

9-8-20

APWA, To be confined at an extremely over crowded prison, such as Northern State in N.J., during normal times is a hardship beyond most public understanding. Amidst the current pandemic and lock down life as an inmate here becomes what is cruel and unusable punishment. We basically are locked in cells, double locked, that were constructed for one person, 22 hours a day. Except every 4th day when locked in 23 hours per day, no outside rec is offered.

They do allow small groups at meal times out to get food then rushed back to their cells to eat. Also persons are let out to get medical services.

Of the 2 hours allowed out, one is designated for outside rec which 90% of the time is actually 50 minutes or less. We get usually 2 half hour periods when doors open per day, one AM + one PM. During these times we are allowed to shower, use the phone and kiosk. I am let out with 8 cells or 16 other inmates for 30 minutes for such.

We have only 1 kiosk, 3 showers and when working 6 phones. Clearly there is not enough time for 16 inmates to utilize kiosk, phone and shower daily. Average phone calls being 15 minutes, shower 15 minutes, kiosk 10.

This means there is time for 12 showers, 24 15 minute calls and 6-10 kiosk uses per day. Of the 24 calls

available 6 inmates make 12-20 leaving 12, perhaps (more likely) 4-8 calls for 10. I am of the ones whose phone use opportunities are few. Compounding communication problems is that no visitation has been allowed since early March frustrating inmates all the more. It is extremely depressing being locked in a small cell 22 hours a day to say the least. Can the public understand? I ask, fact is 99% of spouses love each other dearly BUT would you care to lock inside a small room with yours for 22 hours a day? Imagine being with someone you deem incompatible!!! For months or end!!! With no help, terrible food in a hostile environment. The stress alone will make one ill.

The system is and has been broke for some time. Over crowded prisons are the result stemming from prosecutors who over charge, seek over sentences, a to long a period of no parole, and the fact that our system includes no way to fix its mistakes. People are not perfect. It's time for our court system to admit it makes mistakes and include ways to fix them so innocent people who can contribute are not unfairly incarcerated. I believe if judges and prosecutors work at it mistakes would decrease to everyone's benefit.