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JUNE 2006

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The Community Alliance is an independent voice for workers and progressive groups in the Central San Joaquin Valley. The goal of this monthly newspaper is to build a powerful progressive movement that will support social, environmental, & economic justice; immigrant rights; and a living wage for all working people. We seek to expose social and political injustices and to link the diverse network of activists working in our community.

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Letter to the Editor

HR4437 and the current anti-immigration issues are not just issues for the Latino/a communities. They must also be an issue for the other communities of color such as Asians, Blacks, Muslims and Arabs since if this type of legislation is passed it will be used against all people of color.

It should also be an issue for the middle-class white progressive community. First, the progressive community should stand up to such legislation just because it is the right thing to do if they believe in social justice. Second, they must consider that if immigrants are going to be considered felons and put in prison who is going to pay the price for new prisons, prison guards and the upkeep of the new large community of immigrant felons if not the middle-class tax payer. Also it will be the middle-class who could be arrested as a felon for just employing an undocumented gardener, housekeeper, nanny, etc. It could even cover those who stand up for and help the oppressed. That means you and me.

All of us must stand up to the current wave of anti-immigrant

sentiment, not just those from across our southern border. It is just the right thing to do for all of us.

Vickie Fouts

////////////////////////////////////

Dear Editor

When I was a teenager in the 1960's, dabbling in politics, my mom and dad left the Democratic party. They'd had enough of street protests and flag burnings, and made for the shores of the party of Eisenhower and Nixon. They'd seen Democrats try to solve all problems by throwing away money, but government, they reasoned, should conserve. They were Conservatives. They didn't like the idea of government being in debt, and were aghast at this new thing called a "trade deficit." The 1994 "Republican Revolution" would've especially thrilled them. Small government and Welfare limits would've been right up their alley.

But they were true Conservatives. Yes, keep government out of your pocketbook, but also out of unnecessary wars, your

bedroom, and your telephone records. If they were alive today, they'd be appalled at the number of Republican congressmembers under investigation for corruption. They'd have just called it stealing. They would have found the Republicans' trillion-dollar boondoggle in Iraq just as offensive as the useless Democrat-led government agencies of their own day. And the idea that a Republican President would move America from a surplus to this yawning, endless deficit would've made them furious. After all, isn't that what "tax and spend" Democrats did? But Democratic spending was drop in the bucket compared to current Republican pilfering. No wonder commentators like George Will and have long claimed that Bush and the current Republican crop, with their mounting legal bills, are not Conservatives at all.

Me, I'm a flaming liberal, a bit homeless in the current climate, but if my parents were alive, they'd feel just as adrift in today's "Party of Abe Lincoln."

Lawrence Mings

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This Area is Under Surveillance

By Mike Rhodes

Fresno is on the verge of installing and implementing one of the most sophisticated video surveillance systems in the country. Fresno Police Department Captain Al Maroney says "I hope to have at least a 'seed' system operational before the end of calendar year 2006." The system Maroney is talking about would vastly increase video surveillance in this community with at least 256 cameras and the ability to connect with private sector cameras in locations like River Park, Fashion Fair, convenience stores, and other local businesses. A large part of the funding for this project will come from a grant from the Department of Homeland Security, administered by the County of Fresno.

The Fresno Police Department (FPD) plans to spend over a million dollars in the first phase of the project. Their vision is to have state of the art high resolution cameras interconnected with video surveillance cameras in businesses all fed into a central downtown location. When a crime takes place and a

"not a crime deterrent."

Deirdre K. Mulligan, Director of the Samuelson Law (Technology & Public Policy Clinic) at the UC Berkeley's Boalt Hall, is not entirely opposed to utilizing the technology. Mulligan says "Video Surveillance Technology, accompanied by appropriate policies, and installed after a thorough consideration of whether the technology is well suited to addressing the problem and capable of doing so in a manner that is fiscally sound and consistent with protections for civil liberties and civil rights may be a useful tool in a very limited set of circumstances." Mulligan continues, "Unfortunately, cities like Fresno are adopting surveillance systems without any form of public oversight and little attention to whether the technology is likely to address the problem it's being thrown at."

