

FCL NEWSLETTER

VOL. 54, NO. 2

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON LEGISLATION

February 2005

Eyes Wide Open, Every Day: Bringing Home the Human Cost of War

By Cindy Fowler

The American Friends Service Committee's (AFSC) Eyes Wide Open exhibition comes to California in March, including three days at the State Capitol beginning March 29. Sometimes called the "Boots Exhibit," the traveling display honors fallen U.S. Military personnel and Iraqi civilians and has been on tour for over a year. Created by the Chicago office of the AFSC, the exhibit has toured over 40 cities nationwide and has drawn international media attention. Most recently, it was on display at the National Cathedral in Washington, D.C. during the presidential inauguration. When the exhibit was first unveiled in Chicago in January 2004, there were 504 pairs of boots. Like the AIDS Memorial Quilt, the size of this exhibit is growing every day due to the increasing casualties of the war in Iraq.

I recently heard a live radio commentary from a California bar where the commentator was gauging bar patrons' reactions to the president's State of the Union speech. There was much discussion about Iraq, security and freedom. Suddenly the reporter switched gears and said, "And then the attention turned to the second major focus of the evening—playing pool." That statement summed up why I am strongly motivated to bring Eyes Wide Open to our community.

I am aware that we are in the middle of a messy and costly war, but my day-to-day comfort and concerns are seldom touched by it. I read the morning news, shake



Photo: American Friends Service Committee. Used with permission.

my head and then go about my daily routines. Even though Friends champion the dignity and worth of every human life, it is too easy for me to set aside the families who have been hurt, the homes and lives ruined on both sides. No disturbing press coverage of deceased military personnel returning home in flag-

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"The Friends Committee on Legislation (FCL), guided by Quaker values, advocates for California state laws that are just, compassionate, and respectful of the inherent worth of every person."

Eyes Wide Open, Every Day *(Continued from page 1)*

draped caskets is seen. Thousands of Iraqi deaths are reduced to vague statistics through the lens of the mass media.

Preparing for the arrival of Eyes Wide Open has changed all of this for me. As our committee, led by the Sacramento Friends Meeting, organizes co-sponsors, deals with officials at the Capitol, recruits volunteers and sends out press releases, I am constantly talking and living the cost of this war. I look at photos of the sea of empty combat boots and civilian shoes that make up this powerful exhibit, and I understand. We cannot afford to isolate the reality of this war from our lives.

Whether or not you agree with Friends' position on the war, come and stand with us to honor and grieve the dead. Help us build community—not through demonstrations and parades—but by simply engaging and connecting with others. Better yet, volunteer to help make this exhibit happen.

For more information about the exhibit, point your web browser to <http://www.afsc.org/eyes/>. We need both your time and your financial support. To join the work, send an e-mail to SacEWOinfo@inmemory.com, or call Cindy Fowler at (916) 391-3132. ♡

– Cindy Fowler is a member of the Sacramento Friends Meeting and is a Meeting Representative for FCL.



Photo: American Friends Service Committee. Used with permission.

Eyes Wide Open – California Schedule

March 9-10 • San Diego, CA

Contact Christian Ramirez: (520) 623-9141

e-mail: usmexborder@afsc.org

March 12-20 • Los Angeles Metro Region, CA

Contact La Quetta Shamblee: (626) 791-1978 ext. 133

e-mail: lshamblee@afsc.org

March 22-24 • Fresno, CA

Contact Myrna Martinez Nateras: (559) 222-7678

e-mail: mnateras@afsc.org

March 29-31 • Sacramento, CA

Contact Cindy Fowler: (916) 391-3132

e-mail: cindy@gravesfowler.com

Invest in Life



***Unhappy about U.S. policy on Militarism?
Tired of paying for war?
Think tax dollars should cover healthcare,
education, humanitarian aid?***

Learn about conscientious objection to war taxes. Consider legal protests, phone tax resistance, living below the taxable income, refusing to pay all or part of federal taxes, redirecting tax money to alternative peace funds, the consequences of civil disobedience, local support networks.

