

Final Essay for Jail and Chaplaincy

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Through decades of stability from the 1920s to the early 1970s, incarceration in the United States has more than quadrupled in the past years. According to National Research Council 2014 the growth of incarceration in the United States Prisons System are quickly increasing in population. Their work gives research on the analyses of, the proximate causes of the dramatic rise in the prison population and the societal dynamics that supported those proximate causes. The study identifies that the incarceration was high in the local public safety as well as in the state prison system. The families and communities for which the people come from have high crime issues. Once they return to the area or city they lived, they sometimes fall back into the same habits that got them arrested or they develop new habits which keeps them in the court system.

According to the national Academies Press, it states from 1973 to 2009, the state and federal prison populations that are the main focus of the study rose steadily, from about 200,000 to 1.5 million, declining slightly in the following four years. It was stated that men and women serving prison time for felonies, another 700,000 are held daily in local jails. The federal prison system stills continues to expand, while the state incarceration rate has declined. It's stated between 2006 – 2011, more than half the states reduce their prison populations, and in 10 states the number of people incarcerated fell by 10 percent more.

According to American Progress, the federal judiciary often focus on the substance of decisions made—which side wins and which side loses—and rightly so. These individual opinions are frequently of incredible importance, not just to the parties involved but in shaping the law more broadly. I feel that this focus on substantive decisions has obscured deeper structural factors at play in the nation’s federal judiciary. Often structural problems—such as lack of judicial diversity, ideologue judges, and lack of judicial accountability—undercut the courts’ legitimacy and have tangible negative effects on judicial decision-making. I feel that instead of protecting everyday Americans by serving as a check on abuses of power, too often the federal courts have become a tool for carrying out the agendas of special interests and corporations. This method reminds me of the T.V. Show “ Queen Sugar” where the family Sugar Cane Business is being threaten by a large company and the state to build a large prison in the city. They are telling the community about the creation of jobs and taxes for the area, but behind the scene people are lining their pockets and planning to lock up the poor community.

As we know structural problems with the judiciary have always existed to varying degrees. But they have been exacerbated in recent years due to an ongoing campaign by conservatives to take control of the federal courts, often through procedural changes that have significant effects but garner little public attention.

As a result the problem has now reached a crisis point. It’s proven that

Conservatives have shown a willingness to abandon any and all norms to undermine the judicial nominations process and pack the courts with judges who will help them realize political goals they cannot achieve through the political process according to American Progress reports. To me it is said that judges have proven more than willing to carry out the task, supporting the most specious of legal claims in order to skew the system in favor of conservative interests and even prevent many Americans from accessing the courts at all.

According to Economic Policy Institute as many as one in ten African American students has an incarcerated parent. At least one in four has a parent who is or has been incarcerated. The discriminatory incarceration of African American parents is an important cause of their children's lowered performance, especially in schools where the trauma of parental incarceration is concentrated.(EPI) In this report, we review studies from many disciplines showing that parental incarceration leads to an array of cognitive and non-cognitive outcomes known to affect children's performance in school, and we conclude that our criminal justice system makes an important contribution to the racial achievement gap. Children who have parents in jail face more issues than more people understand. These issues lead to failure in the classroom, crime in the community, and a higher rate of teen pregnancy.

According to Economic Policy Institute, research in criminal justice, health, sociology, epidemiology, and economics demonstrates that when parents are incarcerated, children do worse across cognitive and non-cognitive outcome measures.

Key findings include: [epi.org]

- An African American child is six times as likely as a white child to have or have had an incarcerated parent. A growing share of African Americans have been arrested for drug crimes, yet African Americans are no more likely than whites to sell or use drugs.
- Independent of other social and economic characteristics, children of incarcerated parents are more likely to:
 - drop out of school
 - develop learning disabilities, including attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)
 - misbehave in school
 - suffer from migraines, asthma, high cholesterol, depression, anxiety, post-traumatic stress disorder, and homelessness

www.epi.org

From a chaplains view the system is so out of order and does not look at proper reformation of inmates. They care more about making money and filling the cells than they do about restoring the lives of men and women. We are in need of electing people into office who care and are concern about everyone. We must understand that people make mistakes and some crimes should not involve a forever sentence to jail. The prison systems are often designed to make big money and line the pockets of corrupt people. Chaplains are needed to make life a little better for inmates. We can give them hope, care, and concern.

Reference

The National Academics Press <http://www.Americanprogress.org>

Economic Policy Institute www.epi.org