The Fresno Police Department has already begun the permanent installation of video cameras at several locations. This has been done without a community dialog about the need for the equipment or a discussion about alternatives that might be available. Mulligan says "It is unconscionable to adopt a system like this without public review and without policies to protect the rights of citizens. Policies to protect individual rights, and limit and monitor system use must be in place to guide the design, implementation, use and oversight of the system."

The FPD does not have a policy manual that would determine who has access to the recorded images, how long the images are stored, prevent racial profiling, or other abuses of the system. The FPD is not alone. Fresno City Hall, which has 15 cameras watching people at City Hall does not have a policy either. Brian Terhaar, Fresno City Hall Site Security Supervisor, who gave me a tour of their system says his training includes telling operators to "imagine your grandmother is standing over your shoulder." In other words, don't use the pan, tilt, and zoom features to zero in on attractive members of

the opposite sex.

The Fresno Unified School District (FUSD) has over 100 cameras on at least 15 campuses and they don't have a policy manual to protect students from the misuse of the video surveillance equipment either. Without guidelines for the use of video sur-



Big Brother is watching. This is one of the cameras at the Manchester Center bus stop. All photos by Mike Rhodes.

veillance equipment at FUSD, it is unclear whether anyone could be held accountable and disciplined if they misused the equipment.

As the technological capabilities for video surveillance expands it will become even more important to have guidelines. Will Fresno City Hall, FUSD, or the FPD be allowed to buy and install video surveillance equipment that can look for weapons under your clothes? How about equipment that will allow the police to see through the walls of your house? There is biometric software that looks for suspicious patterns of behavior. This biometric technology will also identify "persons of interest" that the police are looking for. Should public agencies be allowed to use this technology, just because it is available and could aid in crime prevention? A policy manual, written with public input, would answer these questions.

Without safeguards in place, problems can and do occur. For example, in Washington DC, a police employee monitoring video surveillance cameras, recorded video of a man entering a gay bar. Using police computers, the employee researched the licence number of the car the man was driving and used the information to extort money from him. In London an operator was caught selling voyeuristic videos from the cameras he was monitoring.

According to Deirdre Mulligan "At the very least the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) should be requiring localities using DHS money to install and deploy these systems to complete a 'Privacy Impact Assessment' as federal agencies must when adopting new systems to handle personal information. The lack of transparency about new police and intelligence systems and tactics, combined with a lack of careful consideration of the utility and costs of the systems is a recipe for fiscal irresponsibility and substantial incursions on individual rights and democratic values."

With the crime rate going down, social services being cut back, some Fresnoans wonder if this is the most effective use of public money. Would increasing the number of officers on the street be more successful in preventing crime than

Continued on page 4



Fresno Police Department Captain Al Maroney and Police Chief Jerry Dyer presented the proposal for increasing video surveillance to the City Council in January 2006. The title of their Power Point presentation was "Video Policing Project, Combining Technology with Trust."

911 call is received a camera in the area of the crime will be put on alert. The signal from that camera will be sent directly to squad cars in the crime scene area. The camera can be zoomed in and focused on the activity taking place. The responding officer can see, in real time, what lies ahead. Meanwhile, the entire incident is being recorded on a hard drive that stores the information at police headquarters.

The system the FPD wants to purchase is called Endura and is being manufactured by Pelco, one of the largest manufacturers of video surveillance equipment in the world. Pelco's world headquarters are located in Clovis. The pilot cameras in this system are currently being installed. You can see them at the Fresno Area Express bus hub at Manchester Center. Maroney is using this installation to work the bugs out of the system. The first complete system will likely be in the Tower District and downtown Fresno.

If Fresno gets the Endura system, it will be only the second installation of this technologically advanced system in the US. The first Endura system was installed in New York City. The system has the capacity to network hundreds of analog cameras, convert the video to a digital signal, and store the data for future use. Maroney says "we are not planning on having someone watching each of these monitors for a crime in progress." The police will utilize the cameras if there is a crime in progress, like in the case of a 911 call, but most of the time they will save the video and only retrieve it if there is a criminal investigation.

