

REAL TALK - THE VIEW OF A CONNECTICUT PRISONER Vol.1 No.2
By Richard Stevenson

GREETINGS FREE WORLD! A few weeks ago an innocent man was allowed to go home after serving 26 years of a life sentence for a murder he did not commit. I knew him, ate with him, but did not care for his ways. But that's neither here nor there. The point is that once again it took the assistance of the Innocence Project to show that they got it wrong. However, against their advice this man accepted an offer of receiving a re-sentence of "time served" and going home immediately rather than going through the ordeal of another trial and risk being found guilty again. In other words he served 26 years for a murder he did not commit that will remain on his record.

The family of the woman who was murdered is now advocating to have a law passed that would remove the ability of a certain group of prisoners from earning up to 16 days per month good-time. They are under the impression that this man would not be set free if he had to do day for day of his life sentence. This is simply not true. What would have happened is that he would have been re-sentenced under a different charge and he would be set free anyway.

Republican politicians in this state want to prevent all prisoners from being able to earn any good time at all. I believe some of them are taking advantage of this family in an effort to further their agenda. There are less than 1000 of us who are still eligible to earn this "Statutory Good Time". This is due to the fact that a law has taken effect in 1994 preventing anyone else from getting it.

All legislators know that the U.S. Constitution prevents them from passing any law ex post facto. That means that you can't be held accountable for committing illegal acts when they were legal. Or in our case, if the crimes we were convicted of made us eligible to earn good time, a law can not be passed at a later date to take away that eligibility particularly if the law states the conditions under which an inmate "shall" earn good time as opposed to leaving it "at the discretion of the DOC Commissioner".

As such, it is my personal belief that the state republicans who are surrounding themselves with the family of the victim and giving interviews are simply taking advantage of them. If the law is passed preventing me from earning the statutory good time I am currently entitled to these republicans know that I will sue and win. This way they get what they want, publicity that they are tough on crime and the ability to point the finger at the courts. They then go to their constituents with the need for re-election, judicial reform, and a republican governor. As we say around here, "There is always some bull."

Meanwhile, the state is in a \$1.5 bil. deficit. Part of the reason the state is in this mess is because they stopped giving good time to new prisoners (1994). Inmate population is at about a 20 year low. I truly believe that republicans want to raise the inmate population until the prisons are bursting at the seams and then pressure democrats into allowing private prisons for several reasons. It weakens the guards' union, it will give them a fresh source of large donations, continue the vast incarceration racial disparity enabling them and others to continue depicting minorities as probable criminals feeding the further need to privatize Connecticut's prisons and to expand the prison industrial complex.

Republicans in this state have yet to buy into implementing programs that reduce recidivism. How can this be in this day? The only thing that I can think of is that they don't want the recidivism rates reduced. Now one only has to ask why?

**IF YOU CAN'T SEE YOURSELF IN SOMEONE YOU CAN'T EMPATHIZE WITH
THEM!**

Rich.