

Fall 2011

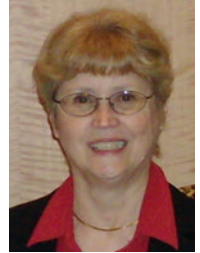
highlights

1. Virginia CURE Annual Meeting
2. Virginia Adult Re-entry Initiative .
3. Reports
4. Resolution on Extreme Heat
5. VADOC Changes Shackling Policy



Director's Corner

This summer saw a slowdown in activities, but there were still some important meetings to attend. Virginia CURE attended meetings with Director Clarke and DOC staff, along with a coalition of organizations led by Del Patrick Hope (D-47), to discuss the issue of restraints on pregnant women. The meetings were cordial and we are all pleased with the results (See page 5). Five CURE members attended the Public Safety Subcommittee meeting of the Senate Finance Committee where reports on the Re-Entry Initiative were given by Banci Tewolde, Re-Entry Coordinator; Director Clarke, Bill Muse, Parole Board Chairman; Helevi Holland, Director of Juvenile Justice and representatives of DCE. Reports are available at the Senate Finance Committee's Public Safety Subcommittee web site under the link for the June 8 meeting. In July, CURE Members attended a Crime Commission meeting that heard the results of a study on the Sex Offender Registry, and in August, members also attended meetings of the Family Reintegration and Financial Obligations workgroups of the Governor's Reentry Council. – *Carla*



Come To

Virginia CURE's 24th Annual Conference, *The Road to Reentry: Paving the Way*

**Saturday, October 8, 2011
9:30 a.m. to 3.30 p.m.**

**STAFFORD BAPTIST CHURCH
2202 Jefferson Davis Highway
Stafford, VA. 2255**

**Keynote Speaker
Harold Clarke
Director, Department of Corrections**

Additional speakers will focus on aspects of the Virginia Adult Re-entry Initiative from both state and community perspectives

Pre-registration

*Members: \$25.00
Non-members: \$30.00*

Fee includes morning coffee, luncheon and materials. Some "scholarships" available for those who cannot afford cost

At the door

*Members: \$30.00
Non-members: \$35.00*

**Please RSVP to Carla at the address below or by email to [vacure 1@cox.net](mailto:vacure1@cox.net)
The pre-registration form is available on the web site at www.vacure.org**

mail form with remittance to:

**Virginia CURE
P.O. Box 2310
Vienna, VA 22183**

If you are not able to print the registration form from the Internet, just send a check or money order to the above address with a note indicating that it is for the Annual Meeting.

Virginia CURE An effort to reduce crime through criminal justice reform

The Virginia Adult Reentry Initiative (VARI) - A Summary

Note: This summary leaves a great many details out. There is a complete report on this initiative that can be accessed at the following link: <http://www.vadoc.state.va.us/documents/reentryInitiativeExecSummary.pdf>

The model for this initiative is based on an approach developed by the National Institute of Corrections called “Transition from Prison to Community” (TCP). The DOC looked at this model and tailored it to fit the needs of Virginia’s system. The program operates from sentencing through release. There will be a concerted effort to prepare people for release gradually and to work with other organizations and services in communities. Community Corrections and the prison system envision working more closely together and sharing information via the computerized Offender Management System. There is a possibility that transitional housing will be included in this initiative, though not immediately.

The initiative is divided into phases as follows:

First contact with DOC: Whether via a Pre-Sentencing Report or coming directly from jail, the prisoner is interviewed to obtain social and criminal history and sentencing data. This information is saved to the Offender Management System, available to both the prisons and Community Corrections. Data will continue to be added to this file over time. The same 7 digit ID number for prisoner files will be used by both the prisons and Community Corrections.

Incarceration: The program begins at the Reception Center, where the prisoner is assessed by various professionals and receives short term programming, which includes strategies for a responsible release plan. A re-entry case plan is developed that will follow the prisoner throughout the term of incarceration and beyond, being constantly updated. The prisoner will be offered programs that are research based and proven effective. A number will be familiar, as some older programs will be folded into the VARI program. All prisoners will complete a research based cognitive behavioral program, “Thinking for a Change.” This 22 session program focuses on changing thought processes and has been demonstrated to reduce criminal behavior. Once this program is completed, people will be placed in “Thinking for a Change” support groups that will be ongoing through the term of incarceration.

Re-entry: The release process will be gradual. Prisoners will be divided into 3 categories. People with Life sentences will be offered “Thinking for a Change” and programs specific to their needs. People with 5 years or more remaining in their sentence will continue to participate in “Thinking for a Change” support groups and other courses. Those with less than 5 years left will continue “Thinking for a Change” support groups, will meet more frequently with counselors to review their progress and be prioritized for classes relevant to their release needs.

