

A. MARK LAMAR

15 July 2021

APWA
Hamilton

Re: COMPELLED PRISONER LABOR & OTHER
CONCERNS

Ma'am -

The subject of racism, and whether "critical race theory" deserves attention as curriculae in our educational system; are certainly issues and concerns society finds troubling, in the way of rectifying apparent wrongs attributable to a capitalistic, corporatocracy, that seemingly disenfranchizes and disproportionately affects minority groups.

Either the debate sticks at a point central to this, or simply moves from that premise that there exists systematic disparities in the way of racism. Thus, once the latter is established, a myriad problems arise in terms of its cause or what contributes to the problem... Chief among them is the so-called "prison industrial complex" and the use of exploitation or modern day slavery in order to sustain this troubling problem.

That said, in 2018 following a hard fought referendum to amend the state's constitutional provision permitting penal servitude, which began as a grass movement to not only remove this clause

as an symbolic gesture, but to hit the department of corrections where it hurts... its bottomline. The language of this Amend. A, effectively prohibits slavery and involuntary servitude — no exceptions... In fact, the state's general assembly even went so far as to clarify this by convening a special session and issuing concurrent resolution elucidating upon what that means, namely, to prohibit DOC from compelling us to perform prison labor.

As it stands, DOC takes advantage of minorities by forcing them to work in the kitchen, as well as relying on inmates to perform menial labor, with a recompense at pennies on the dollar. There is little or no rehabilitative purpose. Nor does society benefit, since canteen costs are inflated or exorbitant causing the inmate to seek funds from family and friends, or engage in illegal activity. In short, DOC is an industry that is exploitative whilst warehousing so many. Thousands are eligible for release, and despite the scourge they released, nothing is done inside to abate the recidivism rate, which is 50% higher than the national average.

Much can be debated to provide options tending to be solutions, though nothing is done while public perception remains unchanged. Might this organization take an interest in this issue?

Respectfully,

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