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Torture Doesn't Teach.

Prisons around the United States have four major purposes. These purposes include retribution, incapacitation, deterrence and rehabilitation. To look more in depth, the goal of doing these things is to ultimately prevent the inmates from committing future crimes because this subsequently leads to reincarceration. According to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the U.S. only makes up 5% of the world's population yet holds 25% of the world's prison population. Over 75% of discharged inmates are re-incarcerated within 5 years (NAACP). With this, it cannot be denied that prisons are not fulfilling their purpose. Prisons focus on torture and punishment, and they forget all about rehabilitation. This explains the high re-offending rate. I argue that prisons around the U.S. needs to be a place where prisoners are able to rehabilitate, get the help needed, and be given a second chance— All while they are still being valued as a human and nothing less.

How are we able to change our prison system to make it effective? To start off, we need to recognize the difference between restraint and punishment. When people are a danger to themselves or others, we restrain the individual for our safety and theirs. But this is completely different from inflicting unnecessary pain on the inmate as revenge or to “teach them a lesson.” Generations of research has proved that people, both children and adults, learn by example. Therefore, the only lesson being taught is to inflict pain on others. Instead of restraining *and*

causing pain to these inmates, prisons should still restrain those who are a possible harm to themselves or others but also help them change the only behaviors they know to turn to in troubled scenarios. This way, when they are released, they have knowledge on how to help themselves the right way and less likely to return. After all, that *is* America's ultimate goal— to better our citizens and improve our country no matter the circumstance.

Providing rehabilitation for inmates not only offers countless benefits to themselves, but also the community in which the inmate will eventually be released to. There are numerous options for rehabilitation, all of which depend on facility, sentence length, and offense. One being, providing education programs. Having an education program has proved time and time again to give inmates a second chance. In fact, those enrolled in the education programs were 43% less likely to commit a crime and be reincarcerated within three years than those who didn't (Criminal Law: Torure and Respect). Most of the inmates have not yet received the lowest form of education. When they are able to achieve obtaining either a GED or high school diploma, that alone, is a major confidence boost and more reason to believe in themselves as well as want better. In addition, the prison education programs cover functional skills. Therefore, those enrolled, or at an advantage even more when attempting to find work. Not only because they have an education, but they are also familiar with technology like updated computers as well as the Internet (ConnectNetwork).

In addition to education classes, job training programs as well as drug and alcohol programs have both been proven to reduce reoffending rate and help prisoners rebuild their lives. Those who are given the opportunity to participate in prison work programs have a better chance of getting work once they are released. Most times when an individual is released, the main

reason for reincarceration is that these inmates don't know what to do with their free time and with no orders. They then fall back to their initial habits as research proves (Dora Schriro). This can be avoided if they had the training and knowledge on how to find employment. According to The Center For Prison Health and Human Rights, about 50% of inmates have a substance use disorder. An article posted on Wharton Public Policy Initiative states, "Although drug treatment programs are available in the majority of prisons only 40% of drug abusing state prisoners and about half of drug abusing federal prisoners take part in these programs." 50% of inmates are incarcerated as well as being addicted to drugs. Yes, you may think: "They are locked up for years with no drugs, so they are not addicted anymore." But in fact, people with an addiction have an excessive focus on using a certain substance, to the point that they let it control their lives. So even though they're away from the substances, they still have the deep craving for it. Meaning, as soon as they are released many times, the first chance they get they will fulfill their addiction. With drug and alcohol rehabilitation these inmates will be able to help themselves when they feel the urge to fall back into their addiction.

Often times, an inmate who is well behaved, follows orders, and gives no trouble is expected to also do well when released. Those the same inmates struggle to do well in their communities. Why do we expect them to do well when we have provided minimum to no resources in helping them become better and change their ways? The only thing these inmates learn in prison is to sit on their bunk and take orders. Instead, we can enforce and provide programs so these inmates are able to do better when they are released. In Dora Schriro's article, "Getting Ready: How Arizona Has Created a 'Parallel Universe' For Inmates," She explains a successful program which has allowed many inmates to be successful in their communities when

released. In Arizona prisons, they bring in the real world to the inmates as much as possible. The program isn't robotic as most are. Getting Ready starts as soon as they are incarcerated and continues until the inmates are released. The program is individually customized for each inmate and is updated yearly. This way, nobody is left behind or given up on. "You do not have to look hard to see parallel universe at work. Unlike the typical present day, which starts about 9 AM and ends around 3 PM and rarely extends to the weekend, Arizona inmates apply themselves every day of the week, working to become literate, employable, and sober, and during leisure time, focusing on their families and communities and improving their lives. (Dora Schriro)"

Taxpayers shouldn't have to pay more money for criminals and their wrongdoings. Initially, prison rehabilitation programs will cost prisons money to implement. According to Wharton public policy, "Studies have shown that these programs decrease the recidivism rate, decreasing the prison population." So, in fact, less money will be required from taxpayers since the number of inmates will decrease and correctional facilities won't need as much money to operate. "Since educational, vocational, and drug we habilitation programs decrease the likelihood that inmates will reoffend, they also allow ex-convicts to contribute to society, boosting the economy (The Economic Impact oPrison Rehabilitation Programs: Wharton Public Policy Initiative). So, instead of turning something bad to worse prisons can turn something bad to better and it's a win-win for all. Offering education programs in prisons ultimately saves the state money. For example, in Nevada, from 2008 to 2009 their prison population decreased by 1.6%, which resulted in the state saving \$38 million. Allowing inmates to have job training in Minnesota allowed the state to save \$1.25 million with the decrease rate of incarceration. In California, it cost the state \$72 a day to incarcerate one prisoner. With San Diego's drug

treatment program, it has been proven to prevent ex convicts from returning to prison at a cost of only \$65 each day. While it is only seven dollars per prisoner being saved each day, if prisoners with substance use disorders participate in rehabilitation programs, prisons can save hundreds of thousands of dollars. So at first, just like anything, providing all of these resources will cost money. If we look at the long run these programs will reduce the recidivism rate as well as save everyone's money.

With the United States incarceration rate being one of the highest in the world, it is evident that America is doing something wrong. By doing simple adjustments with our inmates, we can become a better country as well as saving ourselves lots of money. In some states, many of these programs are provided for inmates but prisons do not encourage nor discourage inmates to participate. Instead, prisons need to make it mandatory to have prisoners participate in the programs which may be most effective to the individual. A lot of times, these prisoners come in with the mentality of not caring for absolutely anything. So by having to participate in these programs, this will open the inmates eyes and allow them to see a better life for themselves. Each inmate is still a human and will eventually return to their community which, many times prisons seem to forget. By enforcing these programs and treating inmates humanely, we allow our country to be set as an example, allow inmates to have a second chance, and contribute to the economy instead of taking away.

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