Phase 1: At 12 months before release, prisoners will be transferred to prison based Intensive Re-entry programs at security Level 2 and 3 prison facilities “located strategically throughout the state.” Programs will also be established at higher level facilities for higher level prisoners. The programs will operate in pods using the Cognitive Community program model and will establish a social environment similar to that of civil society where people will have an opportunity to practice behaviors, exhibit values and take part in decision-making as they will when released. **Phase 2:** At 90 days before release, prisoners will participate in a specialized pre-release phase in Community Re-entry Centers operated by Community Corrections located strategically throughout the Commonwealth. Probation Officers will work with eligible prisoners in the pre-release phase more intensely and will escort carefully screened prisoners on community transition visits to obtain employment, housing, and social services in preparation for release. They will receive intensive re-entry programs by Community Corrections that will include:

- Thinking for a Change” peer support groups
 - Intensive work and planning with Local Re-entry Councils
 - Community employment (if possible)
 - Transition visits (if eligible)
 - Job interviews
 - Family reunification seminars
 - Payment of court ordered financial obligations
-

- Re-entry Case Plans
- Case assignment to a probation officer
- Faith-based and other mentoring programs
- An individualized schedule of appointments that the offender will follow upon release

Release: People should arrive at a Probation District having the following:

- Identification documents necessary to obtain a DMV ID
- Housing
- Employment or job prospects identified
- A schedule of appointments
- An adequate supply of appropriate medications

Intensive Re-Entry Sites will be established at the following Correctional Centers

Bland
Coffeewood
Deerfield
Dillwyn
Deep Meadow
Greenville
Haynesville
Indian Creek
Lunenburg
St. Brides

As soon as possible, the probation officer will meet with the probationer's family or other positive support persons to engage their support in transitioning the probationer to law abiding life. People will be referred to community treatment programs based on the Re-entry Case Plan.

"Thinking for a Change" peer support groups will be held at districts so prisoners can continue practicing and maintaining newly learned behaviors

This is the rough outline of a long and detailed report. One thing to emphasize is that this effort will involve a number of organizations and services. As the report indicates "On-going partnerships and support from state agencies, the legislature, local governments, service providers, and non-profit and faith based groups are essential to achieving the VARI goals and objectives."

REPORTS

Virginia CURE has been saying for some time now that there is little connection between long sentences and crime rates. A recent report by the ACLU supports this claim. Six states have cut incarceration rates and decreased costs while seeing no rise in crime rates. Included in this number are traditional "tough on crime states" — Texas, Mississippi, Kansas, South Carolina, Kentucky and Ohio. In the midst of reform are four more states — California, Louisiana, Maryland and Indiana. The report was prepared by the ACLU's Center for Justice, an advocacy group that supports less-stringent penalties for nonviolent offenses.

Some of the changes noted by the report as having a positive impact include:

- * Decriminalizing possession of small amounts of marijuana
- * Reducing sentencing disparity between different types of drugs
- * Ending mandatory minimum sentences
- * Pushing treatment and parole over prison for non-violent offenders
- * Letting prisoners earn credit toward early release, and
- * Creating parole programs for elderly prisoners who are no longer a threat.

Texas parole and probation reforms since 2007 will result in an 11 percent reduction in prison growth and save an estimated \$2 billion by 2012. Its crime rate is currently at its lowest level since 1973. The report also said Mississippi, with its expanded parole eligibility for nonviolent offenders and earned-time credits for prisoners, is projected to save \$450 million on corrections costs by 2012. Already, its corrections costs have dropped from \$348 million in 2008 to \$332 million in 2011, and according to the report, its crime rates are also at the lowest levels since 1984. This report, **Smart Reform Is Possible: States Reducing Incarceration Rates and Costs While Protecting Communities**, is available at <http://www.aclu.org/print/criminal-law-reform/smart-reform-possible-states-reducing-incarceration-rates-and-costs-while>

REPORTS Continued

Smart On Crime, prepared by *The Smart On Crime Coalition* coordinated by *The Constitution Project*, January 2011. The Constitution Project (TCP) brings together unlikely allies—experts and practitioners from across the political spectrum—in order to promote and safeguard America’s founding charter. TCP is working to reform the nation’s broken criminal justice system and to strengthen the rule of law through scholarship, consensus policy reforms, advocacy, and public education. The report states that due to today’s difficult conditions, “to effectively tackle these challenges, we must abandon heated rhetoric and explore policies based not on ideology, but on evidence. We must come together to forge a system that works for everyone.” Five basic principles the Coalition considers foundational are Fairness, Accuracy, Effectiveness, Proven Practices and Cost Efficiency. This is a very large and thorough report - 43 national organizations participated. The report can be downloaded free at <http://www.besmartoncrime.org/pdf/Complete.pdf>