Introductory Workshop on War Tax Resistance

Saturday, March 12, 2005, 9 am to 12 Noon

Palo Alto Friends New Meeting House, 957 Colorado Ave, Palo Alto 94303
Susan Quinlan, Presenter, Northern California War Tax Resistance (Berkeley)

Phone 650-327-3581 for directions

Sponsored by the Peace and Social Action Committee, Palo Alto Friends Meeting

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Rearranging the Corrections Boxes: California's Failure to Confront the Culture of Incarceration

In his first State of the State address in January 2004, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger said "I don't want to move boxes around; I want to blow them up." As part of his California Performance Review Plan to streamline state government, the governor appointed former Governor George Deukmejian to head the Independent Review Panel (IRP) to examine the state of corrections in California and to propose recommendations for reform.

The IRP's report noted that California was once the national leader in corrections before political interference, union control and a lack of courage and accountability contributed to the demise of corrections. First and foremost, the panel recommended the creation of a Civilian Corrections Commission with the "authority to approve policy and provide direction to the correctional administration." The governor rejected this recommendation. While the panel's report notes the need for a more streamlined organizational structure, it also stresses that changing the culture at the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency (YACA) must become a high priority: a "code of silence" that fails to report wrongdoing is "symptomatic of an urgent need for cultural reform in the state correctional system."

The IRP's recommendations were presented to YACA, which then presented its own reorganization plan to the Little Hoover Commission. The Commission will recommend that the Legislature either adopt or reject the reorganization plan; it cannot amend the plan.

The reorganization plan includes changing the name of YACA to the "Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation" and raises several interesting questions. Can a culture that for so long has focused on punishment and warehousing prisoners reinvent itself to focus on rehabilitation? Is "rehabilitation" merely a slogan if the State is unwilling to reduce the prison population and proposes to reduce funding for programming in next year's budget by \$95 million? Will a streamlined organizational structure produce needed change if the underlying organizational culture stays the same?

What follows are the prepared remarks by Senator Jackie Speier before the Little Hoover Commission on January 27th concerning YACA's reorganization plan that echoes many of those themes familiar to FCL Newsletter readers.

Good morning Commissioners, Secretary Rod Hickman. I welcome the opportunity to offer my perspectives on Governor Schwarzenegger's effort to improve California's correctional system.

" . . . This reorganization plan would appear to lay the mantle of responsibility for our \$7 billion adult correctional system directly on the shoulders Rod Hickman, the current Secretary of the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency. In some respects I see the plan as nothing more than moving CDC [California Department of Corrections] Director Jeanne Woodford to a lower position.

"Unfortunately, the plan isn't ready for prime time because it fails to address the key reforms that must take place if we are to control the \$7 billion CDC spending machine and if we are to reduce the appalling recidivism rate of 79 percent.

"I respectfully request that Secretary Hickman go back

to the drawing board.

"One year ago this week in this building, Judge Steve White, the former Inspector General, testified at a joint hearing chaired by myself and Senator Romero. His testimony sent a chill through the room that day. I would like to read to you part of his statement:

I've had a lot of contact with the Department of Corrections for more than thirty years. I've been in every prison. Most of the prisons I've been in many times. During those times I have spent literally hundreds of hours collectively talking with staff and inmates in the yards, in the SHU (Security Housing Unit, for prisoners deemed to have behavior problems that prevent them from being housed with the general population), in death row—everywhere.

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Rearranging the Corrections Boxes *(Continued from page 3)*

I've been to Board of Prison Terms hearings. I've been to every CYA facility similarly and frequently. . . I've been to virtually any format and kind of meeting in the Department of Corrections having to do with issues of leadership and management; not by any means on a comprehensive basis but in and out, and the same thing with the CYA. I've been in agency meetings. I've been to the Governor's Office. I've been in the Legislature in respect to this overall subject area. And so, I have a fairly comprehensive, but by no means encyclopedic, grasp of the problem. . . . I've touched many parts of the elephant—as many, perhaps, as anybody around—but I don't profess to know everything about it.

