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SPECIFIC TOPIC: MENTAL HEALTH CARE WITHIN THE CALIFORNIA PRISON SYSTEM

HELLO WORLD,

IT WAS ONCE SAID BY RENOWNED AUTHOR JAMES BALDWIN, THAT "THE MOST DANGEROUS CREATION OF ANY SOCIETY IS THAT MAN [OR WOMAN] WHO HAS NOTHING TO LOSE."

WITH THAT SAID, IN THE MID-1980'S, CALIFORNIA BEGAN TO END FUNDING FOR MANY OF THE STATE HOSPITALS WHICH ASSISTED THE MENTALLY ILL. AS A RESULT, MANY OF THOSE INDIVIDUALS ARE HOPELESSLY TRAPPED WITHIN CALIFORNIA'S PRISON MIS-DIAGNOSED AND MALTREATED.

INSTEAD OF HAVING THIS "LOCK UM' UP AND THROW AWAY THE KEY" ATTITUDE, WHAT THE PEOPLE OF THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA NEED TO DO IS TAKE A GOOD HARD LOOK AT, IS THIS "PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE" OF THIS DEHUMANIZING DISREGARD THAT EXTENDS TO THE PHYSICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH TO THE OVER 150,000+ MEN, WOMEN, AND JUVENILE OFFENDERS IMPRISONED WITHIN THIS STATE'S FORTRESSES OF FEAR.

IT IS NO SECRET THAT CALIFORNIA'S PRISON SYSTEM HAS REOCCURRING PROBLEMS WITH ITS MEDICAL AND MENTAL HEALTH CARE DELIVERY. AS THESE ISSUES HAVE WORSENERD SINCE THE MID-1980'S UNDER CONDITIONS OF "MASS INCARCERATION", "OVERCROWDING", AND "INDUSTRIAL MANAGEMENT RATIONALES"; IT DOESN'T TAKE A ROCKET SCIENTIST TO FIGURE OUT THAT PEOPLE WITH ANY SORT OF MENTAL ILLNESS WILL SUFFER THE MOST. WITH MY BACKGROUND IN THE MEDICAL PROFESSION, I HAVE LONG NOTICED HOW THE RELIANCE AND PREVALENT USAGE OF "PSYCHOTROPIC DRUGS" HAS BECOME THE SOLE MEANS OF "TREATMENT" FOR MENTALLY DISABLED PRISONERS, WITH NO OTHER PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL COUNSELING TO ADDRESS THE UNDERLYING CAUSES OR CONSEQUENT DEPRESSION.

DRUGS FILL THE GAPS WITHIN CALIFORNIA'S HOUSES OF PAIN...

RECENTLY, TREATMENT PROVIDED TO MENTALLY ILL PRISONERS IN THE CDCR HAS SLIGHTLY IMPROVED; NEVERTHELESS, FOR MANY REASONS IT STILL FALLS SHORT OF PROVIDING THE RANGE AND QUALITY OF TREATMENT OPPORTUNITIES THAT I BELIEVE WOULD GREATLY REDUCE PRISON RECIDIVISM OF THESE INDIVIDUALS AND THEREBY LOWER CRIME RATES IN SOCIETY, OVERALL. AND THE ONLY WAY TO FIX THIS PROBLEM IS SIMPLE: THERE NEEDS TO BE A COMPLETE, COMPREHENSIVE, AND GENUINE CORRECTIONAL REFORM OVERHAUL OF THE CDCR BY THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY. ONLY THEN WILL THE MENTALLY DISABLE GET THE HELP THEY NEED, AND DESERVE...

SOCIETY, AS A WHOLE, SEEMS TO TRULY MISUNDER-
STAND WHAT IT MEANS "TO DO TIME", AND TO
IGNORE OR FORGET ABOUT THE INHUMANITY OF
PRISONS, IN AND OF THEMSELVES, ONLY DOOMS ALL
OF US TO BEING VICTIMS TO THIS SYSTEM YET
AGAIN. THINK ABOUT IT, READERS, WHAT TYPE
OF INDIVIDUALS DO YOU WANT TO RETURN BACK
INTO YOUR COMMUNITIES?

IF YOU HAVE ANY COMMENTS, PLEASE POST THEM
OR CONTACT ME DIRECTLY AT MY MAILING ADD-
RESS. I'D ENJOY HEARING FROM YOU. UNTIL NEXT
TIME, TAKE CARE! AND BE SAFE.

PEACE,
ZAKEE