Thoughts From LA CURE
Pres. Checo Yancy

Four More Years and Now What?

First of all, LA CURE would like to say Happy New Year to everyone and to thank each and every one of you that was encouraged to get out and vote in the Governor's race. Your Vote did Count!! Now the real work begins, we have to begin to get acquainted with the new elected officials in the attempt to educate them of what platforms we are supporting for criminal justice reforms and other concerns that are of interest to us as advocates, are you ready to assist in this task? As I was reading the political news last week, it's very clear that we will are going have a real battle on our hands, as you may or may not know, some want to go backwards with the issues that are important to us.

Today, some 2.2 million people are incarcerated in county jails, state and federal prisons, giving the United States the largest prison population in the world. Most of the 2.2 million people behind bars are incarcerated at the parish and state level, but with 12 percent of the national prison population, the federal justice system incarcerates more people than any single state. Prison reform is crucial—but in order to fix the problems of the state and federal justice systems, it's important to know how those systems are different in the first place. As you may have heard, Louisiana is said to be back to number one in incarceration, with the reforms that our Governor and others championed the last few years, the Fed's and Washington DC new "get tough on immigration" our jails are filling up again, the Fed's are paying $60 per day for each person in a cell, let's face it, the Sheriff's found a new way to get paid. "Prisons are a growth Industry"

On a good note, because of some of the new court decisions several long-term women and men have found their way to freedom. We were looking over the news articles, we saw names of women and men that a few years ago had no chance of ever attaining their freedom, are now out and preparing for a new life as an abiding tax paying citizen with the assistance of several reentry groups, such as Reentry 72+, the Parole Project and several other organizations that support persons returning back into society, hats off to all of those groups, hope is a very strong will. Welcome Home ladies and gentlemen.

In conclusion, we have four more years to try and continue Reform, we lost some real strong and knowledgeable supporters, which helped to guide us, and we are going to miss that support. Although Governor John Bel Edwards was reelected for another term, we have a new Senate and House to deal with.

Remember, the ongoing eTc Campaign (Equitable Telephone Charges) is working to improve and cut the high cost of the prison telephone systems. You can help by letting your Public Service Commissioner or local legislator know how unfair it is for you to have pay such high costs to talk with your loved one.

CURE is a membership organization of families of prisoners, prisoners, former prisoners and other concerned citizens. CURE's two goals are to use prisons only for those who need to be in them and for those who need to be in them, to provide them all the rehabilitative opportunities they need to turn their lives around.
The Power of Voting: Kelly Garrett, V/Pres. LA CURE

In recent elections, I’ve heard much of the same election rhetoric, “My vote won’t matter.,” “They’re going to do what they want to do anyway.”, “Elections are rigged.”, or the most common, “I’m not registered.” etc… At some early point in my own life, I probably thought much of the same. Now, though, I realize the power of utilizing one’s voice through voting.

You may recall the election back in 2018 with one very important amendment…Amendment #2, Unanimous Juries. Upon educating those within our communities of what exactly this amendment was designed to do as well as disclosing what the original intent was, voters across the state showed up. With over 50% of voter turnout, which is high, we won that amendment which set the tone for the 2019 elections.

As the October primary gubernatorial election approached, we saw a divisive, yet comfortable race. Organizations such as VOTE and Black Voters Matter partnered up with the Power Coalition to really educate and empower voters. We held numerous voter registrations throughout the second half of 2019 through election deadlines. Listening sessions were being conducted around the state, listening to issues that mattered most within our communities. And with 44.3% voter turnout, we found ourselves in a runoff.

It was during that runoff that the state became, in my opinion, the most divisive. It was critical for our efforts to count and our voices to really matter. So we hit the streets even harder…still registering qualified voters and educating them on what was really at stake. We coordinated transportation across the state for those who had none and made sure everyone brought someone or made sure others within their circle voted. We canvassed thousands of homes and made just as many phone calls to those in our respective communities. We used our power!! In November, all eyes were on Louisiana, literally. And on the night of November 16th we saw again what the power of our votes can do.

So to those that still say their votes don’t matter, I say “They do”. And here is the proof!!

Thanks to all of you who helped in any way you could in getting folks out to the polls. They mattered!!

Criminal Justice is NOT a Spectator Sport:
Jay Jackson L.a. CURE Secretary

If you’re a football fan, December and January are great months to sit on your sofa, grab the remote and watch some football… game after game! I ought to know!

We can all sit back in the comfort of our homes and yell at the referees, holler at the coaches and scratch our heads at players for their miscues. Holler, holler, yell, yell… and yet, nothing’s going to change. We know that. But at the end of the day, we know that it’s just a game.

Unfortunately, many of us approach our criminal justice situation in Louisiana the same way. We sit back and watch. Like fools, we complain to the television, to our family and to our friends and nothing ever changes.

According to the La. Secretary of State’s office, we have almost 3 million registered voters in Louisiana. From that 3 million, only 51% of those registered to vote participated in the election of our next governor…That’s 1.4 million “registered” voters that DID NOT vote! That doesn’t include the folks that don’t even bother to register… that’s another story!

