

LAYOFFS

Sunday
July 20, 2014

I've seen and heard of people being laid off for plenty of reasons, but in the end, it all comes down to one thing: money. So tell me, how does the prison system justify its most recent act of stupidity, laying off half the support services work force? Unlike jobs in a company in the outside world, these positions don't have any sort of financial incentive, hourly or otherwise, meaning that the men who perform these tasks do so without any strain on the prison's budget. Laying these guys off doesn't only fail to make any sense from a financial aspect, it also fails to make any sense from a rehabilitative standpoint. Having a job might not be something many of us like to do, in here or on the streets, but in here, having a job gives you a sense of purpose in life, no matter how trivial or menial. It gives you a routine to follow, while at the same time, teaching you skills you're going to need to survive in the outside world, skills many of us have never bothered to acquire before now.

It's bad enough that the prison system has deprived us of yet another opportunity to attempt to rehabilitate ourselves, but to add insult to injury, we're now being told that there are other consequences that go along with our loss of employment as well. For example, not working means not being able to earn additional time credits off of our sentences, and while there will certainly be those who feel that all inmates should serve every single day of their sentence, and then some, consider this: sooner or later, most of us are going to get out of here. Knowing this, wouldn't you hope that we're rehabilitated upon our reentry into society? If so, then it's important to note that rehabilitation is more effective with positive reinforcement than it is with negative reinforcement. Follow the rules, and you're rewarded, but give inmates nothing to strive for, and all of a sudden, no one cares about following the rules, and as we all know, if you can't follow the rules in here, where you're under constant supervision, then you certainly can't follow the rules in society, where you're not.

In addition to not being able to earn additional time credits off our sentences, not having a job also means that we're treated in the same manner as those who are in here breaking the rules. If you have a job assignment, then you get to make more than 1 phone call per month, you get to spend extra time out of your cell, you get to spend a little extra money in the canteen, etc. If, however, you don't have a job, then none of this applies to you.

The bottom line is that there's no justification whatsoever for the prison system to have fired, or, excuse me, "laid off," all of these workers, especially considering the factors I've described above. But then, the prison system often does a number of things that make absolutely no sense. In fact, we often joke that things like "common sense" are against the rules and regulations of the prison system, and now you know why.

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