

Request Denied By The DRI Project

We are fated to spend our days in an earthly purgatory, exiled from society by our own actions in many cases. It can be fairly said that the population behind the myriad walls and fences of the nation's correctional facilities represents a significant destructive force, that through our deeds, lives have been destroyed and property lost.

At the same time in the greater world, there is an existential crisis for more than a hundred thousand Americans. They cling to life and hope in the face of unspeakable pain and horror, waiting for the gift of a life-saving organ transplant.

The government has an absolute duty to protect its citizenry. That is the rationale for the imprisonment of so many; that, and the concept of repayment of societal debt, rehabilitation, restitution, punishment for transgression, etc. The word penitentiary says it all -- a place to learn penitence.

Why is it then, if the government protects its citizenry, and the objective of imprisonment is to shape positive outcomes in the prisoner, that with a population exceeding two million incarcerated, that those in the "free world" awaiting organ donors and tissue transplants, are deprived of willing donors?

That's right! There is for whatever reason -- be it apathy or oversight, or the outright and backward thinking of the eugenic bigot... a complete lack of any program or protocol for the willing incarcerated to donate living vital organs and tissues to those under sentence of death without them. In rare cases it may be possible to do this for a family member, but the bureaucratic impediments are so substantial that people literally die while awaiting the results of the request for the necessary approval.

It is ironic that an entire segment of the population of the country is excluded from the rolls of the willing. The government protecting our society?

Why is it that the state can take life, labor, income and time from the imprisoned, ask of us to "rehabilitate" ourselves, yet deny us the chance to make the ultimate restitution -- literally the gift of life, the only act that can transcend all others? Meanwhile, the sick languish in such numbers that demand far outstrips supply for match-worthy donors and the benevolent state in its infinite wisdom allows this to go unchecked.

What one could rationalize as ignorance or unintentional indifference soon becomes much murkier.

On San Quentin's Death Row, they will move hell and earth to keep alive the sick, elderly, and terminal cases so that they will face an executioner. They will literally stave off death by heart attack or diabetes over the "Do Not Resuscitate" instruction of an inmate, in the name of "justice."

However, when it comes to heroic measures on behalf of its "law abiding" citizenry, there is no such action to keep them alive. Ask yourself, "What is askew with that set of priorities?"

If you believe that I overstate the case, ask yourself this: Why is it that anyone who gets their driver's license, is asked if they wish to donate their organs in the event of death; yet once one leaves the "free world," nowhere in any file or on any form are you able to do this? You may have been an organ donor when you were free, but as soon as you pass into purgatory, your identification is taken and you are issued a prison number with no such provision. How many organs are wasted every year? The numbers are truly astounding.

It is shameful and sick that such an oversight had to come to light in such a place as hopeless as death row before anyone was moved to do anything about it. For all of the "evil" that

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exists behind prison walls, a greater evil would be letting a single individual perish when there are untold riches in the form of the willing masses who have a number beyond their name. Allow those who wish for the opportunity to make a difference, to better the world, to better the life of someone in need, and to better themselves. To make restitution by giving life. What is justice if it isn't the act of making some good come of something bad? The same logic is true of the opposite, too. To create something bad from good intentions would be an injustice.

It is an issue that doesn't know bipartisanship. Death is the great bipartisan. Get involved. Ask your representatives why a single person would be denied the opportunity to live if there is a chance to save them while more than ample resources exist -- living and deceased.

Certain of these efforts are blossoming online at www.deathrowinmate.org. I hope that you'll become a member in favor of this long overdue agenda.

visit: www.deathrowinmate.org

email: thedriproject@gmail.com