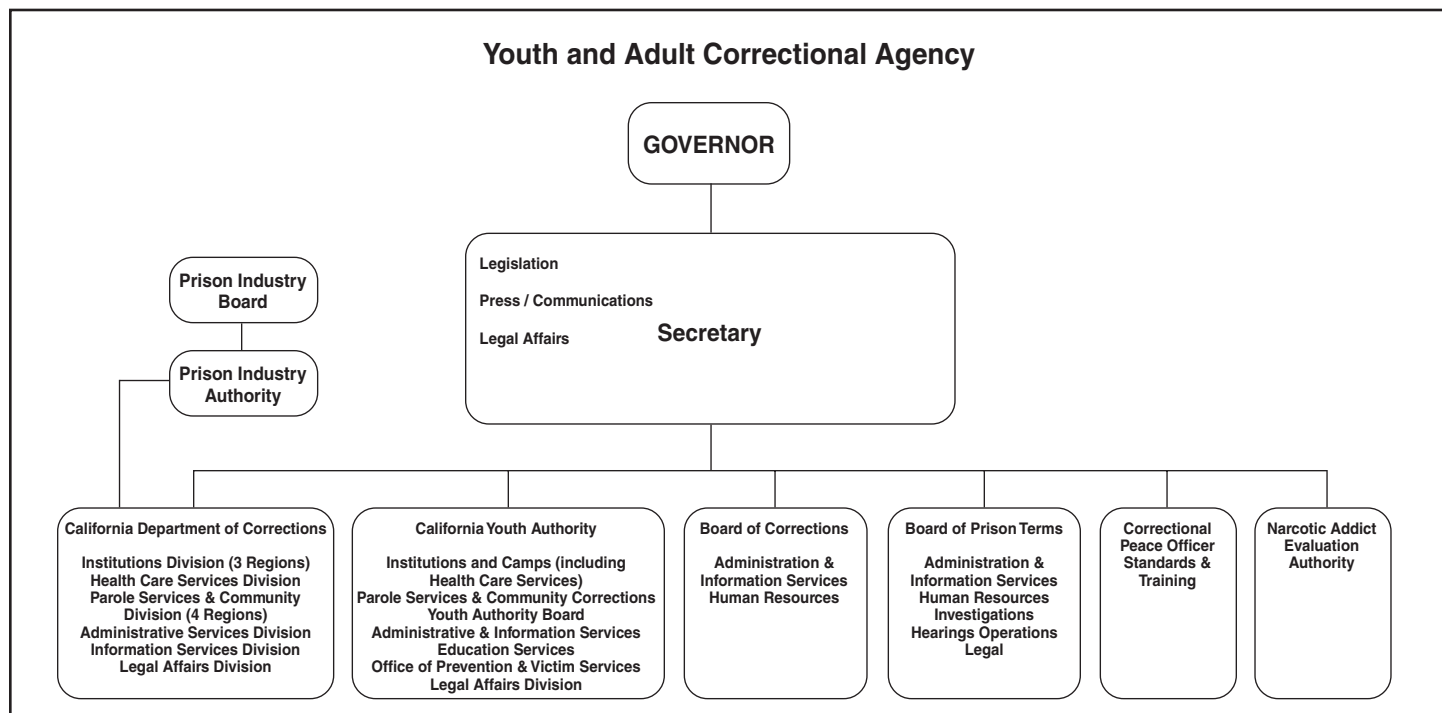
But I offer you this: The Department of Corrections is symbolic of a larger problem. . . . And that problem is this: It's an immense organic entity, and there's no

mission. It's statutory and it's constitutional. It's a very wide scope. The CCPOA has managed, through its leadership talents, its ability to amass political monies, and its sheer competence—they know what they're doing—to move

"I respectfully request that Secretary Hickman go back to the drawing board."

