



UPAN

UTAH PRISONER **ADVOCATE** NETWORK

UPAN Newsletter Volume 2 Number 2 | FEBRUARY 2015

"Advocating for a Better Tomorrow"

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Report on Citizen Lobbyist Training,

Monday, February 2, 2015, 6:00 PM Room 240 Main Floor, East Wing of Capitol Bldg.

Definitions Puts Us All On The Same Page

The verb "lobby" comes from the practice of meeting legislators in the lobby (of a building). Definition of "lobby": to make an effort to influence someone on a particular matter; also, to attempt to influence the passage of a measure by acting as a lobbyist. The noun "lobbyist" is a person who tries to influence the decisions of legislators or government administrators.* There are citizen and special interest group lobbyists.

Some Brief Notes On The Presentation

Every citizen can (should) be a lobbyist. If you are an advocate (a person who pleads another's cause or who speaks or writes in support of something*) you should know how to lobby. So, how do you lobby? The first step is to know who your legislators are. To do this, go to the Utah legislative website: le.utah.gov then follow the instructions in the last paragraph of this report. If you don't have a computer, use one at the public library and ask someone to help you. By simply going to the website you will take a giant step toward being a lobbyist and you will experience the thrill of being an active citizen in directing how our State operates.

Your Purpose

As a citizen lobbyist, your intent is to make your legislator recognize you as an interested citizen in Utah's governance and effectiveness. Contact can be via email, letters, phone calls, and the highly effective personal face-to-face contact. The information available on your legislators' website profiles may provide you with some common ground and interests, making your contact easier.

Tips On Being Effective

Any contact should include your full name and address so the legislator can verify that you are a constituent (a person, especially a voter, represented and served by a particular official, especially a legislator*) and your contact is honest and legitimate and not a deceptive political contact by some fringe group with a hidden

agenda. Being totally honest will build your credibility and show your sincerity.

You should be able to explain a few points of primary concern to you about legislation that is pending. Know the identifying number of the legislation you are advocating (lobbying for). You can obtain the number by finding it on the website and you can track its progress through the legislative process by finding the "Tracking" feature on the website. If you would like to be updated as the bill progresses through the legislative process you can enter your email address. The system will automatically notify you via email of its progress.

A Timely Reminder For Your Legislator

Just before the bill is to go before the legislature for a vote, a phone call to your legislator will be a timely reminder of your concern about the passage (or killing) of this bill. Limit your call to one bill (or one issue) only. A telephone call on one issue per call carries the most impact. If you are lobbying for more than one issue or bill, make separate phone calls (personal contacts letters, emails) for each issue. Don't combine them for that dilutes your effectiveness. Lobbying rule for you: one issue not two. You do good! :-)

Website Instruction

Type le.utah.gov in your browser and move the cursor to the left column and over the word "Legislators." A menu will appear. Click on "Find by address/map." In the box below the headline "Who represents me?" enter your street address and ZIP Code as shown in the sample format. A pale map will appear with a white box containing pictures of your State Senator and State Representative. Click on each, individually, for their full name, contact information, education, and other details including legislative committees to which they are assigned.

*Webster's New World College Dictionary, Fifth Edition (Very current, first distributed, August 2014). ##

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DISCLAIMER: Formulate your own opinions about the information presented, intended for neutrality, not intending any opinion or comment to be UPAN's position. This information is presented for the reader's enlightenment and evaluation.

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The UPAN Newsletter policy is to keep the source of some comments and presentations confidential to prevent or discourage any link between the presenter(s) and the inmate whom they are supporting. The appearance of exceptional or preferential treatment may arise among inmate readers resulting in harassment or complications of many types; the following presenters are referred to as father, mother, parents, etc. of their son, currently an inmate.

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Summary of UPAN Meeting, Monday, February 16, 2015 6:30-8:30 PM

Twenty-eight people were in attendance. Molly opened the meeting with some announcements and old business, then introduced the meeting's presenter (who was later joined by his wife) for the major presentation of the evening:

Preparation for the Inmate's Parole Board Hearing

The Problem – And Procedures That Fit Everyone

Both two presenters have had a lot of success in supporting their inmate by taking several steps they deemed necessary to secure a favorable outcome. These steps are available to everyone and recommended to the inmate's support people. The parents' inmate was incarcerated as a sex offender soon after his 21st birthday and given a sentence of five to life. The declared matrix of 66 months (5½ years) is currently a target that is seldom met and is usually not accurate. A more accurate estimate has proven to be 7 to 10 years expected as the realistic sentence.

The Heart Of The Problem

For readers who are not aware of the current problem of expanding prison populations, this is both a Utah and national problem. Inmates' sentences have been lengthening; the result is a growing prison population while commitments to prison have been dropping. Extended sentences are the reason.

