

## The BIG question is...

### WHAT'S THE DEAL, Arkansas?!?

It's already been proven in several states...lowering the prison phone rate has many benefits. It allows families to keep in touch better, it reduces the contraband cell phone issue that seems to plague many facilities, and it strengthens relationships in preparation for when those who are incarcerated are released and returning to their communities.

New York State Dept. of Corrections and Community Supervision Commissioner, Anthony Annucci, states that New York's decision to lower the rates of phone calls to less than five cents per minute is, "among the most cost-effective family reunification options we offer."

So what's the deal, Arkansas?

Well, unfortunately some states are taking a "penny-wise and pound-foolish" approach and doing their best to block the FCC's historic rate cap.

And unfortunately, Arkansas is among the list of "some states" taking this approach.

What's surprising is this...the governors of most of these states are governors who have previously supported criminal justice reform as a general rule...but state they support "reducing recidivism" and "keeping families together".

More specifically to Arkansas, Governor Hutchinson has stated in his keynote address at the Charles Koch Institute's Advancing Justice Summit that his goal for criminal justice reform is "to give those who are reentering society – the ex-offenders – a better second chance at a new life" by strengthening community connections.

By trying to block the FCC's new rules – these governors are doing the exact opposite!

If New York's example is showing us that the FCC rate caps would make it easier for families to stay in touch, and elected officials in Arkansas and other states are seeking to reduce recidivism and strengthen family and community ties....then why are they opposing the FCC's new rules and efforts that support these same goals?

## Arkansas CURE



Arkansas Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

### LATEST NEWS

#### WOMEN'S UNIT MOVING

Governor Asa Hutchinson has approved the plans to move the ladies housed at the Southeast Arkansas Community Corrections Unit in Pine Bluff... to West Memphis. The new facility was the former Crittenden County Hospital which was closed. It will now be retrofitted to house the women. Currently Southeast houses 350 minimum security female inmates. Pine Bluff city officials have met with the mayor and petitions have been started in opposition of this move. The conversation in the news has been about the ADC staff and having to relocate. What about the women...some who will be moved further from their families? Is this not a concern?

#### ARKANSAS EXECUTION LAWSUIT

The Arkansas Supreme Court has agreed to hear oral arguments in a recent lawsuit by nine Arkansas death row inmates. Their lawsuit challenges the state's execution law. The court has issued a statement granting the request for oral argument by the inmates' attorneys. A date will be set later. These inmates have asked justices to uphold a circuit judge's decision to strike down a portion of the law that blocks officials from revealing where Arkansas obtains the drugs used in an execution. The state appealed the ruling and the high court has temporarily halted executions until the challenge is heard. The inmates are arguing that they have a right to know the source of the drugs being used. The state argues it's immune from the lawsuit.

**Charlie Sullivan Exec. Director of CURE, based in Washington D.C.,** was invited by the White House Office of Intergovernmental Affairs to the White House. The meeting's briefing was on *Life After Clemency*. CURE is a strong proponent for the use of expanded clemency at the federal and state level.

## Arkansas CURE

"An effort to provide information on criminal justice reform through education and advocacy"

Arkansas CURE has been around for quite some time...since 1996 to be exact. Since that time, the chapter has been a viable advocate for positive change in prison and criminal justice reform here in Arkansas.

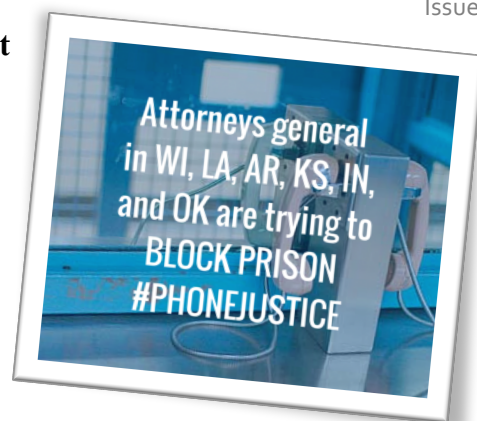
CURE... is an all-volunteer membership organization.  
No salary, No big office...  
Just commitment & passion.

Working hard to provide our members with the information and tools necessary to help them understand the criminal justice system and to advocate for positive change.

If you like this newsletter, do share. If you're interested in joining Arkansas CURE, please write us for more information today!

## A group of Attorney's Generals just can't get their hands out of prisoner family pockets. Arkansas' own...is one of them!!

On October 22, 2015 the Federal Communications Commission voted to cap the rates and fees companies charge those families struggling to keep in touch with incarcerated relatives by phone.



Now, attorneys general in several states are joining with phone companies to try to block this positive step towards criminal justice reform.

Nation Inside has started an online petition letter campaign, sending a letter to several states attorneys generals. Leslie Rutledge will receive them from Arkansas citizens. This petition has been shared via email and several social media sites in hopes to send a strong message to Rutledge, respectfully asking her to withdraw her support for a lawsuit against the FCC. With this letter we are urging Rutledge to consider the thousands of families with loved ones and children who have parents in prison, all whose relationships benefit from connecting through a simple phone call.

