



Vol V, Issue 4, Q-4 **October** | November | December 2014

The Prison Industrial Complex

Part IV of IV

The After-Effects of Incarceration

Individual Impacts | Societal Impacts

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Hebrews 13:3 (NIV)

³ Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.

The After-Effects of Incarceration

In the highly acclaimed New York Times best seller, "The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness", author Michelle Alexander argues that it is not necessarily "mandatory minimum" increases in prison sentencing that caste people for a lifetime of New Millennium Slavery; rather, it is the "Prison Label" itself that banishes them into a permanent under-class.

"Once a person is labeled a felon, he or she is ushered into a parallel universe in which discrimination, stigma, and exclusion are perfectly legal, and privileges of citizenship such as voting and jury service are off-limits. It does not matter whether you have actually spent time in prison; your second-class citizenship begins the moment you are branded a felon."

- "The New Jim Crow:
Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness"

"As of 2008, there were approximately 2.3 million people in prisons and jails, and a staggering 5.1 million people under community correctional supervision - i.e., on probation or parole".

The cost to society for all of this is as outrageous to the taxpayer as it is overwhelming to a civilized economy. (\$31,286* per inmate).

Christian Henrichson and Ruth Delaney, The Price of Prisons: What Incarceration Costs Taxpayers. New York: Vera Institute of Justice, 2012.

* State Prisons Only

FYI: Statistically speaking

- (1) There are more black men in prison today (1 in 3) than were enslaved in 1850;
- (2) Black women represent the fastest growing sector of the US prison population.

Individual Impacts

Once convicted of a felony, much to the surprise of those of us who long for Social Equity, a person may be barred from things like public housing, and they can be legally discriminated against by potential landlords. In addition, they may also be ineligible for food stamps, and as if that were not bad enough, they may also be legally discriminated against with regard to employment, denied professional licenses, and effectively "locked-out" of mainstream society in a variety of other ways.

So a convicted felon, even after having served his or her full sentence, can still find him/herself unable to participate in the "Great American Dream". This can be the case no matter how insignificant or nonviolent the crime(s) may have been. Moreover, travel and association restrictions are also imposed, as well as fines, inconvenient in-person reporting, and mandatory working requirements (no matter the odds against finding employment) are also usually imposed, creating a myriad of "Catch -22" type consequences for an entire sub-group of people who were the least-able to successfully navigate a complex society and ever-constricting workforce in the first place.

In the 1980's, only about one percent (1%) of all prison admissions were for probation or parole violations. In the New Millennium, that number exceeds thirty-five percent (35%), and the sheer numbers are staggering (and almost all of them for technicalities). What real choices, therefore, do people convicted of felonies honestly have but to recidivate.

Societal Impacts

According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS), the number of people who repeat their offenses, even after having completed their sentences (via either probation or parole), is mind-boggling; within six months, thirty percent (30%) of all released prisoners will have committed another crime; within three (3) years, the numbers increase to almost seventy percent (70%), and only a very small percent of those for anything violent.

Remarkably, once convicted of a felony, even certain individual Constitutional rights are legally forfeit: one may be subjected to continual harassment by law enforcement, including surveillance, stops & searches, with or without consent, with or without any valid reason (Fourth Amendment violations for anyone not convicted of a felony).

Always feel welcome to contact me directly with any questions, comments, or great ideas!

Jack Johnson

Founder & CEO

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ADVOCACY



*Helping Individuals, Organizations & Communities
Achieve Their Full Potential*

Our Mission

The Mission of The Advocacy Foundation
is Threefold:

To Rescue

Young persons from the prison pipeline
and help redirect and restore their lives;

To Teach

New and fledgling nonprofit organizations to become
fundable, to thrive, and to maintain compliance;

To Train

Qualified Juvenile Justice Professionals with a passion
for effective careers in the Juvenile Justice system.

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