Recommendations And Actions To Take

The following recommendations and actions are from this presentation. Because most of the offenders are male, as in this case, the following narrative will use a male pronoun (he, him, his, etc.) to mean both male and female rather than the awkward him/her reference.

First point: have a good attorney. To be good, the attorney should know your loved one well enough to be a strong, supportive advocate for him. While your attorney can be of invaluable help in preparing the inmate and all the paperwork for the hearing, the attorney CANNOT say anything at the Board hearing. A Blue Packet is given to the inmate before the hearing and it is important to inform the inmate what to expect and how to process the contents of the Blue Packet for maximum benefit to the inmate. The attorney should be informed as soon as the Blue Packet is received.

Be Sure The Inmate Knows What To Expect

The prison caseworker will ask questions of the inmate and it is up to the supporting people and the attorney to fully brief the inmate what to expect during this process.

Brief the inmate so he can tell the caseworker what prospects the inmate will have when paroled such as a place to live, job opportunities, and support people for assistance and counseling.

In this case the parents prepared a list of 106 people who knew the inmate. This inmate will have five job offers, 40 places to live, and four-score-or-more people ready for support. Most of the 106 people wrote letters stating they knew about the inmate, why he was placed in prison, and they were supportive of him and his parole. At the hearing, 46 people showed up – too many to be in the hearing room, but the rear doors of the hearing room were opened so the reviewing officer could see all the people present who were standing there in support of the inmate.

More Frosting On This Cake

When letters are written about the inmate, everyone should state that they know what the inmate was convicted of and that this knowledge doesn't change their support for him. For verification of the letters' authenticity, a list was prepared of the 106 people's full names, email addresses, and phone numbers, which was provided with the letters.

Letters are sent to the attorney and should be reviewed so that there are no letters that contain questionable information, AND nowhere in the letter should there be any questioning of the conviction or declaration of the innocence of the inmate. That approach will only downgrade the quality of the letter by casting aspersions on the criminal justice system. With these actions and this support, the next hearing was scheduled for 2½ years, which is in line with the 66-month matrix originally declared.

A Final Caution...

One point that was mentioned in the follow up discussion was that the attorney and support people should seriously coach the inmate that he is to follow the rules inside to prove he can abide by the social rules outside. In other words, do it right inside or you'll NEVER get the chance to do it outside. # #

IMPORTANT: Here is an outline of the presentation from the February 9th UPAN meeting.

The following outline and steps to follow are one of the most important tools we will ever publish in the UPAN Newsletter. It is for you to use prior to your inmate's parole board hearing. If you wish to contact the people who prepared this outline, contact Molly via email or the UPAN mailing address. Molly can arrange it.

Outline for Preparation for Parole Board Hearing

1. Acquire the help of a qualified attorney, they can get pertinent information to the Board that we can't on our own.
2. Support people CANNOT meet with their inmate's case manager. But you are encouraged to help PREPARE your inmate for their meeting with their case manager at the prison. This was very important in our case; it gave our son the opportunity to show the support and many opportunities he has on the outside.
3. Prepare as best you can for your inmates future: Places to live, Job opportunities, Support of family & friends. It is also important to prepare for programs and or counseling on the outside and to alert your attorney so they can inform the board of these preparations.
4. Alert your attorney as soon as your inmate receives their blue packet so they both can meet as soon as possible. It is important that you use your time wisely – that you be as prepared as possible. Make sure you and your attorney are on the same page, that you included everything pertinent for your attorney's Brief to the Board.
5. Get as much attendance for your inmate as possible at the Board hearing. Make sure you get as many letters as you can. Also, make sure your letters are written so they will help and not hurt your inmate. They should be written so they are polite to the Board. Here is an example for you to follow:
 - a. Dear member of the Utah Board of Pardons
 - b. Introduce yourself and BRIEFLY tell who you are and what you do or have done in life
 - c. Then move into: I am writing about (inmate name) who has a hearing in (month, i.e. February)
 - d. Tell them how you know the inmate and that you know what the inmate was convicted of
 - e. Include that you have noticed positive change in the inmate over time in prison.
 - f. Tell of what classes or programming you are aware the inmate has done during incarceration.
 - g. Let the Board know that you are willing to do whatever is necessary to help the inmate succeed if given the opportunity of parole
 - h. Close with a thank you for the opportunity to express your support
 - i. NOTE: Saying your inmate is innocent will not help and may downgrade the impact of your letter.
6. What our goal should be is to help our loved ones to be able to succeed on the outside and to become valuable members of society and to lead a happy and healthy life. ##

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**Summary and Pictures from the Rally for Reform, South Steps of the Utah State Capitol Building
Tuesday, February 10, 2015**

Large Turnout Of Concerned Citizen/Advocates

With spring-like conditions favoring this event, the Rally for Reform was a huge success getting media coverage from both TV, print, and internet websites. It was suggested by Utah Prison Support and organized by the ACLU of Utah with support from UPAN and other reform advocacy groups, among them the Utah Support Advocates for Recovery Awareness and the Disability Law Center. Approximately 150 people, on a workday at noon, gathered near the south steps of the State Capitol in a further attempt to show support and to influence favorable legislation for 18 recommendations for criminal justice reform that concerned and informed people are favorably buzzing about.

