

IN THE LIFE OF A CONNECTICUT PRISONER #7

By Richard Stevenson

FINALLY! After about 17 months I've been classified to a job. I'm working in the Marker Shop (license plates). We also make plastic bags there too. I can't begin to tell you how good it feels to get out of the cell for 6 hours. Sitting around with nothing to do I've actually lost 35 lbs. The crazy thing is that my weight stabilized at 195. After a few weeks I began to put some weight back on (I work out with weights). I'm now at 201. This may not seem like much to you but it helps to be a muscular person. The bullies (both inmate and staff tend to look for another mark). When you are muscular people tend to be more friendlier towards you.

Being locked in my cell 22 hours/day has caused me chronic back pain among other issues. Medication has eased it some but working has done much more for the pain. Prison officials figure that by cutting inmate jobs will save them money but they end up spending it on the medical & disciplinary issues that this action created. When people have nothing to lose, no hope and no money (as little as it is) they tend to misbehave. Here are some of those costs to the state: Officers go out on Workers' Comp.; Inmates hurt each other (medical); Some inmates end up in the chronic disciplinary unit where employees are paid more; Staff tend to be more abusive to inmates in the chronic disciplinary units (law suits); Chronic medical conditions caused by such extreme idleness must be treated (mental & physical); and the most expensive of all is the increase in recidivism.

Most prisoners know what it takes to reduce or eliminate recidivism - formal education or vocational education. If it were up to me I would make a requirement any prisoner who wants parole must obtain a bachelor's degree or extensive vocational training which would depend on what the state's occupational needs are. Of course there would have to be exceptions (e.g. disabilities - mental & physical), et al).

Does anyone know what it cost to register a motor vehicle these days? I've been in prison 21 years now and have no clue. What I do know is that here in Connecticut the Motor Vehicle Dept. is charged \$3.28 for each set of license plates.

Hit me up and let me know what you think.

Rich.