

March 13, 2006

Testimony of Bishop J. C. White, Senior Pastor of Turner's Faith Temple Church
360 Colorado Avenue, Bridgeport, Connecticut

To: Judiciary Committee

Men & Women of good conscience, I am Senior Pastor of Turner's Faith Temple located in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I am pleased to appear before you today on behalf of my members and family members of men & women who are in prison.

I am also pleased to provide you with information that I have obtained first hand and not from something that I read out of a book.

Before we can deal with inmates with psychiatric disabilities we must first consider the root cause of their disabilities. We must also ask ourselves the question; what is happening inside of the corrections facilities that is driving inmates insane, to the brink of despair and on to committing suicide? During my own quest to find the answer myself, I discovered the following:

***Prison staff as well as Correction Officer continue to abuse their power over defenseless inmates who have no security and see know what out of a bad situation.

***The retaliation against inmates who may file a compliant against a Correction Officer for wrong doing, is beyond comprehension. The abuse by correction officers and other correction staff is too excessive.

***Too many tickets issued against inmates for no reason other than to inflict harm and pain upon them and making it harder for them to make Parole or to be released when their time is up.

***Unfair hearings by the Discipline Review Board, inflicting additional pain upon the inmate.

***Harsh and inhumane treatments against defenseless inmates, which is causing them to be put in a state of despair and hopelessness.

***Mean Lies told on inmates by Correction Officers with no outside intervention or Justification for their actions.

***Mental Torture, Abuse of Power, etc. all of this and more are some of the reasons for nervous breakdowns amongst inmates.

Men & Women of good conscience if you really want to help inmates with psychiatric disabilities, you must address the above mentioned problems.

I have first hand information concerning an inmates who have been lied on, almost killed and is still being tortured by The State of Connecticut, Department of Correction. This man went from being a victim to becoming a Villain and Correction continue to stacks the decks against him by writing unwarranted tickets, making up lies on this man, etc.. Correction continue to abuse their power and at some point is must be stopped.

The suicide rate will continue to rise within the prisons across Connecticut and inmates who are released to society will continue to come home with mental problems that they did not go in with unless you pass laws to protect them.

Conclusion:

I am recommending that you pass some type of Legislation geared toward ending the torture and abuse of inmates. Laws must be put in place, not just to protect Correction Staff but to Protect Men & Women who are in the custody of the state. In furtherance, I am recommending that an outside Independent Board be put in place to oversee the DR Boards that they have within the prisons. This will allow Inmates to have a fair hearing and hopefully Justice will be served for both inmate and correction staff.

Correction Officer and other Correction Staff who abuse and torture inmates should be arrested and have charges bought against them by both family members and the inmate as well. Their actions should not go unpunished.

I am also recommending that the 50% time serve Law be re-established so that additional spaces be secured thus saving million of dollars each year for Connecticut tax Payers.

Thank you,

Bishop J. C. White