Goals Include Saving Money, People, And Families

The goals are huge, including incredible savings of taxpayer (Utah Treasury) money coupled with far more humane treatment of substance abuse and mentally ill

victims via treatment rather than prison. We were again reminded by a speaker that we are all good people who make mistakes and we are here to help salvage other good people who have made a mistake, or are victims beyond their control, and returning them to society as productive citizens, is 21st Century thinking and action. Reuniting families is another benefit of the goals the group is seeking.

The one-hour agenda included seven speakers. Among them was UPAN's own Holly Moore, who gave us an impassioned presentation. The group was also favored with the speaking appearances of the Honorable State Representative Eric Hutchings and the Honorable State Senator Howard Stephenson. Both men gave encouragement that the group's efforts are recognized within the legislature and that favorable legislation will be pursued.



Rally for Reform – An Impressive Turnout at Noon With About 150 Supporters for Criminal Justice Reform



Some of the Speakers and Rally Leaders * UPAN Staff: Molly Prince, Shauna Denos, & Heather Fabian * (More details on our website, see last page of this issue) * (With Some Junior Citizen-Advocate Helpers) *



Support Signs read (left to right): A Prisoner Is A Person – Treat Inmates Better, Tough on Crime Failed, I Am Ready 4 Reform, Oversight for the Board of Pardons, Less Prisons More Solutions, Invest in Programs Not Prison!, Prison Reform Not Prison Beds, (partially hidden) Reform Prisons Now!, and Time to Scale Back the Drug War In Utah. Many thanks to Debbie, far left with A Prisoner is a Person sign, for first suggesting this rally which others then supported.

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MARCH UPAN MEETING *March 9, 2015 @ 6:30 pm*
 Hunter Library - 4740 West 4100 South, West Valley City, UT 84120

This will be a family meeting to follow up on the Rally and hopefully any information we have on the Criminal Justice legislation (HB 348).

APRIL UPAN MEETING *April 13, 2015 @ 6:30 pm*
 Ruth Vine Library - 8041 South Wood Street (55 West), Midvale, UT 84047

SPECIAL OPPORTUNITY, PLEASE READ: April guest speaker will be Jan Nicol, Supervisor of Hearing Officers for the Board of Pardons and Parole. She will give a presentation on the BOPP. If anyone has specific questions about processes and procedures of the Board, please email them to Molly at utahprisoneradvocate@gmail.com by March 15th. We want to prepare a list of the most pressing questions for Ms Nicol to prepare to answer as part of her presentation. She will NOT be able to address specific cases in the UPAN meeting. No computer? Find our mailing address on the last page.

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NOTE: The Prison Relocation Commission meeting has been rescheduled for Friday, February 27, at 1:00 p.m. It will be held in the Senate Building, Room 210.

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Pastor Roderic Land of Calvary Baptist Church SLC, Anna Brower of ACLU of Utah, Jean Hill of the Catholic Diocese of SLC, Shannon Miller Cox, Executive Director Journey of Hope, Inc., Shauna Denos UPAN v-p, Virginia Ward recovered prescription medication victim, and Kathy Arbaca of ACLU of Utah.



Putting a face and pictorial profile to the words you've been reading these last eight months. Your UPAN Newsletter Editor with a "thumbs up" in the complimentary food Line, courtesy of ACLU of Utah. From the looks of my waistline I should skip the next several food lines. :-) Ed. (My thanks to Marilyn for taking the picture.)

PrisonEd Summary Report January 31, 2015

Greetings friends and associates of PrisonEd,

PrisonEd continues to grow as is indicated by the summary report below - - currently 122 students. In addition to the courses currently being taught (Writing, Basic Math, Beginning Algebra, Job Success, and Great Mentors), we are in the process of adding the following: Write Your Own Story, Vocabulary Building, Ethics, Entrepreneurship, and Personal Finance.