More information about the Constitution Project is available at <http://constitutionproject.org/> or by writing The Constitution Project, 1200 18th Street, NW, Suite 1000, Washington DC, 20036

Resolution on Extreme Heat In American Prisons

Virginia CURE has brought up the issue of extreme heat in our Quarterly Meetings with the DOC. CURE was told that the Department was doing all that it could given the present budget situation. Across the country, many prisons are not air conditioned. This resolution, composed by National CURE, was submitted to the August Convention of the American Correctional Association (ACA) by Diane Tramulta-Lawson, National CURE representative to the ACA. It will be considered at the 2012 meeting.

The resolution is as follows:

Whereas many prisons and jails in the United States are not air conditioned;

Whereas it is estimated that tens of thousands of people incarcerated in the United States and hundreds of their correctional officers during their shifts do not have air conditioning;

Whereas the Center for Disease Control states that air conditioning is the strongest protective factor against heat-related illness;

Whereas not providing air conditioning in facilities is a penny wise and pound foolish in that health costs, especially for older prisoners and older correctional officers, bring about much higher health costs than the cost of air conditioning;

Whereas lack of air conditioning also brings about more security problems in that correctional officers have to break up more fights between people in prison and do more "write ups" for disciplinary infractions;

Whereas not to provide air conditioning is a total disrespect of human beings who are either wards of the state or their keepers whose mission is to provide a correctional environment for these wards;

Whereas climate projections for the rest of this century show that heat waves similar to what we just experienced may become much more common;

Be It Resolved that the American Correctional Association supports air conditioning all prisons and jails.

A Note About Letters to Virginia CURE

While Virginia CURE cares about your concerns and appreciates being kept informed, we don't have a volunteer staff large enough to reply promptly to all letters received. Please, keep it short and to the point. **Do not send legal papers.** We do not have the capacity to deal with legal issues. Send mail to **P.O. Box 2310, Vienna, VA 22183**

Mailbag:

In response to questions about **parole for youthful offenders**, we found that indeterminate sentencing for some youths is codified in §19.2-311, which states that “a person under the age of 20 with a first offense of a felony other than capital murder, murder in the first or second degree or violations of §§18.2-61, 18.2-67.1, 18.2-67.2 or subdivision A 1 of §18.2-67.3, and who is considered by the judge to be capable of returning to society as a productive citizen, following a reasonable amount of rehabilitation, can be committed for a period of four years, which commitment shall be indeterminate in character.” As for the references cited in this paragraph, CURE checked them out and they are too lengthy and detailed to discuss in this newsletter. Be aware that certain crimes committed by juveniles are eligible for parole in certain circumstances.

“**Forced Savings**” laws have been passed as part of a focus on re-entry. One mandate requires that 5 % of prisoners’ earned income must be taken to be set aside for payment of fines, fees and court costs. If a prisoner has no job, the money cannot be taken. The second bill requires the DOC to take 10% of all income, earned or donated, to be set aside for re-entry, until the amount of \$1000 is reached. Interest on this money will go to a DOC fund, not the prisoner. The laws affect all prisoners regardless of length of sentence, “unless an inmate has been sentenced to be executed or is serving a sentence of life without parole”. The only way to change this law will be through legislation to amend the code. Virginia CURE’s Legislative Committee will consider such legislation for possible inclusion in it’s 2012 legislative agenda.

DOC Agrees to Policy Changes on Shackling of Pregnant Prisoners

The Virginia Department of Corrections will implement regulations to prohibit the shackling of pregnant prisoners . The regulations are modeled after legislation (HB 1488) introduced by Del. Patrick Hope (D-47) in 2011. After the failure of the bill, Del. Hope established a coalition of concerned organizations, including Virginia CURE, that met with Director Clarke and representatives of the DOC to discuss the issue. Discussions were amicable and resulted in regulations which prohibit the use of restraints on pregnant prisoners during labor, delivery or post-partum recovery. Handcuffs may be used during transport and more restraints could be used if the prisoner becomes a danger to herself or others. Documentation will be required when additional restraints are used.

Delegate Hope praised the Director for recognizing “the importance of spelling out a policy that protects the health of the mother and her unborn child.” “This policy,” he stated, “sets the tone for other correctional facilities, such as county and regional jails to follow suit.”