But, the technology has its critics. The American Civil Liberties Union is opposed to video surveillance and doesn't believe the technology has a place in our society. Mark Schlosberg, police policy director of the ACLU in Northern California, says "Public video surveillance systems are incredibly intrusive and sacrifice valuable privacy rights without any improvement in public safety. Study after study shows that blanketing large areas with surveillance cameras does not reduce crime. Scarce tax dollars are better spent on community policing programs rather than expensive big brother schemes." Studies in Europe, where video surveillance technology is widely used, seem to back up Schlosberg's contention that it does not stop crime. A 2005 British study showed video surveillance didn't reduce crime or make people feel safer. A BBC article about that study is available here: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/leicestershire/4294693.stm> . An earlier study (see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk/2192911.stm>) also showed that video surveillance is

"They that can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."
Benjamin Franklin



This camera is monitoring activity at the Manchester Center bus stop in Fresno. It is being used to test the hardware and software in preparation for a huge video surveillance project in this community.

video surveillance? In a recent discussion about this issue on a Tower District listserv several writers said they were uncomfortable with the proposal to be monitored when they were in the area. One writer asked why there weren't more bicycle patrols and officers in the neighborhood on foot. Other writers proposed boycotting the Tower District if the video surveillance cameras were installed.

Catherine Campbell, a local civil rights attorney and one of the writers on the Tower District listserv, wrote that the negative reaction to video surveillance cameras "is an overreaction borne of our experience of hyper-illegal surveillance by the FBI and other law enforcement agencies over the years. Many stores have video cameras to help them protect their businesses and we hardly notice it and are grateful they were there when they help in the apprehension of someone who has stolen property or injured someone." She continued, "The public sidewalks are free space for us and for the police too; we don't have a right to be private when we're walking the street, it's simply not conduct that is protected. If the cameras came into our homes, that would be an entirely different issue but the FPD is not proposing that."

While Catherine Campbell and Captain Maroney seem to agree that the public have few privacy rights in public spaces, not everyone thinks that is true. A report, just released by The Constitution Project, says that "Privacy and anonymity rights are clearly imperiled by public video surveillance systems, if misused. Cameras could routinely capture footage of individuals engaging in activities in which most expect anonymity, such as entering an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, a psychiatrist's office, or the headquarters of a fringe religious or cultural group. Similarly, cameras might capture things most people would seek to keep private, such as the label on a vial purchased at a drug store or an intimate conversation between two family members on a stroll."

Freedom of speech and association could also be at risk. If video surveillance cameras, monitored by armed government agents, are able to keep a record of who you talk to, what you say, and what you read, it could have a "chilling" effect on your free speech rights.

In weighing the balance between privacy rights and the desire for greater security, Campbell concludes "Personal discomfort with police surveillance of this sort is warranted, however, not because it violates our rights but because it tells us that the police cannot handle our streets by being personally present. Video surveillance is an alienating form of protection, one that

creates an 'us vs. them' mentality and is a very poor substitute for the community presence of known and respected officers."

In January 2006 captain Al Maroney and police chief Jerry Dyer made a presentation about the video surveillance project before the Fresno City Council. Council president Jerry Duncan introduced the presentation by saying that the purpose of the hearing was to bring the council up to speed on the project. Duncan made it clear that there was no opportunity at the January meeting for public comment on this issue. Duncan said "It is my expectation that in the near future we will have a more formal process for adoption and action and at that point we will hopefully get feedback from the public from those who think this is a good idea and those who think it is not a good idea." That public hearing has now been scheduled - it will take place on Wednesday, June 14th at 6 PM at Bullard High School.

In an email to me about this hearing, Duncan wrote "We are having our budget hearings outside of City Hall this year, in the evenings, to make it easier for people to attend if they are interested. During that meeting FPD will present their plan for any dollars requested in the new budget (including surveillance cameras) and there will be a chance for the public to speak and the Council to ask questions. So the budget process is very much a public hearing and since that is the time funding is requested, a very appropriate venue."

