

REAL TALK - THE VIEW OF A CONNECTICUT PRISONER Vol.1 No.5  
By Richard Stevenson

Greeting Free World! I'd like to weigh in on a substantial reduction on the budget in this state.

The gov't and its people must realize that they have a great resource in the prison population. This system is intentionally structured to break down a person and re-mold him/her. Our school children are being molded. In either case the Connecticut tax payers aren't getting our money's worth. The gov't sees our children as potential resources (future tax payers). Just keep in mind that our birth certificates have been securitized to finance current debt.

We can substantially reduce crime by getting all of our children involved in gov't. Not just in teaching them how it works but participate in holding politicians responsible in keeping their promises and duties and assuring transparency via utilizing the Freedom of Information Act. That's how you find out what certain rogue gov't actors don't want you to know.

They could start by requesting copies of any file that the FBI may have on them. Copies of videos could also be requested. This information could also be downloaded to a computer.

Teach them about what various laws are and the consequences are for breaking them. It's easy to learn how to research case law. They should learn how various cases affect them and thus learn one reason why voting, and keeping their right to vote, is so important.

I would make it mandatory for all children to know how the economy works and how they need to contribute to it. Teach them about the stock market and how easy it is for them to invest. They should know the difference between a stock broker, C.P.A. and a financial advisor. They should know the income potential of the three. Have them practice what it's like to live at various income levels. They should know what and how much it takes to run a household. Have them actually do it. Most will appreciate their parents more.

Then, have them see what it's like to live as a convicted felon. They should know just how much harder it is. See what it's like to face that stigma. But most important they should



know that there is help and how to ask for it. The point is to teach them that they don't have to be victims of their circumstances and to be sympathetic of the less fortunate by obtaining knowledge rather than relying on partial truths and flat out lies.

With regards to the prison population, there is enormous potential just awaiting for proper use! Why wouldn't the governor assign someone to make deals with corporations for the state to train us to work for them once released? This alone would significantly lower recidivism saving the state \$50,000/yr. per person that doesn't return to prison making this state a safer environment for companies to relocate to. This would also provide them with what they need most...an educated work force ready to go. Such a program would also make the prison system safer for all involved thus lowering operating costs.

One of the main problems is that you would have to change the mind-set of the union members. Most believe that rehabilitation is a farce. They joke and scoff at the changes that the commissioner is trying to make. They resist at every turn and this is costing the state millions of dollars. They then complain about the taxes that they have to pay. WHAT THE HELL!

A number of correctional officers transferred from this facility due to the changes that this warden has made in order to lower the recidivism rate and save money. Even more chose to retire. Again, it goes to the mind-set of these people. Our politicians said lock them up. The officers said lock them down. Most prisoners in this state have no more than 2 and a half hours per day for rec., showers and use of the phone on average. These officers want to keep us locked in our cells all day so they can stay in the Officers' Mess and do nothing. They frequently abandon their posts because there is nothing for them to do. They are totally against anything that causes them to leave their O.M. particularly if prisoners benefit in any way.

Either the culture has to change or the staff must. The costs are just going to keep rising. So something has got to change.

Rich.