The FCC's new rules will establish fair guidelines for an industry that has far too long taken advantage of a captive population and their families.

## Arkansas Prisoners remain in Private-4-Profit Prison...

.....  
**Arkansas Prisoners remain in Private-4-Profit Prison in Bowie Texas: Shipping Arkansas Prisoners Out-of-State Is (STILL) A Bad Idea**



What was 'billed' as a 'temporary move' of 200 men from Arkansas State Prisons to relieve overcrowding is now over a year later and 335 Arkansas Male Prisoners are housed in the Private-4-Profit Prison at Bowie, Texas.

In October 2014 AR-CURE along with other advocates told our public officials that, 'Shipping Arkansas imprisoned citizens to out-of-state Private-4-Profit Prisons was NOT a good idea. Shipping Arkansas citizens across state lines as a 'quick-fix' to prison overcrowding is an abhorrent practice of treating incarcerated men and women like commodities and our state's dangerous reliance on incarceration.

Shipping incarcerated people across state lines into for-profit prisons rather than prioritizing reforms that would reduce the number of people behind bars exemplifies our state's dangerous reliance on incarceration, particularly incarceration for profit. This costly tactic, which fails to address the root causes of mass incarceration, severely diminishes prisoners' ties to family and

community while private prison companies profit handsomely.

Proponents of this plan may characterize it as a temporary arrangement, but the experience of other states shows that these arrangements generally become permanent. The four states currently shipping prisoners out-of-state have been doing so for between seven and 18 years.

There are cost effective, common-sense alternatives to this idea that will keep Arkansas safe, represent a better use of taxpayer money, and avoid making things even more difficult for incarcerated Arkansas citizens and their families.'

AR-CURE takes no satisfaction that: We told you so!

.....

## RESOURCES FOR YOU

**Arkansas Companies That Hire Felons**[Goodwill](#)[LORAM](#)[Tyson](#)[Greater Little Rock Transportation Services](#)[Right Turn Recruiting](#)[Aerotek](#)[Net-Temp](#)[WorkSource](#)[Hughes Agency](#)[TEC Staffing](#)[Employment Solutions](#)[Hancock Staffing](#)[Marriott](#)[SERVICE Group 360 inc.](#)[Salvation Army](#)[Avon](#)[Cintas](#)

This list is a brief list from a quick google search... but it's a starting point for companies to check into when you start searching for employment.

NOW...There are obvious restrictions and guidelines for each of these companies.... BUT....It's certainly worth stating that there ARE JOBS out here when you start preparing for release. Don't give up hope and think that no one will hire you or work with your record and your past.

**NEW LAW can help suspended drivers get license back and keep money.**

A new law for those battling extensive fees for having a suspended license, ACT 1193, is a law that is valid from Jan 1, 2016 to June 30, 2016. The law states that if a person's driving privileges have been suspended or revoked "solely as a result of outstanding driver's license reinstatement fees," the state will only collect a reinstatement fee of \$100. That payment will cover all administrative costs and responsibilities. The law would "clear the hurdle" to allow people with suspended licenses the ability to drive with a license. The law also states if the person can prove to have successfully completed a rehabilitation program of some sort (i.e. a court ordered diversion program, drug court program, probation, etc.), they can be one payment away from being debt-free.

**Arkansas has historically said, "Thank God for Mississippi"**

A common adage particularly used in the South to discuss rankings of U.S. states. The state of Mississippi stereotypically ranks near or at the bottom of various rankings. Other states that rank near the bottom frequently proclaim, "Thank God for Mississippi," sparing them of the shame of finishing in last place.

Arkansas would do well to say "Thank God for Mississippi" *but not* in its traditional refrain, at least in reference to criminal justice reform.

In 2011, Arkansas chose to use a "justice reinvestment" approach to address the state's criminal justice challenges. A data-driven approach to reduce corrections spending and reinvest savings in strategies that decrease recidivism and increase public safety.

- ✓ Arkansas has the fastest growing prison population in the country. A 22% increase in the prison population between 2012 -2014.
- ✓ Arkansas's violent crime rate has decreased by 4% while property crime decreased by 17% between 2012 – 2014.
- ✓ Arkansas incarceration rate is increasing disproportionately to a declining crime rate.
- ✓ In surrounding states, crime rates and incarceration rates are decreasing at a faster rate than in Arkansas.
- ✓ By 2014 Prison and Parole revocations skyrocketed 300%, although the number of arrests had not increased. (this means that 1 in every 105 adults in Arkansas was on parole supervision that year).
- ✓ Between 2004 and 2015, state spending on corrections increased 68 percent, from \$305.4 million to \$512.2 million.
- ✓ Corrections currently costs more than \$.5 Billion taxpayer dollars annually
- ✓ Projected growth of corrections will require an additional \$1.3 billion over the next 10 years (that's a conservative \$6.3 BILLION in 10 years)
- ✓ Arkansas has a population of 2.9 million people. Our prison population is 18,877 men and women (size of Maumelle, AR).
- ✓ There are 88,196 Arkansas citizens under Criminal Justice Control, 18,877 In Prison, 15,552 In ACC, 23,452 On Parole, 30,315 On Probation.<sup>1</sup> (the 2<sup>nd</sup> largest city in AR., after Little Rock and before Fort Smith 86,209)

Two years ago, Mississippi legislators agreed on a smart, principled plan to transform the state's troubled criminal justice system.