With the FPD moving forward with installing and testing surveillance equipment, phase one of the project scheduled for completion by the end of the year, and a June 14th meeting

about this issue before the City Council, the public will have to get engaged if they have concerns and want to have input into the process.

For more information about video surveillance, contact:

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1025 Vermont Avenue, NW
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202 580-6920
info@constitutionproject.org
www.constitutionproject.org

American Civil Liberties Union, Northern California
1663 Mission Street - Suite 460
San Francisco CA 94103
415 621-2493
<http://www.aclunc.org/>

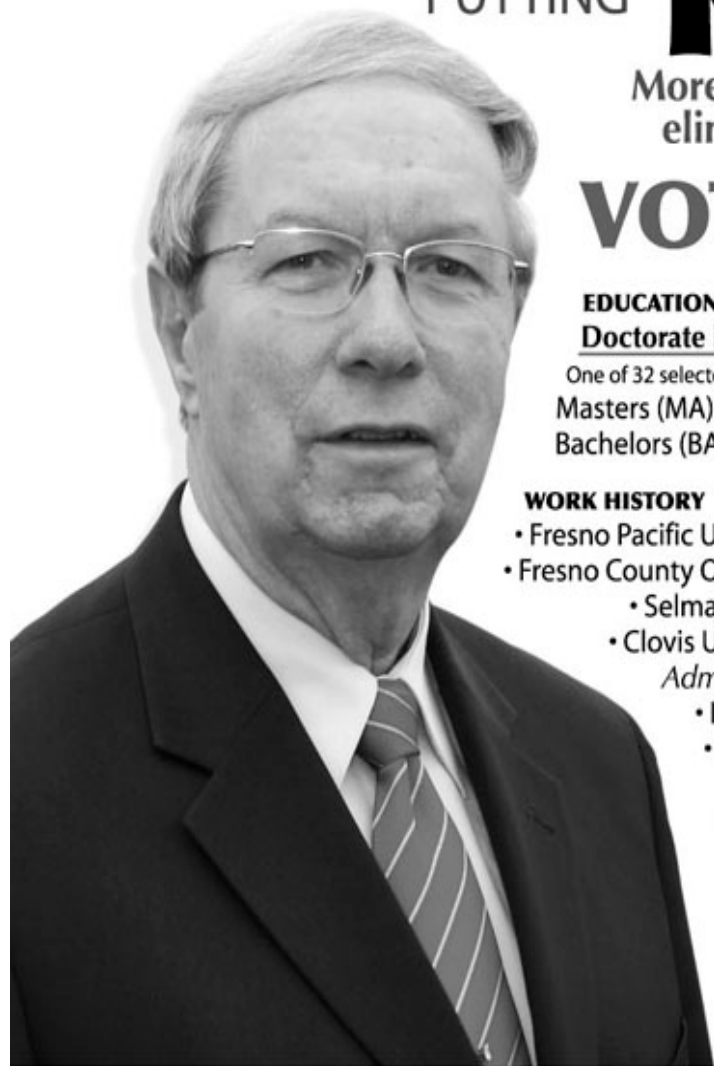
Wednesday, June 14 6 PM

The Fresno Police Department's video surveillance proposal will be discussed at a meeting which will be held at Bullard High School, 5445 N Palm. The public will have the opportunity to comment on the proposal at this meeting.

Connecting the Dots... and Follow the Money

Why is mayor Alan Autry pushing for Fresno to be the second city in the nation, right after New York City, to get the most sophisticated video surveillance system on the market? Could it be because fellow Republican and one of President Bush's major backers is David McDonald? McDonald is the president of Pelco, which is one of the worlds largest manufacturers of video surveillance equipment and one of the largest private employers in this area. In a major public relations campaign to connect Pelco to the events of 9-11, national security, and the need for video surveillance, the company has constructed a major memorial at their world headquarters in Clovis. Pelco has paid for hundreds of New York fireman, policemen, and their families to visit the memorial. Even New York City mayor Rudolph Giuliani visited Pelco and had his picture taken with Autry and McDonald.

