

**JOHNNY MAHAFFEY SAYS: "Is the 'change' bandwagon
actually going anywhere?"**

In a previous post, "The Innocuous Displeasures," I spoke about the protests at the state house here in South Carolina, concerning the prison "business."

I still stand behind what I posted.

However, I've now met one of the members--a co-founder, even --of Hearts for Inmates, with their saying: "South Carolina. It's Time for a Change. Advocates for Sentencing Reform." And I've got a few words to add in supplement, in addition--if interested in human rights--you should visit:

heartsforinmates.org

The movement is growing, and many authoritative figure heads are now gleefully jumping on board--as if it'd been in them the whole time to do so. Going back to my previous statement that: "Today's leaders seem somewhat disaffected with the end-games of their predecessors."

Policies within the system are changing left and right, and we're seeing more programs enter. Things that were once here before (some of them), but taken away during the whole War on Crime bandwagon of the 90s that replaced the War on Drugs bandwagon of the 80s--both of which set up the current War on Sex bandwagon that seems to be forming from the 2000s. Now here in the mid-2010s, the system has hit a standstill; in thanks (unfortunately) to the economic collapse that brought attention to any (and all) unsustainable government entities and/or projects.

The prisons, for too long, have been taking in a massive influx of prisoners with long sentences, or no release date at all, without parole. These guys--referred to only as "inmates," like that of an asylum--are stripped of identity Dostoevskian-style, like in some old-school Russian prison from Siberia (read "House of the Dead," by Fyodor Dostoevsky), they (we, I should say) are not rehabilitated or offered any form of pay, no way to earn credits or parole. So what's the result? Complete pandemonium: the guys (not we, not me!) revert back to primordial-brain functions--they go all alpha/beta on one another, raping, robing, and killing. We had dozens of stabbings, hundreds of fights, a RIOT resulting in one building severely damaged, and a couple of gruesome murders. Over the holidays, and all in just this one prison.

The warden has since resigned.

The associate wardens, and our current acting warden, have been implementing some changes--stuff that you would've expected done years ago, but, alas, hands were tied and bound with--among other things--red tape. Things are rapidly improving! Changes in

classification are said to be on the horizon, and changes in dorms are already underway. The current regime is now embracing a needed change. Policies that were in effect in the 80s, that were removed erroneously under the guise of the War on Crime, and rewritten in the mid- to late-90s, are now being reimplemented. And in addition, programs are expanding. Rehabilitation is being discussed. Sustainability is no longer a four-letter-word.

Sustainability is the nature of the modern economic beast. Its thirst has grown post-economic collapse; and its strength is derived from both modern technological advancements in things like accounting, and human morality whose infractions now become more publicly known--spreading like digital wildfires!

This, heartsforinmates.org, just like betweenthebars.org, and others--are tips of an iceberg authorities (and politicians) have been dreading for years, seeing it on the horizon. Now, out of perhaps too many changes in captains and crews, the ship drifted off course, struck, and is now taking on water--in the form of prisoners, weighing it down. The distress signals are being sent out via the world wide web... people are listening, gathering to discuss possible solutions, and even heading out to help.

It is time for a change: mass incarceration is a failed experiment, it did not decrease crime or recidivism. So according to scientific method, that means creating a new hypothesis, examining all the available data collections, and brainstorming a solution that utilizes what's worked for other states (and countries), and getting innovative. Getting outside the box would be an understatement; because to save the system, there needs to be a change in the way people actually think about crime and its causes. The middle-class is drastically shrinking, creating a bigger gap between the rich and the poor: this isn't going to end well for America.

With the poor growing in number, so will crime.

The prisons need to reunite families; teach fathers and mothers incarcerated, new trades. Rehabilitate them. Don't just house them indefinitely....