Patrick McFillin

Sabatino Mangini

English Composition

November 29th, 2017

The Prison System in the United States

The United States is home to less than five percent of the worlds population. They are also home to twenty-five percent of the worlds prison population. The United States has a prison problem, from violence to over population, a United States prison is the last place on Earth you want to be. The United States has 2.2 million people incarcerated right now and that number only goes up, even though crime has been decreasing since the 1990’s the population in prisons is at an historic high. Within three years after release 67.8 percent of released prisoners were rearrested. Isn’t prison supposed to rehabilitate people if so its not working. The United States prison system needs to be changed so that criminals are rehabilitated, so prison populations go down, and inmates are treated as humans.

67.8 percent of released prisoners are rearrested in three years after release.(Sterbenz) These people either really like prison or have been the victim of a cycle that is hard to break free from. Some criminals are dealing with drug addiction, a sickness that is better treated in a drug treatment center or a hospital then in a prison. The United States spends around 30,000 dollars per inmate per year. (Lee) That money could be used to help cure their addiction or even kickstart a better lifestyle for them but thats not the reality they live in. The reality they live is one where people would rather say lock them up and let them rot. For some people rehabilitation is useless, no matter how hard you try you'll never be able to corral them, but for most people rehabilitation is possible, and preferred. With 67.8 percent of related criminals being rearrested obviously something is wrong.

2.2 million people are incarcerated in the United States (Lee) and that number only gets higher, prison populations are too high and cost too much money. Confident is the most expensive form of punishment and the United States is a huge fan. Prison populations never used to be so big. In the late Eighties the prison population of America soared to new heights with legislation made by congress. With the “war on drugs” and the “war on crime” America passed laws that are still in the books today and are ruining lives as I type this very paper. With populations in prisons so large it is impossible to have a safe life in prison in hopes one day being released in order to survive in prison you need to join gangs and associate with people who normally people wouldn't even look at on the streets. Solitary confinement is also a form of punishment in prisons that simply does not work. Solitary confinement is limiting the inmates human contact to as low as possible, guards do not talk to them, they are not allowed visitors and they are kept away from other inmates for as long as guards and prison officials seem fit. Humans are social beings without other human contact people can go insane. A day in solitary may feel like a week and once released from solitary inmates are more mad coming out than they were coming in. Imagine you were a child who disobeyed your parents, the punishment my parents always went to was sending me to my room for five to ten minutes to think about what I did. Not being able to go outside and hang out with your friends or even talking with a brother or sister in infuriating, and I was only in my room for ten minutes, imagine being in a tiny cell with a bathroom and reinforced door as an adult it is no wonder that these convicts go right back where they started when they are released, in prison they learn that the life they live is the life they will always have so why change their lifestyle. Prisons need programs to help educate prisoners so when they are released they can get jobs that help society instead of making a living by selling drugs or robbing stores and homes. As long as prison stay they way they are now nothing will change.

Inmates in prison are treated like animals by both correction officers, and by other inmates in prison. They throw the new inmates into they lions den where they can, and mostly likely will be beaten, raped, and attacked repeatedly. Inmates are at the mercy of correctional officers who can be violent towards them and have no respect for them. New inmates are red meat to inmates in prison and for prisoners who are already serving a life sentence what more do they have to lose, nothing. These inmates don't care about changing because even if they do change and become model inmates there is no way out for them. People protest about treating animals wrong, some people protest trees being cut down but I don’t see anyone protesting the inhumane ways of running prisons in the US. The problem is people do not care about these people. They had their lives and ruined them themselves, why should I care. Aren’t we all humans, don’t we have have god given natural rights, rights that are being taken away from people because they were caught with drugs or they were caught stealing to pay for food for their starving family. Kids grow up and have to visit a family member in prison, that kid might grow up idealizing their parent or loved one and end up doing the same things that their loved one did before them. Is that fair, the kid was born with a bad hand in life and he played it. The only way that they will stop is prison or death, and if they go to prison odds are they’ll be out again only to be rearrested in the years to come. This is a serious problem in the United States and it needs to be solved.

This is the prison system in the United States. This is what the world sees when they look at America. Not a country born off of the belief a free world but a country full on convicts and low life's. The thing is their not wrong. Our prisons makes more criminals then it does rehabilitating them We hold twenty-five percent of the worlds prisoners while only being home to five percent of the worlds population. When you have more prisoners than Russia and China, some of the largest countries in the world there is a problem, when 67.8 percent of released prisoners are rearrested there is problem, when there is 2.2 millions people incarcerated…you have a problem. These problems though are solvable. Rehabilitate instead of punishing send people with addiction problems help. Give criminals a chance to make society better and you will. This is the prison system in the United States, but it doesn't have to be.

Works Cited

Lee, Michelle Ye Hee. “Yes, U.S. Locks People up at a Higher Rate than Any Other     Country.” The Washington Post, WP Company, 7 July 2015, [www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/07/yes-u-s-locks-people-up-at-a-higher-rate-than-any-other-country/?utm\_term=.9f7a92c9b0f3](http://www.washingtonpost.com/news/fact-checker/wp/2015/07/07/yes-u-s-locks-people-up-at-a-higher-rate-than-any-other-country/?utm_term=.9f7a92c9b0f3).

“Harsh Justice: Comparing Prisons Around the World.” Criminal Justice Degree Hub, [www.criminaljusticedegreehub.com/worldprisons/](http://www.criminaljusticedegreehub.com/worldprisons/).

Sterbenz, Christina. “Why Norway's Prison System Is so Successful.” Business Insider, Business Insider, 11 Dec. 2014, [www.businessinsider.com/why-norways-prison-system-is-so-successful-2014-12](http://www.businessinsider.com/why-norways-prison-system-is-so-successful-2014-12).

Scommegna, Tyjen Tsai and Paola. U.S. Has World's Highest Incarceration Rate, [www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2012/us-incarceration.aspx](http://www.prb.org/Publications/Articles/2012/us-incarceration.aspx).

“Six Charts That Explain Why Our Prison System Is So Insane.” *The American Prospect*, [prospect.org/article/six-charts-explain-why-our-prison-system-so-insane](http://prospect.org/article/six-charts-explain-why-our-prison-system-so-insane).

Rabuy, Peter Wagner and Bernadette. “Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2017.” *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie 2017 | Prison Policy Initiative*, www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2017.html.