Virginia now joins ten other states— California, Colorado, Illinois, Pennsylvania, New Mexico, New York, Texas, Vermont, Washington and West Virginia in banning this practice. The Federal Bureau of Prisons and the U. S. Marshals also have similar policies.



Del. Patrick Hope

New Editor for Inside/Out:

We welcome Crystal Davidson of Fairfax, who has agreed to become the editor of this newsletter. Crystal is an Intellectual Property Law Paralegal with a strong interest in prison reform and prisoner rehabilitation. She is also a volunteer mentor in the Offender Aid Restoration (OAR) office of Arlington County, where she assists newly released former offenders with preparing for employment, continuing educational needs, and gaining basic life skills to aid in their smooth transition back into their communities.



LIFE-LONG CURE, for those serving life and practical life sentences and their loved ones, has been restarted by Kathe Izor and Barb Stephenson. They are looking for members and support. Contact them at:

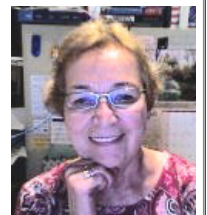
P.O. Box 2093

Englewood, CO 80150

E-mail: everyonesmom4@comcast.net***A Message from Jean***

Thanks for the good wishes during my illness. It was gratifying and encouraging to receive your cards and messages. I am working to regain my strength and am on the road to recovery.

*Best wishes, Jean Auldridge
President
Virginia CURE*



Chapter News



Hampton Roads: Under the leadership of James Bailey, the chapter is finalizing written information for ex-felons seeking jobs. “The Ex-Offender Reentry Information Handbook” has over 200 Employers in the area who have agreed to hire ex-offenders! “We will be holding job fairs next year where we will invite employers and ex-Offenders who have completed our program on Resume writing and Job Interview techniques!” James tells us.

Northern Virginia: Gail Arnall, PhD. Executive Director of Arlington OAR (Offender Aid and Restoration) spoke at the September Meeting about the mission of OAR and the impact of the new re-entry initiative on organizations like OAR. Other speakers are planned for future meetings. The group will also discuss possible legislation to introduce in the 2012 General Assembly.

Richmond : Leader Al Simmons reports that the August chapter meeting was canceled due to Hurricane Irene. September will see the group discussing the issue of voting rights for ex-felons and examining last year’s legislative agenda to familiarize them with the legislative concerns of Virginia CURE. In October, the group will hear from guest speaker Tom Fitzpatrick, of the Richmond ACLU speaking on their voting rights campaign.

In the News

The number of people behind bars in America has increased by more than 600 % in the past 40 years. There have been many suggestions as to how to treat this epidemic. An article appearing in the June 2 issue of the New England Journal of Medicine argues that society's inadequate treatment of mental health conditions and drug addiction is to blame. Policy changes over the last 30 years, the authors contend, such as severe punishment for drug use and treating health problems as crimes, are mostly responsible for this plague. The study contends that more than half of all prisoners have either a mental health condition or a drug addiction, and these people are released to the community without health insurance or access to care. This leads to a revolving door back to prison. The authors suggest that there are tremendous opportunities by diagnosing certain medical conditions while people are incarcerated and working with community health resources to continue to provide treatment.”The Affordable Health Act “, they write “ has the potential to improve access to much needed health care, which in turn, could redirect many people with serious illnesses away from the revolving door of the criminal justice system. “

Supreme Court to consider Strip Searches in Jails

In 2005, a New Jersey State Trooper pulled over Albert Florence, who was driving with his family to a family event. He was arrested on the basis of a warrant in his glove compartment saying he had failed to pay a fine. There was also proof that the fine had been paid years ago. Nevertheless, Florence spent 7 days in jail and was strip searched twice. Florence contends that strip-searching him for a minor offense without any reason to believe he was smuggling contraband into the jail violated his Fourth Amendment protection against unreasonable searches and seizures. Joining Florence in this suit are several people who were strip-searched after being detained for “driving with a noisy muffler, failing to use a turn signal, and riding a bicycle without an audible bell.” The lower courts are divided on whether the Fourth Amendment gives the right to the facility to decide when it is necessary to strip search. The American Bar Association is supporting Florence but many states and municipalities, including the Obama Administration are fighting against this case. The case will be heard in October.

Monthly Virginia Parole Board Decisions July 2005 – 2011

The current update includes June 2011 data. **Two prisoners were granted parole in June**, or a grant rate of 1.2 per cent, out of a total of 161 decisions. The overall grant rate for 2011 is consistently running well less than half of January to June 2010 and likely at the lowest levels ever. Only 1 of 147 parole eligible “old law prisoners” (sentenced for crimes committed prior to 1995) were granted parole. **This raises basic questions as to why does Virginia even bother to have a parole board.** Recent decisions appear to be consistent with an apparent policy shift to an extremely conservative set of standards for parole well below what has long been considered one of the nation’s most conservative parole boards.