— Senator Jackie Speier

the department off of its larger comprehensive role and refocus the department on the CCPOA's ground. And so, the battles that occur—to the extent they're battles and not resolutions at the bargaining table—are on CCPOA's turf. They're on CCPOA's agenda. CCPOA drives it. And I think that a metaphor you could look to would be a billiard table. There's a ball on that table that's the Legislature, and there's a ball on that table that's the administration,



Source: Youth and Adult Correctional Agency

center to it. It has no leadership. It has no structure that stands on principle. It has an organization that doesn't work except in ad hoc and informal and let's-make-it-go-aways that have been largely managed on local levels—that is to say in the respective prisons—by virtue of collaboration between the wardens and the CCPOA (The California Correctional Peace Officers Association, aka the prison guards union). To a lesser extent, it is managed—to the extent that word even applies—at the headquarters level, also in collaboration with the CCPOA.

The CCPOA has come in for a great deal of criticism, much of it deserved. But having said that, I'm mindful of this: The CCPOA has a mission of its own, and it has a fairly narrow scope. The department has a very large

and that administration includes the Governor's Office and YACA, and it includes the Department of Corrections and CYA and so forth. And there's another ball on that table that's the CCPOA, and it's the biggest ball on the table, and it beats those other balls back and forth across the felt. It does that on a pretty regular basis.

Then what happens on occasions such as we're here today—and I've seen these occasions before, as have many of the people in the audience, as have the Members (of the Legislature)—there gets to be a great deal of focus on this subject. And this one is, I think, one of the best such focused forums because it also has the benefit of the Special Master John Hagar's report, and it has the benefit of two senators who have given a great deal of attention

to this and now, over a period of about a year and a half, have achieved a great level of information and expertise on the subject. So, it's not something that can be easily glossed over when witnesses appear.

"Heads will roll, butts will get kicked, and three months later, when you're not looking, it will be back to the way it was."

— Stephen White

But having said all of that, what will happen, unless you do something different than what normally is done in the wake of these events, is that there will be great focus, there will be great saber rattling, there will be sincere commitments from Members here, there will be sincere—or at least ostensibly sincere—commitments from the people who are witnesses before you. Heads will roll, butts will get kicked, and three months later, when you're not looking, it will be back to the way it was. I know this to a certainty.

This plan, on the surface, creates the specter of a strong centralized management system. But the plan does not alter the Unit 6 contract [the contract between the prison guards and the State] and, therefore, I believe the plan will ultimately fail. The plan is like the agency's much touted *zero tolerance policy* on the code of silence. It looks good on paper. But the policy effectively died when 35 officers pled the Fifth Amendment last year regarding an inmate who bled to death on Super Bowl Sunday. Nothing happened to those officers. You don't talk—[therefore] you walk.

"To borrow on Judge White's prediction: the plan is a ruffling of feathers.

"Rehabilitation' has been incorporated in the proposed name change for CDC. But the Governor's budget proposes slashing \$95 million from CDC's budget for drug treatment and the already sparse educational programming. CDC admits that 80 percent of inmates have an addiction problem and 60 percent are functionally illiterate. I believe, as many do, that CDC's abysmal recidivism rate of more than three out of four could be cut to one in four with literacy remediation and drug addiction treatment programs. But don't use the name "rehabilitation" while you strike the money that pays for it.

"This is a plan without a price tag.

"This is a plan with ridiculous timelines.

"But let me talk about the part of the plan I fear the most. The California Youth Authority [CYA] has been a house of horrors in terms of suicides and brutal beatings. We have a large ward population that desperately needs mental health services, not just opportunities for basic education. I would advocate that the State of California house and treat our troubled youth in a stand-alone agency that may borrow expertise from the adult correctional agency, but would ultimately be driven by treatment values that are more sensitive to these young, highly troubled lives. In many respects, correctional officers and counselors are faced with more risks and greater treatment challenges at the CYA than at CDC.

"The plan envisions a Division of Youth Operations. I don't want the problems of the CYA to be tucked away and overshadowed by the demands that come with the incarceration of 164,000 adults.

"We need to look at the successes of the Missouri system where wards called "kids" are treated by guards who are called "youth specialists." These specialists have college degrees and go by their first name. In California we warehouse wards, but in Missouri, rehabilitation programs are delivered in small settings where bonds are forged between those in need of help and those who provide it. It took a series of scandals in 1983 to get Missouri to reform itself, and the reform has been cost effective. Missouri spends \$43,000 per youth per year while the CYA's tab is in excess of \$80,000 per ward per year.

