

Bill HB-2386

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In the summer 2014 *Correctional Forum*, Bill HB-2386 (submitted by Rep. T. Stephens, R.-Montgomery County), was printed for people to see. Happily the Prison Society opposes such a Bill. Rep. T. Stephens attempted to have a bill passed that would garnish *at least* 25% of wages prisoners make working in prison, and 75% of all deposits made to an inmate's personal account.

Apparently, Rep. T. Stephens doesn't understand prison economics whatsoever. The highest pay scale an inmate can receive for eight hours of labor is \$.42 per hour. The average prisoner has no family to support him and uses such hard-earned work pay to support himself, which if you do the math doesn't even come to \$100 a month. People on welfare receive more in food stamps than a prisoner does for a month's worth of labor. Some of us (more fortunate) prisoners use our families' hard-earned money to survive in prison, and Mr. Stephens wishes to have 75% taken from that. The reality of this Bill is capitalism and stupidity at their "finest". You can't pinch 6 cents from a penny. Prisoners have nothing financial to provide as it is. What they do have is hard-earned, working at slave wages, keeping the operation of each jail afloat. Without prison workers, the prisons couldn't function normally.

Additionally, this Bill, if passed, would cripple the economic gains the PA Department of Corrections makes from contracts with vendors. Prisoners would literally have no money to buy from these vendors, which would cause businesses to lose money and cut ties with the PA Department of Corrections.

Silly as this Bill is, one would think that a Republican as Mr. T. Stephens would be trying to gain rather than lose millions of dollars off crime. His proposed Bill would do nothing more than place the PA Department of Corrections back to the stone age.

It's simple for any lay person to see, let alone a Republican. The PA Department of Corrections makes money off prisoners. They know we need things such as hygiene products, food, cigarettes, entertainment, footwear, etc. all of these items the PA Department of Corrections makes money from. They get a certain kickback from the sales.

How the Bill even passed 25-0 in the House Judiciary on June 27th, 2014 is a complete mystery. This is evidence to any person reading such a ridiculous Bill that Pennsylvania lacks Republicans who can think and rationalize both business and politics at the same time.