

December 30, 2013

mwh4y

Hello World!

Thank you (Clover) for your comments/questions regarding my March 8, 2013 post about The Wright Petition and the exorbitant inmate telephone fees. I learned of this proposal through this site. Between the bars will send me prison related issues to comment on.

Unfortunately, I am unable to sign the petition but I believe there are people (family, friends, advocates) who take this issue, and other issues that would encourage minds and hearts to change, seriously. Sadly and understandably, it's difficult to advocate for inmates because we have done horrific crimes and many still will.

However, there are those, including myself, who have changed and are living positive and productive lives.

As an inmate, it is against prison regulations and state law to unite with other inmates to protest anything. It is defined as 'inciting'. Our mail and telephone calls are screened, thus censoring and effectively muzzling us. Any voice that does reach the outside world to cry foul is easily discredited by saying, "He's just a whining inmate with a false sense of entitlement." That is why I focus my thoughts and energy on what positives there are, whether created by me or foresightful people. I wish to be an example of change that advocates can point to and rely on when proposing investment in prison programs.

I am unable to speak on the telephone fees for inmates in other states. I imagine their situation is similar given the fact that California's inmate phone contractor Global Tel-Link is nationwide.

In your comments you mentioned being an intern in a prison. Depending on your belief in man and your

experiences with the inmate population your attitude will be shaped for the better or worse. I am the first to admit that there are inmates who should never be released. They refuse to walk the difficult road of self-examination. No one likes to admit their mind set is wrong. Many cannot imagine living a 'square's' life. I use this term because that is the nickname given to me. It was not given in derision but out of respect. I proudly answer to it. It is my hope that you will hold tightly to the belief that men can change. Even if only one out of a hundred succeeds, society is better for it.

There are many ways inmates could positively interact with the community. Besides the telephone, prisons could set up mentors, internships with employers, sponsors through community organizations (EIKS and Moose Lodges, Veterans, etc.), and churches. This positive interaction would dispell many inmates' belief that no one cares. It would also help policy makers to see that the majority of inmates want out of the cycle of recidivism but need the tools to accomplish it.

In closing, thank you for your interest in inmate issues. Please encourage your friends and family to visit this site. May it be a place of enlightenment and hope for a better future for all.

Cordially,

Gregory Barnes Watson

Novel: A Thundering Wind

Journal: A Year in a Life Sentence

(Amazon.com)