"Akin to the CYA, are the challenges raised by the incarceration of women. I am deeply troubled by ongoing reports of abusive behavior of young female inmates who prey upon frail and elderly cellmates, a dynamic encouraged by a CDC policy that apparently puts the young and the old in the same cell. Women's health issues abound and I would hope that the proposed Division of Correctional Health Care Services will be set up to focus on the special needs of women.

"Last month this commission issued a report on the failures of California's women's prison system. The CDC agreed with the commission's findings regarding rehabilitation failures.

"... don't use the name 'rehabilitation' while you strike the money that pays for it."

— Senator Jackie Speier

"I say to Corrections: make correcting your failures a priority. There should be a separate correctional division set up for women.

"Clearly, one of the past problems at CDC is that the 32 state prisons were independent fiefdoms, and four of them were actually operating in the Dark Ages given that they had no e-mail capabilities. The new plan flattens the organization and, as I said, appears to streamline the flow command and control management. This is a positive step.

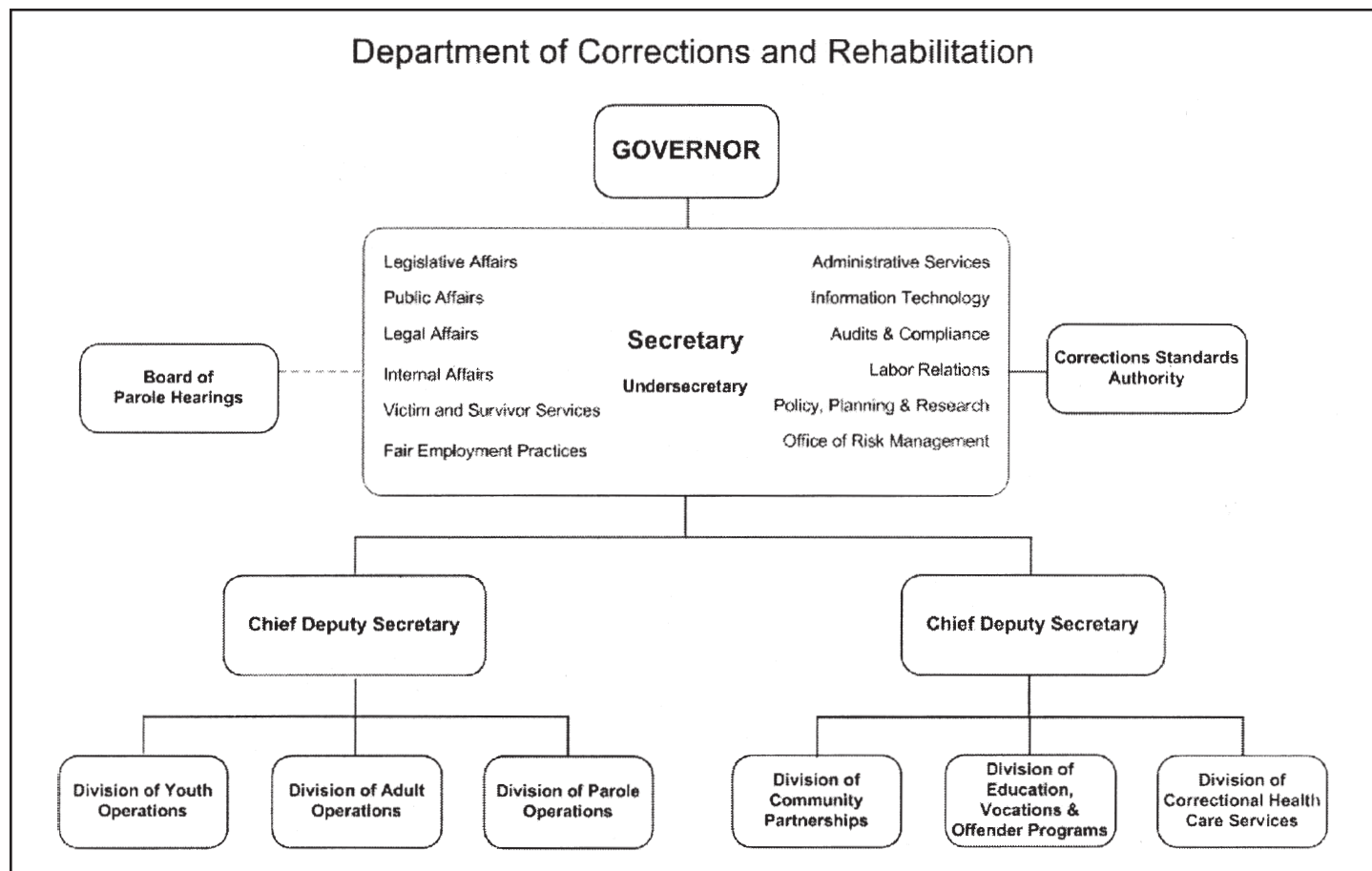
"I concur that wardens do not need to be subjected to Senate confirmation. They should be skilled chief financial officers, not political appointments approved by the CCPOA.

