

July 14, 2020

What CDCR is Doing about COVID-19  
and What It Should Do.

The California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation is acutely aware of COVID-19. This is especially and acutely so since CDCR transferred infected prisoners from Chino prison to San Quentin, resulting in a huge outbreak of infections in excess of 1300 prisoners in San Quentin, plus 100 staff members. CDCR Secretary Ralph Diez lost his job over that monumental gaffe.

What is CDCR doing to reduce their COVID problem? They are doing something that will cause more problems. They have announced the pending release of 8000 inmates statewide - all of whom have less than 150 days to serve on their sentences. The candidates for release will be non-violent offenders, not ~~sex~~ sexual predators, and most have a place to go upon release. All prisoners know that these people will in too many cases use their release and freedom to return to criminal lifestyles and in many cases return to prison in short order. This is not what should be done.

A better program for CDCR would be to release



Medically fragile prisoners over the age of 60 years old - including lifers, formerly violent offenders and do it before new COVID outbreaks kill or harm these senior citizens. They are older and are not the same people they were when convicted. The likelihood of them ever returning to prison is low. CDCR knows this too, and would prefer to release younger guys that will predictably return to prison.

As usual, CDCR is financially motivated and unable so far to accurately determine what solutions are best in terms of public safety. Let the older guys with diabetes, breathing problems, compromised immune systems, cancer go home. Show some compassion and show some common sense. The public will not be at risk from such releases.

Many ~~Costa~~ ~~California~~ prisoners have petitioned for early release on these terms. To date, CDCR has resisted this sensible approach, but perhaps CDCR will finally yield and do the right thing.