

# JRC

## Justice Reform Consortium



Vol. 5 #9 June 24, 2014

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### A Letter Not Printed

The following letter was written by Rev. Carlos Jayne earlier this month after The Des Moines Register published an [opinion piece](#) on June 9 about a county attorney's garnishment of every penny an inmate earns. Carlos' letter was not published by the Register.

On Tuesday, June 24, 2014, the Des Moines Register published another [opinion](#) on the same subject. Carlos is still waiting for his letter to be published. We believe it's appropriate to print it here:

Editor, Des Moines Register  
June 9, 2014

It would be difficult to convince me it is not arrogance of power for a County Attorney to take every last penny of a prisoner's meager resources for the rest of their life as a way to satisfy his personal sense of vengeance. Per your editorial of June 9, that is exactly what Ben Smith of Sac County is doing by garnishing every source of money for Tracy Richter. All of it for the rest of her life will not clear her state-imposed debt. Maybe the garnishment laws at this point allow him to do this, but common sense and what is humane says "No."

It doesn't matter the crime. Richter has already been sentenced. Smith's job is done once he gets the conviction and she is off to prison for life. Smith says he is doing it to get money for the victim's family. Does he do it for every crime victim in his jurisdiction? I doubt it. He is undoubtedly obsessed with the fact she did this terrible crime on his watch. If every prosecutor started doing this our whole system of criminal justice and the way we supposedly set up our Corrections system to try to be humane would be even more out of whack than it is already.

Our Constitution does not allow for "cruel and unusual punishment." This might qualify. There must surely be something in law that would not allow for every cent of a prisoner's money to be taken from them even though it might be sent in for their telephone account or commissary account or for the three bucks it costs for an inmate to see a doctor. Taking a person's freedom away is a very costly punishment to one's being. It reduces

one's humanity. The little bit a prisoner makes in wages or gets sent to them by relatives only keeps them at the very lowest level of human worth. We are supposed to be supporting their efforts to become better human beings even if sentenced to life without parole.

We don't have the death penalty in Iowa, not in the literal sense. What we do have is a very slowly applied death penalty implemented by denying freedom for the rest of one's life for crimes such as was committed by Tracy Richter. Apparently, County Attorney Ben Smith has come upon a way of making Richter's life even more lastingly miserable than our Iowa society itself has thus far intended. He should not be able to do that.

Carlos Jayne

*Rev. Carlos Jayne, Co-Founder and retired Advocate for Justice Reform Consortium*

## In Memoriam

Bill Basinger, husband of JRC Steering Committee Chair Jean Basinger, passed away unexpectedly on Friday, May 30th. A memorial service is scheduled for **July 6, 2014 at 3:00 pm at First United Methodist Church in Des Moines (1001 Pleasant Street - at the "top" of 10th Street downtown). Following the service, people are invited for a meal with music and stories in the fellowship hall.**

Many of the photos you have seen in the JRC Newsletter have been snapped by Bill. If you ever met him, you got a hug from him.

A link to Bill's obituary is included below:

<http://www.legacy.com/obituaries/desmoinesregister/obituary.aspx?n=william-adam-basinger-bill&pid=171189228>

JRC and its extended family pass on its deepest sympathy to Jean and her family.

## Congratulations!

Paul Stageberg, Director of the Criminal & Juvenile Justice Program [CJJP] is retiring from state government at the end of this month. JRC, and especially this newsletter, has used Paul as a solid source of information over the past 5 years. We wish Paul the best with his future of relaxation. 😊

## From the Legislative Fiscal Division

This newsletter wouldn't be possible without the information, guidance, and occasional correction we receive from the CJJP; but it is also impossible to publish this without the vast supply of information that is available through the Legislature's non-partisan Fiscal Division of

the Legislative Services Agency. There are a few really good features that have been released recently (sounds like movies, huh?). These links are brief and extremely informative:

Budget Unit – Offender Re-Entry Program:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FT/25449.pdf>

Special End-of-the-Session Edition, May 14, 2014:

<https://www.legis.iowa.gov/docs/publications/FU/26068.pdf>



## Selected links:

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/06/08/us/seeing-squalor-and-unconcern-in-southern-jail.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&r=0> **Seeing Squalor and Unconcern in a Mississippi Jail**, *Goode, Erica*. **New York Times**. June 7, 2014.