2011	Number	Percent	Number
January	18	6%	262
February	7	2%	313
March	9	2%	404
April	14	3%	426
May	12	4%	317
June	2	1%	159
Total Jan.-May	60	3%	1722

CURE Chapters

Northern Virginia CURE
 Jean Auldridge
 Jean4vacure@gmail.com
 3rd Thursday, 7:30 PM
 Arlington Unitarian Church
 4444 Arlington Blvd.
 Arlington VA 22204

Richmond CURE
 Al Simmons
 Al22s@hotmail.com
 4th Sunday, 1:00 PM
 Friends Meeting House
 4500 Kensington Ave
 Richmond VA 23221

Hampton Roads CURE
 James Bailey
 Jbailey383@aol.com
 3rd Tuesday, 7:00 PM
 Norview Baptist Church
 1127 Norview Ave.
 Norfolk VA 23513

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WE NEED YOUR EMAIL ADDRESS!

If you have an email address and are not receiving updates from Virginia CURE, please send a message to vacure1@cox.net. (vacure one)

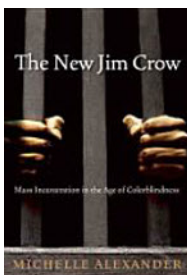
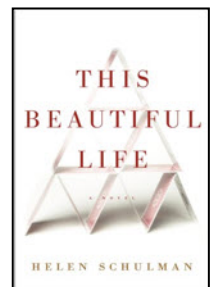
Have You Renewed Your Membership?

Please see membership form on back page.

We can't do this without you.

Book Reviews:

This Beautiful Life by Helen Schulman, is a novel that tells a story of a “sexting.” and it’s impact upon one family. A young girl sends a photo of herself to a boyfriend, who shares it with just one friend, well, you know what happens! Schulman vividly portrays the circularity of events and the instantaneous connections of lives caught in a very real world wide web. The novel illustrates what can happen to teens who unthinkingly provoke unintended consequences and change the life of every one of their family members. Harper Collins publishers.



The New Jim Crow by Michelle Alexander addresses the issue of the mass incarceration of black men in America. “Jarvious Cotton’s great-great-grandfather could not vote as a slave. His great-grandfather was beaten to death by the Klu Klux Klan for attempting to vote. His grandfather was prevented from voting by Klan intimidation; his father was barred by poll taxes and literacy tests. Today, Cotton cannot vote because he, like many black men in the United States, has been labeled a felon and is currently on parole”, she writes. Former lawyer, now professor, Alexander argues that “we have not ended the racial caste system in America; we have simply redesigned it!” New Press publishers.

Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants– Virginia, Inc.
Virginia CURE
P.O. Box 2310
Vienna, Virginia, 22183

Virginia CURE web site
www.vacure.org

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VirginiaPrisoners@yahoogroups.com

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*Today's prisoners
are tomorrow's neighbors*



Member

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants– National, Inc.

Are you a Member of Virginia CURE?



Use form for new memberships or to renew your membership for

Membership in Virginia CURE

Join Virginia CURE today and become a part of the effort to work for criminal justice reform and safety in our communities. Send dues payment to:

Virginia CURE, P.O. Box 2310, Vienna, Virginia 22183

Dues are payable January 1 on a yearly, non-prorated basis for current year. Prisoner members need to include state number on all communications to CURE.

Remember to send address changes.

Check type of membership

- Prisoner* \$ 2.00
- Individual \$ 15.00
- Family \$ 25.00
- Sustaining \$ 50.00
- Organization \$100.00
- Life \$100.00
- Renewal

Please make checks payable to **Virginia CURE**. Contributions are tax deductible under the provisions of 501(c)(3), Internal Revenue Code.

*Prisoners may send five stamps.

Please feel free to reproduce

name _____

address _____
street/or p.o. apt.

_____ city state zip

e-mail _____ prisoner birthday _____

phone day () evening ()

fax () _____

Involvement: prisoner family friend professional volunteer

other _____ Institution _____

please specify

Virginia CURE invites prisoners to submit original articles, poetry and artwork for consideration for publication. Virginia CURE reserves the right to edit submissions accepted for publication.

Virginia CURE will not return submissions unless prior arrangements are made. Send submissions to: Newsletter Editor, Virginia CURE, P.O. Box 2310, Vienna, Virginia 22183

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