

The American Prison Writing Archive
Hamilton College; 198 College Hill Road
Clinton, NY 13323 - 1218

August 12, 2022

RE: Education In Prisons

Dear The Editors,

How are you!

I've been incarcerated since the year 2000. I'm serving 30-35 years for the Home Invasion and other related charges that I was accused of committing when I was nineteen years old. For the first nine years of my imprisonment I was in the Maximum security prisons, Shirley-Max and Walpole where education was not available and I could not learn how to properly speak English since English was my second language.

In 2009 I was transferred to MCI Norfolk level four prison for good behavior, where I was finally able to pursue my dream of getting my education, and not on my own as I have done so for years but through the (B.U.) Boston University prison program that for four decades been offering Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts to prisoners. After four arduous years of trying to pass the required entrance exam I finally succeeded and was accepted into (B.U.) in 2013.

In 2020 I graduated from (B.U.) with Bachelor's degree in Liberal Arts and because of my education, a year later, I was able to publish my first poetry book, "Ruminating Years" and six months after that in May of this year I published my second book, a fictional novel, "ZEK" (transliteration from Russian) "The Convict".

Education has changed my life. It has transformed me into a person that I could never even imagine myself becoming especially while I'm in prison. And it was because of (B.U.) that I was able to become a poet, a writer and a published author. However, sadly, (B.U.) no longer offers Bachelor's degree to prisoners, but instead only a certificate. In addition, other educational programs had been in decline for years. The vocational programs such as, welding and the barber shop also stopped offering licenses, and were replaced with certificates and many other programs disappeared.

The prison administration is determined to deprive prisoners of their education and even prevent them from pursuing it on their own. I personally was put through Hell when the prison administration found out that I was trying to publish a book. Deputy Superintendent Sherry Eliote would not allow me to send money out from my personal account to the publishing company to pay for their publishing services, unless she would review my manuscript herself. It took me six months to fight the prison administration through the grievance process to prove that they were in violation of my rights.

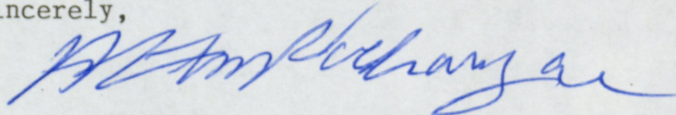
It is heartbreaking for me to see young men enter into the prison system that are managed by the administration who are determined to prevent education from expanding, because I used to be one of those lost, confused, and uneducated young men. It should be a crime to deprive education from the young men who had been living in a vicious cycle of crimes and physical and psychological trauma all their lives.

I ask of you to please support education in all prisons. Since it is only with education that prisoners can transform their life and become better human beings; and in the process abandon their criminal behavior along with attaining all the necessary tools to support their families and contribute to the community.

Thank you for your time!

I can be reached at the address below.

Sincerely,



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