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Allied Media Conference  
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PRISON JUSTICE  
AND THE RIGHTS OF PRISONERS AS HUMANS

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\* Pressing issues:

- 1) Education: The best thing to combat inmate recidivism and ensure an inmate can live a better life after release is to give the inmate tools to do so. Furthuring their education and providing a degree and skill is a logical answer to crime rate and drug use. Instead of fighting criminal violence and stupidity with legal violence and stupidity--why not trying knowledge. Go back to what used to be called rehabilitation and not just this current movement towards mass incarceration. Prisons are not suppose to be a booming business; their an embarrassment to humanity and we should be ashamed that they exist. They should be kept small, and the inmate population as small as possible. Educating the prisoners is the only logical solution. When you have a disease, such as the HIV/AIDS running rampant in Africa, you combat it with education! Crime is like a disease, and the cops have become the financial equivalent to the big pharmaceutical companies. They're not about the cure, only the shepherding of crime. If the crime rate really went down, cops couldn't justify their massive tax budget. College courses were removed from prisons also because of groups complaining that it wasn't fair for a prisoner to be given a college education while others in the "free world" struggled--but they fail to see the bigger issue: that an inmate released as a newly trained carpenter, or mechanic, is safer for for society, and will have something to contribute. Education at every possible level should be an option.
- 2) Food: what gets shown on paper as an inmates meal, is not what is actually on the inmates food tray. Prison food has no fresh fruits, the meat--when present--is of the dog-food-"meat product" level, and any available water to drink is not something you'd give to your kids.

- 3) Mental health: The law seems to steer away from the issue of mental and psychological influences, sentencing anyone convicted without consideration of possible mitigating circumstances that may have played a role in their case (something that should've been taken into consideration during their trial).
  - 4) Women: Women have NO place working in the inmate areas of a men's prison; just as men have no place in a women's facility. This is just an invitation for trouble. In men's prisons, female guards are vindictive and power-hungry with something to prove; while at the same time they prostitute themselves and are the major source of contraband brought into the prison.
  - 5) Religion: Separation of church and state does not seem to apply to "state" tax-payer owned prisons. South Carolina prisons actually have preachers on state payroll under the guise of "counselor" and they run primarily Southern Baptist style churches out of tax-built buildings that run off of tax-paid-for-AC and supplies. Christian college courses are offered that get donated funds, but, still rely on tax payers to provide supplies, AC, guards, teachers, etc. Atheists or any other non-Christians are not offered classes, special meals or privileges or anything of that sort. The pledge of allegiance is played on loud speakers, professing the state's love for the christian god.
- \* To end mass incarceration: The entire legal system must be made to answer. Stop trying to grow and make a business out of it--and address the issue at hand: Education. Fight crime with knowledge instead of force. You can't just lock people away at will and expect that to go on, it'll backlash at some point and you'll have a bigger problem than when you started. Right now the current crime rates do not justify the tax money spent on law enforcement and incarceration. Severe punishments should be handed out to any officer of the law, judge, prosecutor, or lawyer, that mishandles a case in any way. Especially if they fabricate, or hold back any evidence. Warrants and convictions should not be rubber stamped under ANY circumstances, and when they are, anyone involved, no matter who they are or who they know, should be held both financially and criminally responsible for any damages they caused a defendant or society.

In South Carolina, we don't have "prosecutors" or even "DAs", we have "solicitors"! The very word solicitor has many money based, self-serving, meanings. They solicit business, and handle SMALL low court issues, or that's the old meaning.