

- President Checo Yancy called the meeting to order at 10 a.m. and then discussed the purpose of the workshop. The purpose of the workshop is to teach and inform attendees on how to maneuver through the Legislature.
- Each attendee took a few moments to introduce themselves with their name, group they are representing, and why they are attending the workshop.
- Checo noted that when approaching the legislature for help with a bill, you cannot go and talk about your personal issues, you will get lost in the shuffle.
- Checo recommended that we need to establish personal relationship with elective officials.
- All attachments that were passed out will be emailed.
- Judge Trudy White spoke about elected officials. She noted that these officials are elected by the populous and need 50% of the vote plus 1. Locally, Layne Grisby has helped stack things the way he wanted by getting involved in the elections. She noted money talks but asked “What if a grass roots organization had their own candidate?” We could have someone who could help make the changes we want to see.
- We reviewed the Legislative Judiciary Committee meeting from 2/23. Secretary Leblanc emphasized the need for the programs. However, attendees noted they didn’t see receptivity from the senators who were present.
- Checo recommended we all go check out www.alec.org to find out about American Legislative Exchange Council and that we buy the PAR book which tells all about the Legislature.
- It was also recommended that attendees put their email address into the Legislative Website in order to get alerts about bills.
- Debra Sheehan discussed how a bill is passed.
 - Every bill starts with a need or want.
 - The issues need to be researched and you must be able to state your position.
 - How many people will your bill affect?
 - You need to be able to sell your product to people that don’t want it.
 - Need to be able to site all statistics and information. There are a lot of resources on the La State Department of Corrections website.
 - Must be able to address the opposition (Victim’s Family). For true success, we need to be able to bring both sides together.
 - You will need to answer “Who, What, Where & How much will it save?”
 - Don’t assume the Legislators understand what you are talking about. They may not understand what it means to be “parole eligible,” they seem to think we are looking to open the gates and let everyone out rather than just making them eligible for parole.

- Pardon/Parole Committee no longer needs to have knowledge of corrections
 - All attendees should go online and look at the bills. Two have been prefiled. They are HB99, which reduces time serviced from 85-75% due to good time for low risk offenders.
 - After the age of 45, it has been shown that you reach “criminal menopause” which puts you in a low risk category.
 - LR score- risk assessment for going before the parole committee
 - We reviewed the LSU study by Keith Nordyke.
 - Your group should show up to support the bill when it goes to committee and have a handout for the author to pass out when it goes to vote by the House.
 - Amendments will be added to the bill and are often seen as “watering down” the bill. Amendments make changes to the original bill and can sometimes change the bill radically.
- Cammie Maturin spoke on behalf of the Coalition for Mercy.
 - The Coalition for Mercy is trying to reinstate the 2045 Geriatric Parole across the board for all crimes.
 - Pat Smith put it through for non-violent offenders 2 years ago.
 - The bill currently excludes 1st degree and sex crimes because some Representatives have already said they won’t touch it if it includes those crimes.
 - The Coalition is currently looking for members.
 - The Coalition understands they need to address the Legislators as a tax paying citizen.
 - There is a conference call every Monday Night.
 - Cammie has met with Gerald Boudreaux who is working on finding out who will support the bill. She is also waiting for a return call from Fred Mills and noticed that G. Smith on the Judiciary Committee seemed interested and will follow up with him soon.
 - Checo noted that the Supreme Court in New Orleans would have records of the laws as they were in the 70s. Cammie noted she is trying to research that original law.
 - Checo suggested that we may want to bring some of the guys that have gotten out and are doing well. VOTE (Voice of the Ex-offender) may be able to help get some of those people available.
 - Robert Matthews at the EBR Public Defenders Office would be a good example. He does investigative and paralegal work for that office and enjoys focusing on helping those currently incarcerated to get out.
 - It was suggested that the rationale behind the bill should be that it doesn’t work and costs too much money.
 - The Coalition’s website is coalition4mercy.org

- HCR82 will address procedure changed in 2017.
- Need to ensure the economics of the bills are accurate as they will be reviewed by the Legislative Auditors Office.
- Julia from VISION in New Orleans spoke about what her organization is doing.
 - They are a diversion program for women with sex crime charges.
 - They advocate for populations not normally addressed such as sex workers, LGBT, and transgender.
- It was also noted that in the State of Louisiana, 1st degree and 2nd degree murder carry the exact same sentence.
 - Checo noted that was due the time period when Harry Connick was in office in New Orleans during 1972-76. The laws continued to change to make the Life Sentences necessary in Orleans Parish.
- It was also noted that you can be convicted of 2nd degree murder with a non-unanimous jury.
- Educate yourself on what is actually going on. Don't rely on the media.
- Need a member of the media on the board of the groups.
- The squeaky wheel is what gets noticed.
- Have Meet and Greets.
- Need to change the minds of the public.
- On Monday through Thursday from 10-1 on WWL Radio in New Orleans, they address Criminal Justice as part of the show.
- Juvenile Justice was addressed as well.
 - There are 3 bills currently.
 - One of them will raise the age of adult conviction to 18 from 17.
 - One of them is about decarceration
 - And the last is for guaranteed council
 - There is a rally on April 6 at the Capital.
- Checo noted that everyone gets a Master Prison Record that shows their dates. Lifers do not get this record as they don't have numbers
- LA CURE meetings are the 2nd Tuesday every month at 7 pm in this room.
- It was noted that CURE hosts this workshop every year. This is the 1st time that other organizations have participating. CURE has been able to facilitate what we all need to do for Criminal Justice Reform.