With millions of dollars of Homeland Security money being given to law enforcement it is not surprising that Fresno, the hotbed of terrorism that it is, would get its fair share of this money. It is the perfect storm - you have the Fresno Police Department who wants new high tech toys, the right wing that wants to convince everyone to be scared of each other, Republicans with close connections to the Bush administration, and a local industrialist who is making money on fear and the war against terrorism. McDonald is a war profiteer, much like Haliburton is in Iraq, just on a local scale.



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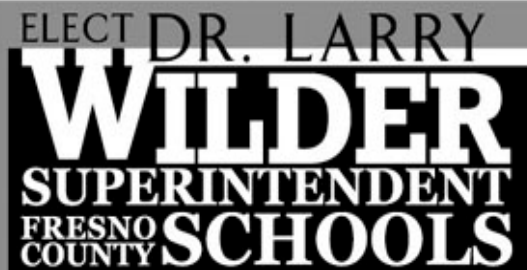
Bachelors (BA) in English from Cascade College, Portland, Oregon

WORK HISTORY

- Fresno Pacific University – Director, Administrative Services
- Fresno County Office of Education – Assistant Superintendent 19 years
 - Selma Unified School District – 4 years as Assistant Superintendent of Personnel and Curriculum
 - Clovis Unified School District – 6 years total, Learning Director, Coordinator of Special Projects, Administrator of Personnel
 - Immanuel High School – 5 years Superintendent/Principal, Teacher
 - Reedley City Council Member 16 years – Mayor for 10 years – balanced budget every year

HONORS

- Crown Zellerbach Scholarship Winner, Who's Who Among Students in California,
- Cum Laude Graduate, Who's Who in California,
- 1993 Reedley Man of the Year
- Life Member Fresno State Alumni Assoc.
- Member of Bulldog Foundation
- Fresno State President's Advisory Commission
- and more.



The Community Alliance Political Endorsement Grid - June 2006	Central Valley Progressive PAC	Fresno, Madera, Tulare, Kings Central Labor Council	Service Employees International Union - United Healthcare Workers	Fresno Democratic Women's Club	Fresno Stonewall Democrats	Black Political Council	National Women's Political Caucus	Fresno Teachers Association	California School Employees Association
Fresno County Board of Supervisors District 4	Cynthia Gonzalez	Cynthia Gonzalez	Cynthia Gonzalez	Cynthia Gonzalez	Cynthia Gonzalez	Cynthia Gonzalez	Cynthia Gonzalez		
Fresno City Council District 1	Charles "Chuck" Riojas	Charles "Chuck" Riojas	Charles "Chuck" Riojas		Charles "Chuck" Riojas	Blong Xiong			
Fresno City Council District 3	Cynthia Sterling	Cynthia Sterling	Cynthia Sterling		Cynthia Sterling	Cynthia Sterling	Cynthia Sterling		
Fresno County Sheriff	Margaret Mims	Colleen Mestas	Colleen Mestas	Margaret Mims	Margaret Mims	Colleen Mestas	Margaret Mims		
Fresno County Coroner/Public Administrator	Loralee Cervantes		Loralee Cervantes			David Hadden	Loralee Cervantes		
Superintendent of Schools, County of Fresno		Larry Wilder	Larry Wilder			Larry Wilder		Larry Wilder	Larry Wilder

Vote **NO** on Measure A

By John Crockford

Measure A - City of Fresno Charter Amendment: This measure will repeal Section 1504 of the Charter of the City of Fresno which was adopted by the voters in 1993 as part of the City's change to a Mayor-Council form of government. Under Charter Section 1504, the City Council membership will increase from seven to nine when the population for the City of Fresno reaches 540,000 - estimated to occur in approximately 8 years.

