

Recidivism rates of large numbers of prisoners who are not dealing with their problems/core issues, i.e. the unlawful behavior which landed them in prison, is proof that the state of Arkansas is failing to rehabilitate its inmates. Arguably, prison alone offers no clear incentive or advantage for the inmate to take a serious inventory of his/her behavior and do something about it. Self-help programs are the brain network for the rehabilitative process, and a re-entry program post parole is the backbone of complete rehabilitation that will allow the parolee to live the rest of their life as a well-adjusted productive citizen. If the Arkansas Department of Corrections provided a workable rehabilitation program that is successful when utilized responsibly while an inmate is in prison a re-entry program ensures zero recidivism.

Re-entry programs help in job placement and transitional housing and resources for other basic necessities that can be hard for a parolee to obtain, and in Arkansas recidivism has always been high due to very few available re-entry programs. KABF 88.3 "It Could Be You" hosted by John S. ~~Wright~~ ~~Wright~~ has been helpful and informative about re-entry programs such as Goodwill and CARE (Central Arkansas Re-Entry). The former offers a parolee a job for a minimum of four months for part-time employment, and CARE offers help in basic necessities such as food, clothing and shelter. However, these programs mostly depend on donations.

Lack of rehabilitation and high recidivism is unacceptable in a corrections system that has the ability and fiduciary responsibility to reform lives.

However, as far as the state is concerned the warehousing of inmates is the extent of its involvement, not addressing core issues to help change the convicted person.

Politicians are focused more toward selfish gains, and although the warehousing of inmates is financially taxing on the state itself, it is most definitely financially beneficial when concerning the private sectors politicians contract within prisons. This is the practice of "wholesale warehousing" of inmates for maximized profit, which encourages tough-on-crime policies by politicians in partnership with companies such as commissary vendors (Keefe, Union Supply), phone providers (Securus), and medical services (WellPath) who benefit from such a lucrative structure.

Recently law makers passed a bill that allows them to build a new 500 bed space addition to the Calico Rock unit. It was curiously finalized by Asa Hutchinson's signed approval. Curious, because during the governor's first term he was strictly against building new prisons or bed spaces, citing that that was not the answer to overcrowding. Now, toward the end of his second and final term, he is all for it. Construction is projected to cost between 50-100 million dollars. Is this the answer to overcrowding? It won't even make a dent.

To warehouse each inmate it's going to cost \$71 per inmate a day. Think that might provide better rehabilitation programs and lower recidivism? Not by a long shot.

A great portion of that money could have gone toward Arkansas' infrastructure and education, two very important issues. A small percentage of that money could have gone toward rehabilitation programs and re-entry programs, effectively lowering recidivism and decreasing overcrowding. Furthermore, the money spent in these programs is miniscule compared to the money made by the private sectors the ADC contracts. If even a small percentage were given from these sectors to existing re-entry programs and ~~other~~ toward the creation of rehabilitation programs and other re-entry programs it will prove highly effective in total rehabilitation of a parolee's life. State leaders/law makers have the ability and power to make this happen, also meaning that they know that they have the power to not make it happen, which is why they didn't and won't do it. They'd rather build more prisons to generate more money for private sectors who make it top priority to stay in partnership with those politicians who benefit financially through wholesale warehousing.

State leaders/law makers conveniently forget that they work for the people, not themselves, and the people (YOU) seemed to have forgotten that the power to create change is within YOU. You need only to take the first step toward doing so. That first step starts with your voice.

Let your voice be heard, through whatever avenue you're able to use.

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Bio

Jeremy Keith Phillips writes fiction under the name Jeremy Mac, with five books and one short story collection to his list of credits. He is currently warehoused in the Arkansas Department of Corrections, Cummins unit, serving a life sentence for first degree murder.