Don’t think that your vote doesn’t matter! In some elections, it came down to just a few votes to determine a winner. In the Senate 16 race, Frank Foil and Steve Carter ended the unofficial count TIED! Foil won on a recount by just a few votes…maybe 6 or 7.

We hear a lot of complaining about our elected officials, and maybe some of it is well deserved! If you happen to be in the 49% of registered voters that DID NOT vote, you can complain, but it only gets the same results as yelling at you TV!

Get in the game! Know who your players are! Watch them! Communicate with them! Make sure they play up to their expectations! If they don’t… you’ll know when it’s time to take them out of the game!

Football is a game. Criminal Justice can be a matter of life or death!
THE UNANIMOUS JURY PROJECT WANTS TO HELP
Were you convicted by a non-unanimous jury (10-2, 11-1)?

What is Ramos v. Louisiana?
The Ramos case challenges whether non-unanimous juries are constitutional under the 6th Amendment of the U.S. Constitution. The U.S. Supreme Court heard oral arguments in the case on October 7, 2019. A decision from this case will likely be issued in, or before, March 2020.

Who could be impacted by the Ramos case?
We cannot be sure who will be affected by the decision in Ramos until the Court rules. However, we do not think the Court will decide retroactivity. We believe it will apply to all those currently on direct appeal, with a preserved issue challenging their non-unanimous verdict. For others, there will likely be more work to do in order to establish whether a new trial is possible. We are partnering with other organizations to help individuals get a lawyer to represent them on these issues.

How might the Unanimous Jury Project offer support?
The Promise of Justice Initiative’s Unanimous Jury Project has begun collecting records of people who were convicted by non-unanimous juries in Louisiana. We are working to make sure people with non-unanimous jury verdicts can show proof of the non-unanimous jury. We are also working to connect people with legal resources and education for after the U.S. Supreme Court rules in Ramos.

Please do not hesitate to contact us if you have any questions. Together we can help Louisiana heal after more than 138 years of harm caused by non-unanimous juries.

*Nothing on this page should be construed as legal advice or initiating an attorney client relationship.*

We want to help you find proof of your non-unanimous conviction, which you will need if/when you fight your case. We want to stay in touch with you as we learn more about how the Ramos case may affect you and how we can help. We want to help find lawyers to represent you at no cost to you. We believe in justice.

Write to us with the following information:

1. Your full name  2. Your D.O.B.  3. Your D.O.C. number  4. In what parish were you convicted?  5. Are you appealing your case?  6. Has a Court issued an opinion in your case? If so, what is the case number?  7. Is there anyone you want us to reach out to on your behalf to work with us on this?  8. Have you already retained counsel or are you currently represented? If so, please direct questions to that lawyer, and we cannot speak with you. If not.

Send us your information to:  Unanimous Jury Project c/o Promise of Justice Initiative 1024 Elysian Fields Ave. New Orleans, LA 70116

Things we would like to see, will you help?
⇒ Parole Eligibility for All Prisoners
⇒ A Review of the 10-6 Prisoners
⇒ Expungement/Clean Slate
⇒ Clean for Act 636 (Voting Rights)
⇒ Plea Bargain/Collateral Consequences Study
⇒ Habitual Offender Reform
⇒ Solitary Confinement Reform

Important 2020 upcoming dates:
⇒ Legislative Committee Hearing Rehearsal, March 3, 2020 @9am
⇒ Legislative Session begins March 9 and ends June 1, 2020
⇒ Lobby Day, Tuesday, March 24 from 10am -2pm @ The Capitol Park Welcome Center, 702 N. River Rd, BR
⇒ Louisiana Census begins, April 1-Will You Stand & Be Counted?
⇒ April 4 - Presidential & Municipal Primary Elections
⇒ May 9 - Municipal General Elections
⇒ November 3 - President & Congressional & District Attorneys Elections
⇒ December 5 - Congressional & Open Run-Off Elections

VA Governor considering age in parole decisions:
"Considering Age in Parole Decisions of An individual would be eligible for consideration of parole if they are at least 50 years old and have served 20 years or are 55 years old and have served 15 years."

I wonder if Louisiana would ever consider something like this??
CURE – Citizens United for Rehabilitation of Errants
Is a nationwide grass roots organization dedicated to reducing crime through reform of the criminal justice system.

Renew Your Membership!
Please fill in and mail this application to:
Louisiana CURE, P.O. Box 181
Baton Rouge, LA 70821

Name:
Address:
City, State, Zip:
Phone:_______Fax:
E-mail:

Prisoner $2.50 Basic $10.00 Family $20.00
(6 Stamps acceptable)

Other ______ New Member ______ Renewal

If your address is changed, you must let us know, all returned newsletters will not be re-mailed, postage is too high, we will delete you from our mailing list.

CURE is a 501(c) 3 Organization

Let's Keep the Ball Rolling

IT'S TIME TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!!!
THIS IS YOUR FINAL ISSUE
OF
LOUISIANA CURE NEWSLETTER