<http://www.nytimes.com/2014/05/23/us/politics/justice-dept-to-reverse-ban-on-recording-interrogations.html?partner=rss&emc=rss&r=0> **In Policy Change, Justice Dept. to Require Recording of Interrogations**. *Schmidt, Michael S.* **New York Times**. May 22, 2014.

<http://jonathanturley.org/2014/05/19/ohio-woman-in-injured-when-police-throw-her-to-ground-pry-open-her-mouth-and-arrest-her-after-taking-tylenol/#more-79298> **Ohio Woman Is Injured When Police Throw Her To Ground, Pry Open Her Mouth, And Arrest Her ... After Taking Tylenol**. *Turley, Jonathan*. [JONATHAN TURLEY](http://jonathanturley.org) Blog. May 19, 2014.

[http://www.magellanoof Iowa.com/media/841237/ia\\_customer\\_newsletter\\_may\\_2014\\_doc\\_pilot.pdf](http://www.magellanoof Iowa.com/media/841237/ia_customer_newsletter_may_2014_doc_pilot.pdf) **Magellan/DOC Pilot Project that connects individuals close to release of confinement with Medicaid to help provide mental health assistance.**

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I want to help Justice Reform Consortium with its goal of working toward restorative justice.

Here is my contribution of \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Submit your subscription payment to:

Jean Basinger  
Justice Reform Consortium  
c/o Trinity United Methodist Church  
P.O. Box 41005  
Des Moines, IA 50311

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

## UPCOMING EVENTS

**Voices to be Heard** is a support group for families and children of an incarcerated loved one. The group gathers to support and comfort those who know too well the grief that comes to those left behind when someone they love is incarcerated. The group meets on the first and third Tuesdays of the month at Union Park Methodist Church (East 12<sup>th</sup> & Guthrie in Des Moines) from 5:30 – 7:00 p.m. The group brings in speakers, performs outreach, provide support groups and leadership classes. It is a good idea to contact Melissa ahead of time because the group provides dinner and a head count is preferred. Contact Melissa at 515/229-2645 for more information.

The next **Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners** meeting is at noon on **Tues., July**

**15th at Wesley United Methodist Church, 800 East 12<sup>th</sup>.**

**MISSION: To bring together and inform individuals and groups concerned about women in the Iowa correctional system and to act on their behalf.**

FIWP Mailing Address: Post Office Box 71272, Clive, IA 50325

Our July presenter is Renee Schulte, former Iowa legislator and mental health therapist. She spear-headed the passage of mental health and disability services (MHDS) redesign in 2011-2012. Currently, Renee has a unique opportunity to consult with the Mental Health Division of the Iowa Department of Human Services to implement the reform policy. Her work on MHDS reform won nine awards including the Iowa Mental Health Counselor Association award for bipartisan leadership 2012, the Gold Star Award from Iowa Sheriff's and Deputies Association 2012, and the Iowa Hospital Association Legislator of the Year 2012.

Renee is the owner of Schulte Consulting LLC, which offers strategic planning in mental health, healthcare, legislative process and environment. She is married to Brent, the discipleship pastor at Antioch Christian Church, and lives in Cedar Rapids.

Bring your lunch. The place and time are consistent throughout the year. The meetings are always held on the third Tuesday of the month, and always held from noon to 1:00 pm at Wesley United Methodist Church located at 800 East 12<sup>th</sup> Street in Des Moines. The location is a block west of East High School. Please contact [Vi](#) for more information.

AMOS, Blank Hospital, and a number of other organizations are going to put on a conference on Sept. 29 at Blank Hospital to address the topic of "Justice and the Juvenile Brain." Attending the conference will be nationally known experts in the field. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

***Justice Reform Consortium member organizations:*** Iowa CURE & Iowa Coalition 4 Juvenile Justice; Friends of Iowa Women Prisoners; Trinity United Methodist Church; Methodist Federation for Social Action; Voices to be Heard; ACLU of Iowa; Social Action Committee, Des Moines Presbytery; Des Moines Chapter of WILPF; American Friends Service Committee; Plymouth Congregational Church, Board of Christian Social Action; Iowa Annual Conference, UMC; Iowa NOW and Des Moines NOW; National Association of Social Workers; Beacon of Life; Citizens for Undoing Racism-War on Drugs Task Force.

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