An increase in the number of City Council members will preserve the ratio of one Council member per 60,000 residents. If Measure A is adopted, City Council members will be representing an ever-increasing number of residents resulting in less effective representation and a reduction in the accountability of politicians to the people. A vote for Measure A is a vote against the democratic principle of proportional representation. The Peace and Freedom Party of Fresno County recommends that you vote NO on Measure A.

For more information about the upcoming elections - including candidates' responses to questions from the Peace and Freedom Party - visit the San Joaquin Valley Peace and Freedom Party website at <http://peaceandfreedom-sjv.org>

John Crockford is the Peace and Freedom Party candidate for the 29th State Assembly District.

HOWARD'S HOPEFULS

Here are my voting recommendations for contested races in the June 6, 2006 primary election. Most are clear choices, a few are close calls. I hope you find this list helpful. Thank you and please vote!

Howard K. Watkins
Fresno, CA

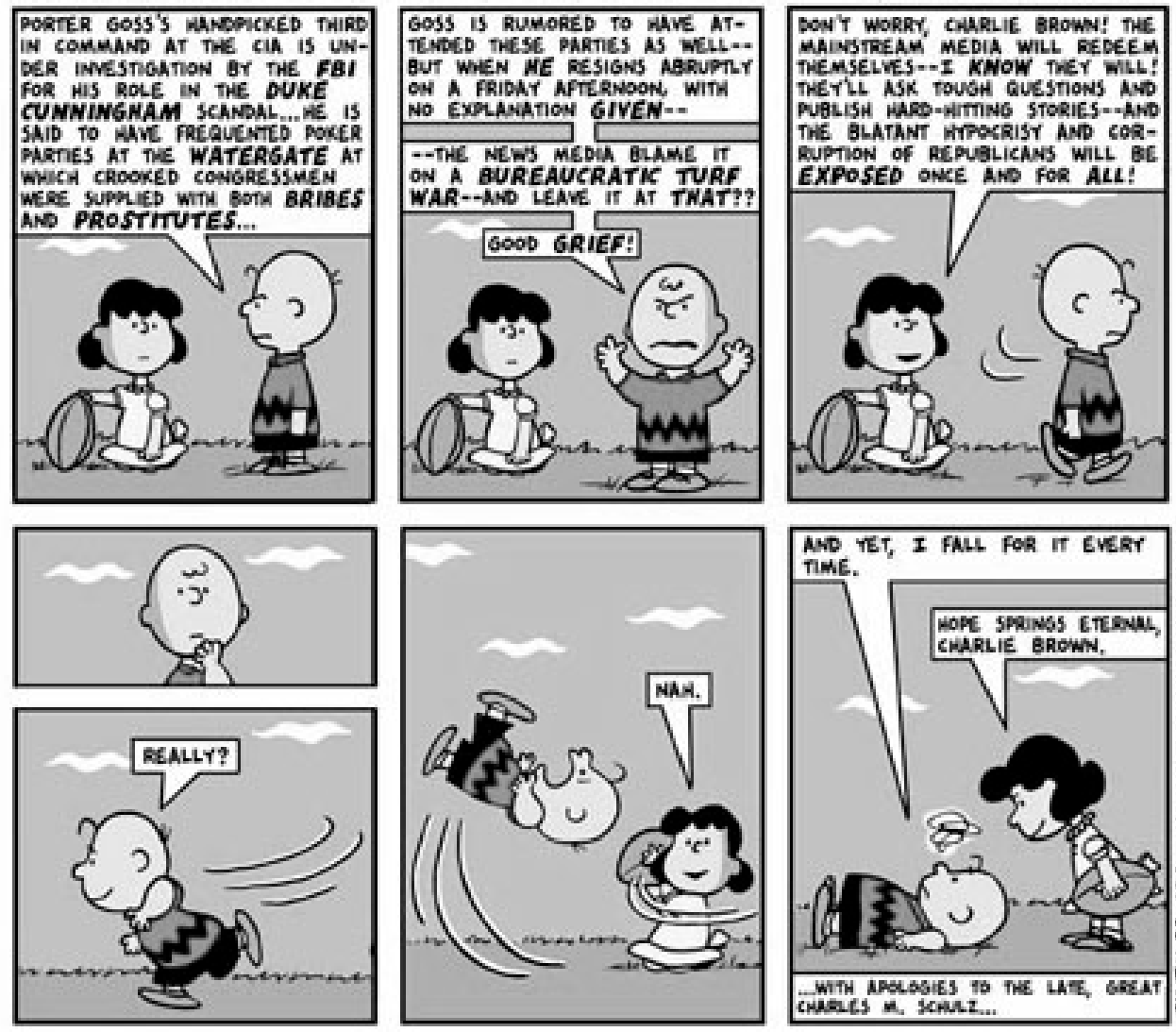
- STATE**
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 - Lieutenant Governor..... SPEIER
 - Secretary of State..... BOWEN
 - Controller DUNN
 - Treasurer LOCKYER
 - Attorney General DELGADILLO
 - Insurance Commissioner..... BUSTAMANTE
 - State Board of Equalization #2..... OPEN
 - State Supt. Of Public Instr.O'CONNELL
 - STATE PROPOSITIONS YES on 81 + 82
 - FEDERAL**
 - US Senator FEINSTEIN
 - FRESNO COUNTY**
 - Public Administrator/Coroner CERVANTES
 - Sheriff MIMS
 - Supt. of County Schools WILDER
 - Board of Supervisors #4 GONZALEZ
 - CITY OF FRESNO**
 - City Council District #1 RIOJAS
 - City Council District #3 STERLING
 - City Measure A YES