- ✓ In 2012 Mississippi had the nation's second-highest imprisonment rate.
- ✓ The incarcerated population had surged 300 percent between 1983 and 2013 to more than 22,400 inmates.
- ✓ Taxpayers faced the burden of spending another \$266 million over the next 10 years to accommodate still more prison growth.
- ✓ Almost a third of nonviolent offenders released from prison were reconvicted within three years.
- ✓ The system was failing.

Mississippi's bold actions are bearing fruit. With the implementation of evidence-based strategies, more offenders are completing probation crime-free, and the number sent back to prison for not following the rules has dropped dramatically. For residents of Mississippi, the dividends of all this are taxpayer savings, an estimated \$266 million in averted prison costs over 10 years, more accountability, and a slowing of the revolving prison doors — now Washington and the nation are paying attention.

Even Congress is taking up reforms pioneered in states like Mississippi. The Senate's Sentencing Reform and Corrections Act, coupled with the House's own package of bills, demonstrate the hunger Americans across the country have for criminal justice reform.

Even though, Arkansas and Mississippi began criminal justice reform at about the same time and even used some identical policies and concepts. The success of Mississippi and the failure of Arkansas is apparently in leadership and commitment.

You decide which of these two state is serious about criminal justice reform?

*But Wait...*  
**THERE'S MORE!**

**AR-CURE** was pleased to be a part of arranging to have four former Arkansas Department of Correction inmates address the Legislative Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force. They addresses "How they were treated while and after they were incarcerated". The Legislative Criminal Justice Oversight Task Force has been meeting monthly for many months hearing from numerous experts about the Arkansas Criminal Justice System. However, the presentation made by these 'true experts' who have lived the experience of having lost their freedom over a combined number of decades of incarceration was expressed from a first hand point of view for the first time since the Task Force began its meetings.

### Oh...and...BTW...

Despite court stay, Mississippi sets new phone rates in accordance with FCC order

Back in 2015, the FCC concluded that 11 cents was a reasonable maximum rate for prisons to charge. This price limit was set to go into effect before the federal appeals court put certain sections of the FCC's order on hold. Mississippi opted to go ahead with a rate of 11 cents voluntarily.

What prompted the steep decrease in Mississippi? Commissioner Marshall Fisher expresses concern for the families who pay a high price to speak to their loved ones: "We receive constant complaints from inmate family members and others regarding the high cost for phone service...This decision will significantly reduce expenses to the families." It looks like Mississippi has turned over a new leaf. The last head of the Mississippi prison system left a very different mark on telephone history. Former Commissioner Christopher B. Epps pled guilty last year to charges stemming from his role in a bribery scandal in which he accepted kickbacks from consultants of private companies, including phone giant Global Tel-Link, in exchange for awarding DOC contracts.

Whatever its motivations are for slashing its rates, Mississippi made an important point. Mississippi, without stalling or protesting, just proved that the FCC's rate caps are workable after all.

## JOIN ARKANSAS CURE!

Want to stay informed about what's going on in Arkansas? Join today!

Please provide the following information:

Name/#, Address, City, State, Zip

Annual Dues

Indigent Incarcerated Citizens: Fee waived.

Incarcerated Citizens: \$3.00 (stamps/stamped envelopes accepted)

Individual/Family: \$12.00

Individual Benefactor: No limit or set fee on donation amount.

Supporting Organization: No limit or set fee on donation amount.

Arkansas CURE  
PO BOX 11554  
Conway, AR 72034

501-519-0064  
FAX: 501-470-9039

[rehab4justice@yahoo.com](mailto:rehab4justice@yahoo.com)

Find us on the Web: [www.arkansascure.org](http://www.arkansascure.org)

Join Arkansas CURE on Facebook

**THANKS**

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!!**

## The ABC's of Arkansas CURE

Alternatives to imprisonment

Ban the Box

Criminal Justice Reform

Do Away with the Death Penalty

End Registries

Family Education and Integration

Good time credit

Human Rights

Information and Education

Job Training and Skill Development

Know Your Rights

Legislative Reforms

Medical and Mental Health

Diagnosis and Treatment

Newsletter

Oversight for improvement within the system

Public Perception

Quality Rehabilitation Programs

Restorative Justice

Stop the use of Solitary Confinement

Telephone Cost Fairness

Unite Community Resources

Voting Rights

Well-being of the elderly

eXamine and Duplicate

Successful Programs

Youth Private Prison Elimination

Zero Life and Life without Parole Sentencing

\*\*\*\*\*