

"Corrections? or Corruption?"

Did you know there is no federal constitutional right to rehabilitation? And as a result, whenever there's a so-called "budget crisis," educational programming is the first to get X'd out. So when a judge says he's sentencing you to prison to be rehabilitated, it's a load of crack. In theory, the DOC is suppose to rehabilitate prisoners, right? Which would mean promoting higher education for those interested, right? Only in theory.

A few times throughout my grueling incarceration I have sought to participate in correspondence college classes which offer low tuition or payment plans. Imagine my surprise when I was denied because I couldn't afford it! The department requires us to pay the entire tuition, up front, from our prison account. Meaning a payment arrangement between my family and the school would not suffice for me to better myself. But wait, there's more!

In 2016, I was among a select group of prisoners chosen to participate in the "Inside Out" program which allows prisoners to attend one free college class... with selected outside college students. I had the privilege of taking Sociology with students and a professor from Albion College. It was by far one of the most exciting events in my 18-years inside. Sadly, the MDOC refused to allow me to complete

the course. I was removed because I had been fired from a prison job. So much for the image of "corrections" or "rehabilitation."

I will say this though, in the past year or so, multiple colleges have begun teaching courses in prison. Again, we have to pay the full tuition upfront, but it's a start. The MDOC has instituted a few new vocational programs which is a step in the right direction, but I have to believe that the Indiana DOC has the best idea: time is deducted off your sentence for each degree or certificate earned. Now that's rehabilitation.

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