"However, the plan is faulty on two related fronts. One: the Agency doesn't expect to have a fully functional technological management system in place for five more years. This means that 280,000 inmates each year will be processed through a system without their tracks appearing in a central database.

"Furthermore, a central health care data base is also not envisioned until July 2010. That's not five years away, it's at

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Rearranging the Corrections Boxes *(Continued from page 5)*



Source: Youth and Adult Correctional Agency

least \$6 billion to \$8 billion or more away—and this is the amount of taxpayer money that will be devoted to inmate health care which is out of control. It is unconscionable to spend this sum of money without appropriate utilization data in place.

“This plan should call for immediate negotiations with the University of California, with HMOs, and with county hospitals, all who can help CDC effectively care for an aging inmate population.

“The plan calls for each new commitment to corrections to be interviewed and assessed regarding his or her rehabilitative, behavioral and medical needs. A few months ago CDC employees at San Quentin told me, as they had the year before, that inmates arrive for release without medical records and with incomplete personnel files. The reality is that CDC employs a cumbersome paper-driven system when a central data base system is required now—not in 2010. And when government says ‘in five years,’ it often means seven, eight, [or even] 10 years.

“Frankly, the system is overloaded, that is, there are too many inmates for the cells available. The crowding of inmates breeds hostilities and disease while over taxing custody and health care staff. Parole reform has failed to date.

“When you look at this reorganization plan, you don’t

see the troubles of the prison culture. You don’t see the ongoing injustices at facilities for women where basic hygiene needs are subject to a degrading barter system. You don’t see the schizophrenics who are routinely sent to the SHU for behavior that warrants treatment at a state mental hospital. But you also don’t see the ongoing results that are occurring at Pelican Bay State Prison, once our most troubled institution, but now, due to intense federal scrutiny, an institution where correctional staff enjoy going to work, where the code of silence has been hushed and where management is standing strong—and this testimony comes from correctional officers brave enough to share their views.

“I would note that reform at Pelican Bay was driven by the courage of the Honorable Judge Thelton Henderson and Special Master John Hagar. This plan, in many ways, is a byproduct of the federal court’s intervention in health and disciplinary problems uncovered at Pelican Bay State Prison, and I would suggest that we may have to

“I don’t want the problems of the CYA to be . . . overshadowed by the demands that come with the incarceration of 164,000 adults.”

— Senator Jackie Speier

consider a federal takeover if the state fails to implement needed reforms at every prison.

"We need the best, the brightest, the most committed to run a \$7 billion correctional system. The plan does set up a framework for the best and brightest to excel. But the plan falls short by failing to recognize the urgency of using technology, the urgency of dealing with troubled youth in separate environment and the urgency of funding treatment programs.

"I will be introducing a series of bills that will address shortcomings at CDC and I expect the administration to work with me and my staff to craft amendments to this plan. We should move quickly to separate the CYA from this plan and we should bolster oversight of conditions that confront women in prison.