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Prison Illiteracy: Addressing the Problem

By Boston Woodard

Prison illiteracy is a problem of tremendous proportions with ramifications for the entire nation. According to some calculations, illiteracy in American prisons is as high as 75%—about three times higher than the level of the general population. Most educators do not know about it, and most corrections professionals are unprepared to deal with it. Most politicians do not acknowledge that prison illiteracy is a problem and that most taxpayers resent having to pay for prison education.

A research study by the Friends Committee on Legislation showed, however, that addressing this problem is a proven and cost-effective way of slowing the rising tide of crime in the United States.

Recently, the California Department of Corrections (CDC) changed its title to the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR). The CDCR has been making a lot of noise that it will finally focus on rehabilitating prisoners as opposed to the punishment and retribution it has been laying on its wards for decades. Most prisoners understand that the new focus on rehabilitation was enacted as a direct result of pressure on the department's ineffective punitive policies.

Since there is a strong correlation between criminal behavior and educational insufficiency, greater literacy can be one way out of criminality. The right kind of education in prison has been shown to reduce recidivism. This suggests that participation in prison literacy programs increases prisoners' chances of staying on the outside and living a more satisfying, profitable life after they have been released, thus cutting back on the tremendous waste of human potential fostered by our current prison system. By reducing the prisoner population, prison literacy programs can reduce long-term prison costs, thus lightening the taxpayers' financial load and building a stronger tax base.

Insights on the Problem

A direct relationship exists between insufficient literacy and unsocial, often criminal, behavior. Education is a proven catalyst for change, and a majority of studies report a correlation between greater education and lower recidivism (instruction is particularly successful with juvenile prisoners). How the offender thinks is associated with his or her criminal behavior and thus with his or her rehabilitation. Consequently, programs that use cognitive training were found to be most effective in reducing recidivism because they encourage critical thinking on the larger issues of literacy, self, life, and society.

Success in prison literacy programs, however, should not just be measured in lower levels of recidivism. Education also has a socializing effect on many prisoners' personalities. Better educated prisoners tend to be more tractable, thereby making prison life more bearable for all involved. Prison literacy programs are cost-effective. Fewer offenders who have participated in prison literacy programs recidivate, thus slowing the rise in prison population and costs. The country benefits as well from the earning power of those who go on to become responsible, taxpaying citizens. Furthermore, prison industries that incor-

porate workplace literacy programs can pay for themselves and even turn a profit, as well as teach prisoners skills that will be in demand after their release from prison.

