S 2S6

download, print, contact:
www.ClassActionNews.org

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Deadline: Dec 1, 2019
Mail-out: Jan 1, 2020

If you don't like the news ...

... make some of your own !!!

Whatcha got in there that's gotta get out?

... Hmm ... ?

Art, Poems, Stories, News, Whatever !