"In closing, I would note that the Commission has done great work on parole reform and on women in prison. And I would ask the commission to consider holding a follow-up hearing on this reorganization plan, sometime prior to the

May Revise of 2005. [In May, the governor will provide a revised budget proposal for the next fiscal year based on the revenue collections and spending since the governor's original budget proposal in January.] I make this request because public oversight of corrections is one element missing from the reorganization, although the establishment of a public oversight commission was a key recommendation of the Governor's California Performance Review plan prepared by former Governor George Deukmejian. Clearly, our prison operations need more public scrutiny.

"I believe it is critical for Californians to understand why California annually spends an average of more than \$32,000 to house an inmate while Texas, which has more inmates than California, is able to house inmates at a cost of just over \$16,000 per year. The answer rests with inefficiencies. This plan addresses a few of the problems, such as convoluted lines of authority. But overall, the plan fails to recognize the urgency of dealing with the crisis in inmate health care, recidivism, treatment of wards and lack of cost controls." ❧

New Reports Boost Plan for Universal Health Care

With Senate President Pro Tem Don Perata (D., Oakland) pledging his full support, Senator Sheila Kuehl (D., Santa Monica) announced plans to reintroduce legislation in February to create a universal health care system for California. The bill will be officially known as the *California Health Insurance Reliability Act*.

A recent study released by the Lewin Group, a health care consulting firm, found that the plan would save California \$8 billion in health care spending the first year while providing a comprehensive benefit package and extending coverage to the uninsured. Folding all public and private health care plans into a single program would generate savings of \$25 billion due to administrative simplification and bulk purchasing of prescription drugs and capital equipment. Of the savings, \$17 billion would be used to expand coverage and benefits for a net savings of \$8 billion. Consumers will retain the freedom to choose their own health care providers.

The Lewin study found that employers who currently offer health benefits would realize savings averaging 16 percent, while families with incomes under \$150,000 per year would realize savings ranging from \$600 to \$3,000 per year. Health care would be financed by current government funding from discontinued health care programs, an employer payroll tax, an employee payroll tax and other taxes in lieu of premiums.

A recent study by Boston University indicates that 25 percent of all economic growth is being eaten up by rising

health care costs. The U.S. spends over twice as much per capita than other industrialized nations that provide universal health care and have larger elderly populations. The study also found that one-half of every dollar spent on health care goes to clinical and administrative waste, excess prices and theft. The fastest rising cost of health care spending in 2003 was program administration, including insurance industry profits and the costs of administering public and private coverage.

California has 6.5 million people with no health care coverage. The California Healthcare Foundation recently reported that health insurance premiums rose by 11.4 percent in 2004, the fourth consecutive year of double-digit premium increases. ❧

– Jim Lindburg <JimL@fclca.org>

For further reading:

"Lewin Group Report Release of the Health Care for All Californians Act," January 19, 2005: <http://healthcareforall.org/lewin.pdf>.

Health Costs Absorb One-Quarter of Economic Growth, 2000-2005, February 9, 2005: Boston University School of Public Health, <http://www.healthreformprogram.org>.

California Employer Health Benefits Survey 2004, California Health Care Foundation, <http://www.chcf.org/documents/insurance/HRETEmployerBenefits2004.pdf>.

! SAVE THE DATE !

California Interfaith Coalition's

Legislative

Issues

Briefing Day

Sacramento, California

May 25, 2005



(details to follow)

◆ ◆ ◆ **2005 Roster** ◆ ◆ ◆

FCL's 2005 Roster of the California State Legislature and The California Congressional Delegation is being prepared and should be available by the end of March, 2005. Thank you for your patience.

The Friends Committee on Legislation of California (FCL) includes Friends and like-minded persons, a majority of whom are appointed by Monthly Meetings of the Religious Society of Friends in California.



Expressions of views in this newsletter are guided by Statements of Policy prepared and approved by the FCL Committees. Seeking to follow the leadings of the Spirit, the FCL speaks for itself and for like-minded Friends. No organization can speak officially for the Religious Society of Friends.



While we strive above all for correctness and probity, we are quick to recognize that to err is human. We therefore solicit and welcome comments and corrections from our readers.

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