

Ken Sherman # 336931

Wisconsin Department of Corrections

Hamilton College\The American Prison Writing Archive (APWA)

Here is another brief overview into the drastic conditions and behavior is that us as inmates and offenders have to suffer thru. This last year has been Hell for others and me. First off, the WI.DOC has been severely overcrowded. I have had to file a legal action on behalf of others and myself for a transfer that was against State Laws and Codes.

I've watched the Medical system here in the DOC become deficient, untimely distribution of medication, long waits for appointments, lack of available staff just to name a few. Then there are Security staff shortages because of unsafe work environments, mandatory overtime. A Breakdown in the System and Administration of the Wisconsin DOC.

I have seen Addicts come into the system without any opportunity for treatment of help, and upon release, no assistance besides placing them in an environment that is harmful to their sobriety. Since the Heroin and Methamphetamine epidemic, Corrections was not prepared for the influx of inmates that are addicts or addicted to these substances.

Few prison inmates receive Substance abuse treatment. **75%** of State Prison inmates are in need of Substance abuse treatment; fewer than **20%** actually receive treatment. 1

Drug Offenders comprised **25%** of State Prisons population.2

One National Survey found that **53%** of Americans believed Drug use is more of a Public Health concern than a Criminal Justice problem, requiring treatment rather than incarceration .3

Community offenders, Parolees, Probationers Wisconsin Extended Supervision, a limited number of parolees receive treatment relative to need, and even fewer receive comprehensive treatment services. Because of their primary role as enforcement and monitoring agents, Agents are more likely to focus drug testing, monitoring and adherence to Probation requirements. Rehabilitative concerns are **secondary**. Many of these issues need to be adequately addressed to try to fix the problem of the Drug Epidemic.

Treatment can have Economic benefits:

\$5,000 in reduced crime savings; \$19,600 in reduced incarceration costs; \$ 32,100 in Economic benefits. All based on 1-year study. 4

The vast majority of inmates are from poor background and underprivileged. What is happening is the lack of Care in State Governments and agencies. The Federal government is

helping offenders by enacting the Second Chance Act and Obama care which helps offenders with aftercare and healthcare which they couldn't have access to if Obamacare wasn't enacted. Another crisis is the lack of mental health care or inadequacy of the care provided; numerous inmates have mental health problems that if it were not for that problem they probably would not be incarcerated. In addition, the States need to look at what the Federal Government has done to relieve overcrowding, **Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act (Oct.2015)**. As stated, it is the product of thoughtful **bipartisan** deliberation. Like an article in Mother Jones stated: ten times more prisoners are in State prisons and local jails. States need to take a hard look at that Act and try to figure out a solution

The U.S. incarceration rate is 700 people per 100,000, which is still the highest in the World. The "**Tough on Crime**" attitude has created an unjust system. For example, the Affluenza teen from Texas if you have money you can buy your freedom even when you kill.

Incarceration costs the taxpayer in excess of 75 billion. Why not take a few of that billion and assist offenders after release. That is to logical, The Politicians mainly Republicans saying is **Lock em Up**. The U.S. has the second highest Per Capita incarceration rate.

Some offenders do not deserve sympathy but most do and to be treated with that label because some people have made a mistake is wrong. Why not give offenders another chance, another opportunity to redeem his or herself. Society needs to change the way ex-cons, offenders are looked at because all Offenders are not bad people, and they just made a mistake and are paying or paid their debt to Society.

States are finally and certain companies are waiving the disclosure if you are or are not a felon. That is a step, but more needs to be done. However, things cannot happen overnight. The biggest concern is the Budgets that these states are approving, Drastic Cuts to education , but no costs cuts in Corrections What type of Sense is that? . **Education builds futures; Incarceration ruins lives not just of offender but also of the offender's families.** Wisconsin Budget passed in 2015 was a terrible budget, tens of millions cut from UW system, for what because Wisconsin has a Republican controlled Senate and House. Now Wisconsin Corrections is over capacity and the Politicians are not focused on that, only Education budget cuts.

In December 2014, the prison system housed 22,234 inmates and was at 129.7% of Corrections' defined capacity. Additional inmates were housed by: (a) exceeding the defined number of double occupancy cells; (b) housing more than two inmates in some cells; and (c) utilizing some non-housing space for housing purposes. To the extent that Corrections continues to exceed its defined capacity or modifies the component parts of its definition, the amount that the system is "over capacity" may vary.⁴

One Major point is making offender's get a High School diploma. A Very Good decision by the Department of Corrections officials.

Lastly Prison is a big industry with all these private **for-profit** companies coming in and profit off Prisoners, and those companies have the Who cares attitude. These companies have made money skimping on inmate healthcare, food, and commissary and charging excessive fees for telephone use. Keefe, Aramark, Securus, CCA, Geo Corp., Correct Care and Corizon health care. Numerous of the above Companies have lawsuits filed against them for their acts or inactions. There are many Prisoner rights advocates and groups that assist in helping prisoners with conditions of confinement, prisoner treatment etc.

Clearly, there needs to be an overhaul of the Correctional system in this State and the whole United States or this Country is going to go Bankrupt. Need to get rid of **Lock'em up** Attitude. This article is not to bash Corrections, this is only to help aware the Public about important issues facing Corrections.

Dated 1- -2016

Sincerely Submitted,

Ken Sherman # 336931

-
1. NATIONAL Center on Addiction and Substance abuse (Behind Bars)
 2. U.S Dept. of Justice
 3. Drug Strategies by Paul Hart and Associates.
 4. Steven Belenko & Jordan Puegh, Fighting Crime by Treating Substance Abuse (1998)
 5. Adult Corrections Program. Wisconsin Legislative Bureau. January 2015