We can use additional tutors as well as administrative and clerical assistance. Thank you for your support and interest in PrisonEd. Don Wright

Inmates Enrolled By Month:

- 8 June 30
- 17 July 31
- 34 August 31
- 49 September 30
- 61 October 31
- 73 November 30
- 101 December 31
- 122 January 31, 2015

Enrollees include 16 female students. To date, we have received assignments back from 70% of students registered in various courses.

Participation By Facility:

| | |
|----------|----|
| Draper | 40 |
| Gunnison | 24 |
| Jails | 58 |

3 Student Comments

"I am a pretty good forgiving person of others who have done me wrong. However, perhaps my biggest struggle (among other things) is with forgiving myself. I know what it means to forgive others: but what I do not know is what self-forgiveness is supposed to look, feel, taste, and smell like."

"The thing I learned from this lesson is that I've been so caught up in material things in my life that I lost myself. Now that I've had a chance to look deep within myself I've realized I had forgotten who I was."

"Before I came to prison I suffered and was prisoner to depression, alcohol, drugs, and pornography. I was in a prison inside my mind, full of hopelessness and despair. I wanted to escape this and stop the negative behavior and thinking, but success was always partial or fleeting. My mission has already begun, and I'm laced up and ready for my long walk. My responsibility is to improve my life and the lives of those I encounter. A story began with tragedy, will be turned to one of motivation and triumph." ##

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FROM ANNA BROWER: GREAT NEWS!

Email from Anna, Wednesday, February 18, 2015 7:24 AM!! (Anna is right on top of things! – Even early in the morning)
Subject: BIG NEWS: Justice Reinvestment Legislation Introduced

Good morning, everyone - no, wait, GREAT morning!

The "Justice Reinvestment" legislation based on the Commission on Criminal and Juvenile Justice (CCJJ)'s 18 reform recommendations is finally out - numbered and public. You can read the full text here - <http://le.utah.gov/~2015/bills/static/HB0348.html>.

There will be a press conference announcing the legislation this morning at 9:15 a.m. in the Aspen Room of the Senate Building (that's the one with the cafeteria in it) up at the Capitol. Bill sponsors Rep. Eric Hutchings and Sen. Stuart Adams will speak, as will Department of Corrections Director Rollin Cook.

I'm pleased to report that - at first, second and third glance (I reserve the right to have missed something...I mean, the bill is 50+ pages) - the CCJJ recommendations appear largely intact in the

introduced legislation. Very exciting that, despite lots of pressure from the Statewide Association of Prosecutors and some county sheriffs, the drug penalty reforms CCJJ unanimously approved is intact here in HB348, "Criminal Justice Programs and Amendments." **Much kudos to the sponsors for protecting the integrity of this effort so far!**

From this point forward, the goal will be to keep the bill that the Governor eventually signs, looking pretty much identical to what has been introduced - and then, making sure that the implementation is executed in the spirit of since reform and commitment to ongoing improvement.

More as it happens, but for now - congrats to CCJJ, Rep. Hutchings, Sen. Adams, Governor Herbert, and all those who labored to get this giant bill to the starting line of the legislature!
Anna E. Brower, Public Policy Advocate, ACLU of Utah

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FOR YOUR INFORMATION: The Utah State Legislature convenes every year on the 4th Monday in January. It remains in session for 45 days. There are 75 Representatives and 29 Senators in the legislature; the majority in both houses is Republican. The following are the current standings. Representatives: 14-Democrats, 61-Republicans, 2-year terms. Senators: 5-Democrats, 24-Republicans, 4-year terms. Source: <http://www.uselections.com/ut/ut.htm> ##

Gunnison Phone Issue

Below is a message for UPAN families who have loved ones in Gunnison regarding some of the problems that have occurred with the phone rates and that Century Link is working on it.

UPAN has been notified by Brooke Adams, Public Information Officer for Utah Department of Corrections to share with our group that some calls in the Gunnison area were apparently being billed incorrectly. According to CenturyLink, all calls from Gunnison to numbers that begin "435-262-XXXX" were not being rated correctly due to an issue with the data feed. CenturyLink is now working to resolve that problem and should have a fix in place by Thursday.

It also plans to conduct an audit on calls placed to those numbers and apply credits where warranted over the next couple of days. # #

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FOCUS MEETINGS: Location – 36 West Fremont Avenue, Salt Lake City, Utah

MARCH FOCUS MEETING March 2, 2015 6:00 p.m.

Doug Fawson of Utah Department of Corrections is Guest Speaker
Mr. Fawson facilitates victim / offender meetings at the prison

MAY FOCUS MEETING May 4, 2015 6:00 p.m.

JULY FOCUS MEETING July 6, 2015 6:00 p.m.

Focus meetings are scheduled this year to occur every other month. Thus there will be no FOCUS meetings in April, June, and August. # #