

"The Cost of Prison Living"

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I think many people out there are under the assumption that it is cheap or even free to live in prison. Well, I am here to tell you firsthand that it is not. The cost of living within these walls is extremely high and is steadily rising sadly. I do not care to think of or to know just how much money I have spent during these past 16 years of my incarceration. Nor am I contented in anticipating how much more I will be forced to spend before my journey comes to an end. Distressing.

As stated by memorandum from A. David Robinson, Chief of Collections Operations, effective December 16, 2021, commissary prices will increase a sizable 4.4% for the

incarcerated population. The memo states, "While unfortunate, these price increases are necessary to offset increases in manufacturing and packaging costs while minimally impacting pricing to the inmate population." Minimally? Are they serious? That is a huge difference!

As if it were not expensive enough, for those incarcerated who depend on their meager job earnings to support themselves financially, how will they survive? What are we to do? What can we do if the kitchen is infested with cockroaches and we are afraid to eat the food but cannot afford to purchase food from the commissary? Starve?

There are other necessities one must have to exist comfortably within these walls amidst all of the other

discomforts. And for this, one needs money; especially if a person has a lengthy sentence to serve out. If not, spending unnecessary funds on prison luxuries is not recommended. Better to be frugal, put some away in savings, and have more to use when reentering society instead of squandering it away in a temporary dwelling place.

The incarcerated populace is consistently negatively impacted by random price increases. This is all too common for us unfortunately. But as prices increase, our wages do not. And so we struggle. We struggle as the Prison Industrial Complex grows into one of the most profitable industries in our country.

Charrel Durrett