

Trump's "Prison Reform"

During Donald Trump's January 30, 2018 State of the Union Address, he announced that his administration would undertake "prison reform" that would ensure that inmates get a "second chance" after completing their sentence and being released.

While we do need criminal justice reforms that ensure rehabilitation and the opportunity to succeed and be productive upon release from prison, that is NOT prison reform.

Does Donald Trump even really understand what prison reform is and what reforms are needed? Doubtful. Trump received hundreds of thousands of dollars via a super PAC from private prison corporations in 2016, the day after President Obama's Justice Department announced it would phase out the use of private prisons. Under Trump's administration, the Justice Department reversed the Obama-era policy; and private prisons are flourishing under the Trump presidency.

The only interest Trump has in prisons is (a) donations from private prison corporations which (b) his administration gives contracts to, and (c) putting more people in prison which leads to a need for (d) more prisons.

When Trump is ready to address the inhumane conditions, abuse, neglect, inadequate medical care, overcrowding, lack of rehabilitation, over use of solitary confinement, unjust policies, corporate extortion of prisoner families, and myriad other injustices that pervade this nation's prison system, then he can claim attempts at "prison reform". When he's ready to stop enabling and benefiting from the prison industrial complex, then he can utter the words "prison reform" without the taint of hypocrisy.

Until then, he should not even attempt to claim that prison reform is on his agenda. He's not fooling anybody, least of all the millions of Americans who have loved ones or friends in prison and know all too well how badly true prison reform is needed.