

## Correctional Education

### **CURE Position:**

1. States should provide adequate funding and ensure the quality of education throughout both the prison system and the community corrections system to further develop social, cultural, academic and vocational learning.
  - a. Vocational and academic education should be expanded to include skills that will increase employment upon release in keeping with current employment trends.
  - b. Job-oriented post-secondary education should be restored, so as to offer hope and growth paths to economic viability for all prisoners, from literacy education through post secondary education.
  - c. Qualified prisoners should be used in non-supervisory, non-disciplinary positions for the education of other prisoners, and be paid wages comparable to those of the prisoner work force.
2. Education deprivation should not be used as punishment. 3. Work programs should provide on-the-job training with achievement certification, which prepare inmates for jobs with a livable wage, as directly-related adjuncts to vocational, life-skills, and academic education.

### **The Problem**

Education and training that enable a person to hold a job paying a livable wage are obviously prerequisites to a stable, non-criminal life. Increased productivity of ex-offenders contributes directly to the national economy. Yet:

- A majority of state prisoners have no high school diploma.<sup>12</sup> An estimated 40% of them cannot read.<sup>9</sup>
- Despite evidence that inmates who receive such training are less likely to recidivate, more than half of all state prison systems have reduced educational and vocational training since 1989. <sup>1</sup>
- Post secondary programs which have generated incentives and have a demonstrated track record in substantially reducing recidivism have been eliminated in virtually all state and federal prisons.

### **Why We endorse This Position**

1. All correctional education programs (literacy, adult basic education, GED, vocational, and post-secondary) reduce recidivism rates. Quality education programs have consistently reduced recidivism by 16-62%.<sup>1-8</sup>

2. The more education offenders receive, the lower their recidivism rates are.<sup>2</sup>
3. Generally, post-secondary correctional education programs reduce recidivism the most.<sup>2, 3, 4, 5, 6</sup>
  - a. In Arizona, probationers with a GED education had a re-arrest rate of 24% compared to a control group's rate of 46%.<sup>7</sup>
  - b. In Texas, the recidivism rate for those without college degrees was 60%. The overall recidivism rate for degree holders was a low 12%, and inversely differentiated by type of degree: Associate 13.7%; Bachelors 5.6%; and Masters 0%.<sup>7</sup>
  - c. In Ohio, while the overall recidivism rate was 40%, college recidivism rates were at 18%. Ohio further calculates that graduating from college programs - vs. no participation in prison education at all - reduces recidivism by roughly 72%.<sup>2</sup>
  - d. In Canada, prisoners who completed at least two university courses had a 50% lower recidivism rate than the norm.<sup>3</sup>
  - e. In New York, only 26.4% of the inmates who earned a degree returned to prison compared to 44.6% of those who participated in the college program but did not complete a degree.<sup>6</sup>
  - f. By lowering recidivism, correctional education more than pays for itself in less incarceration costs and less costs of crime to society. A CURE-NY report, for example, calculates that post secondary correctional education alone would produce net national savings of hundreds of millions of dollars per year.<sup>8</sup>

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