

Name: Mark Bova

Title:

Organization or Agency:

Topic: Meeting Date Not Listed

NA

Testimony:

My name is Mark Bova, a little background on me, I'm 64 years old, been incarcerated for the past 32 years. I had no previous criminal history. I've only had 2 tickets in this entire time. I've worked my whole time in here and for the past 4 years I've been training service dogs to assist veterans with disabilities for American's VetDogs.

I've been writing to our state representatives and senators, Senator Winfield, Senator Perrillo and former Representative Brandon L. McGee to name a few to try and push parole for the elderly in prison. There's a lot of data out there that men who have been incarcerated for 25 continuous years and over 55 years old "age out of crime." The Osborne Association has issued several papers on this subject.

The recidivism rate of those who get out and reoffend is 43%. Statistically, for those who are over 55 years old, that rate is less than 4%. Other states have begun to offer parole to their elderly population: to name a few, California and New York State. California gives parole to those who have been incarcerated for 25 continuous years and 55 years and older, automatically, no questions asked.

The cost of incarceration goes up significantly as we age, medical costs being the biggest culprit, yet the quality of medical care we receive is woefully inadequate to meet our needs. Most times we are placed in the infirmary and left to die, never receiving the care we should be getting for the medical issue we are suffering from.

It is fiscally irresponsible to continue to incarcerate those who pose no threat to the public, cost the most to incarcerate, and should be given the ability to reestablish themselves into society before they become too old and need to be placed into state-run elderly care facilities.

Also, at our ages, institutional histories and time incarcerated, we should be given modifications or commutations. This is supposed to be the Dept. of Correction? But shouldn't my institutional history show that I've been "corrected?" Keeping someone locked up for decades when they don't need to be is inhumane and fiscally irresponsible.

Other countries, Germany being one, their sole purpose is to reintegrate men back into society as productive citizens. Their institutional history being a major factor in their release. We complete programs, stay ticket free, establish work histories and yet are repeatedly denied parole, modifications or commutations.

Victim Services plays a big role in a person being granted any of these three options. I understand our victims having a voice, but it seems that's the only voice that's heard. People are not the same that they were at the time they committed their crime and their institutional histories bear that fact.

Decades in prison is not a solution to preventing crime and never allowing someone to show they are "corrected" is a crime in itself. They have been fighting for the juvenile law and with good reason. But at the other end of the spectrum, there is a lot of "elderly" incarcerated men that deserve to be given a second chance, an opportunity at parole so they may become a tax paying citizen instead of a tax costing burden.

The money this state will save can be used to fund our educational system instead of cutting school

budgets and laying off teachers. The average c/o is making in excess of six figures while teachers make half of that and barely have money for school supplies.

These are some of the issues plaguing the D.O.C. and what is on the minds of men in here. The opportunity to apply for parole, modifications or commutations needs to be improved and more people need to be granted these options, if not, then why do we offer them when not enough are being granted?