To be rehabilitative, correctional education must (a) be responsive to the particular learning needs of the offender; (b) include content that focuses specifically on changing criminal values, beliefs, and attitudes; and (c) integrate its activities with other correctional initiatives. The content of successful prison literacy programs must provide skills and information needed by prisoners on their return to society. Basic skills development should be integrated with life skills development.

The educational paradigm for prison literacy programs includes (a) social education, (b) moral education, (c) the experience of democracy (creating a sense of social responsibility), (d) humanities education (learning the traditions, heritage, and norms of society), (e) a cognitive moral approach (stimulating the prisoner's own efforts to identify and correct those errors in thinking that cause criminal behavior), and (f) teaching methods geared toward adults, not children. A curriculum needs to be developed for prisons that blends basic academic skills with material that stimulates social learning.

Studies also point toward the need to recognize that specific groups in prison have particular needs, such as an alternative education program for the learning disabled or an ESL (English as a second language) program for non-English-speaking prisoners. Prisoners tend to have a high incidence of learning difficulties and peer tutoring and teacher-student contracts for learning goals are especially effective with prisoners. Experience has shown that prisoners favor a more hands-on learning style, rather than the more passive, traditional lecture style.

Research Directions

There is a real need for more conclusive, controlled research as well as carefully designed evaluative studies that would encourage analysis within the field of prison literacy. Specific research needed includes studies on (a) the educational needs of non-English-speaking prisoners, (b) conditions and populations in local jails, (c) the cognitive educational identity of prison populations, (d) the effectiveness of peer literacy instruction, (e) the long-term, general effectiveness and cost effectiveness of privatization of prison literacy services, and (f) the non-educational actors that impinge on the post-release success of literacy program participants.

Teaching Suggestions

Some of the best ways to teach prisoners include making the most of their hands-on learning style, exploring teaching methods that involve cognitive training (thus deriving the full benefit of education's ability to effect change in established thinking patterns), and utilizing peer tutoring and group learning experiences.

In order to make the most of the available educational opportunities, the literacy needs of the prisoners (accommodating learning disabilities, non-English language, etc.) must be assessed so that the prisoners can be encouraged to participate in the appropriate programs. Technology can be useful in specific instances, but it should be remembered that prisoners can best profit from the social interaction with their human teachers, thus working on needed social and academic skills simultaneously.

Managing an Effective Program

Hiring educators to develop and run the programs is most desirable, although input from educators based at local colleges and universities is also helpful. Prison literacy programs that coordinate courses with local community colleges can provide needed direction for released prisoners and contribute to the success of their continuing education. Peer programs organized for post-release also foster the long-term effectiveness of prisoner literacy programs.

Soliciting prisoners' input on program development is important, but even more important is acting on that information and including the prisoners themselves in the continuing management and evolution of the literacy program. Prisoner participants often have an idea of the kinds of skills that would be in demand after their release, and they readily drop out of programs that load them down with useless or trivial information and so-called skills. Vocational programs need to be assessed according to these same criteria—are the skills being taught marketable?

Policy Recommendations

Official correctional policy at all governmental levels should demand a strong, rehabilitative education program for prisoners. Legislation should encourage educators to be more involved in prison literacy programs so that the major focus is learning rather than punishment or security concerns. A national strategy for expanding prisoners' literacy is vital. Vocational training to acquire marketable skills is needed and even demanded by prisoners. Combining this with other kinds of more academic learning is particularly beneficial for lifetime literacy acquisition.

Industry cooperation with prison literacy/vocational programs could be encouraged by tax incentives. A properly educated prison work force could replace inactivity and boredom with productivity, decrease taxpayers' corrections cost, increase offenders' restitution payments and simultaneously develop prisoners' real-world job skills.

###

Boston Woodard is a prisoner/journalist who has written for the San Quentin News and the Soledad Star, and edited The Communicator. The Department of Corrections has pulled the plug on all three publications.



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