



**PCDO**

Princeton Community Democratic Organization



Princeton Community Democratic Organization  
Post Office Box 481 □ Princeton, New Jersey 08542

★ ★ *General Membership Meeting \* Free and Open to the Public* ★ ★

**SECOND CHANCE FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE:  
UPCOMING REFORM LEGISLATION**

**Sunday, November 22 at 7:30pm**

**Suzanne Patterson Center, One Monument Drive (behind Boro Hall)  
Princeton, NJ**

Featuring Richard Greenberg, director of the Second Chance Campaign, a project of the Social Justice Institute of New Jersey, and a panel of former prisoners. They will focus on reentry problems addressed by the reform legislation.

*New Jersey's prison population has increased by 400% in less than three decades. We have spent \$1.2 billion a year on corrections with a 67% re-arrest within 3 years of release, costing \$39k per prisoner. The average person in a NJ prison functions at at 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade math level; only 2% of corrections budget is spent on educational programming.*

Co-Sponsored with Princeton College Democrats, ABC Prison Literacy  
and the Petey Greene Prisoner Assistance Program

*Proposed resolutions enclosed*

PCDO Politics Book Club – Next Meeting: Sunday November 22 at 4pm. Next Book: The Healing of America: A Global Quest for Better, Cheaper, and Fairer Health Care by T. R. Reid. All PCDO members are welcome to attend. Contact book club coordinator Peter Lindenfeld at [lindenf@physics.rutgers.edu](mailto:lindenf@physics.rutgers.edu) for meeting location and join the book club email list.

**PCDO Leadership Nominations: We need you! - Run for the PCDO Executive Board!**

The PCDO leadership election is on Jan. 24, 2010. Positions and job descriptions are available on the website, [www.princetondems.org](http://www.princetondems.org).

The PCDO's nominating committee ensures that there are candidates for each position and seeks to diversify the executive board, but it does not recommend or endorse candidates. Anyone who is a member can run. Potential candidates should contact the nominating chair at the latest by the deadline (Jan. 10). However, the committee has already begun actively seeking candidates. If you are thinking about running, any committee member will be happy to talk with you. Vicky Berman, Chair - [vicky.bergman@verizon.net](mailto:vicky.bergman@verizon.net), 921-2050

**Running for Local Office**

If you are interested in running for local office, the PCDO offers an avenue for you to test the waters through our endorsement process. We value competition and welcome new candidates. By facilitating communication with Princeton's most active and interested Democrats through email, our postal mailing list and at meetings, the PCDO gives candidates meaningful support that allows them to compete without a large initial expenditure or campaign organization.

For more detailed information about how to run see the Elections and Endorsements page on our website, [www.princetondems.org](http://www.princetondems.org).

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION  
NEW JERSEY SECOND CHANCE LEGISLATION**

WHEREAS, more than three decades of "get tough" policies have made the United States the world leader in incarceration but with no demonstrable gains in public safety;

WHEREAS in New Jersey one out of every 35 adults is under correctional supervision (either in prison, in jail, or on probation or parole) at a cost of more than \$45,000 per prisoner for a budgeted amount of more than \$1.5 billion dollars in fiscal year 2009;

WHEREAS New Jersey now imprisons a higher percentage of non-violent drug offenders than any other state;

WHEREAS people of color make up 83% of New Jersey's prison population but only 28% of the general population;

WHEREAS the average New Jersey prisoner is a high school dropout with a 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level and a 5<sup>th</sup> grade math level, but only 2% of the corrections budget is devoted to education and job training;

WHEREAS more than two-thirds of the 18,000 people released yearly from New Jersey's prisons will be re-arrested within three years, reflecting prisons that do not rehabilitate, post-release penalties that impair job opportunities, and parole programs that fail to adequately support re-entry into society;

WHEREAS studies have shown that alternatives to incarceration, including drug courts and community-based programs, cost less, improve public safety by significantly reducing crime rates, and free up taxpayer funds for investment in education and infrastructure; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey lawmakers, under the leadership of Assembly Majority Leader Bonnie Watson Coleman, have introduced criminal reform measures designed to promote alternatives to incarceration, increase educational programs in prisons, eliminate barriers to re-entry, promote greater accountability in correctional practices, increase investment in community-based corrections, and create programs that strengthen families and respond to the specific needs of imprisoned women and mothers;

NOW, THEREFORE, the Princeton Community Democratic Organization, believing that this legislation represents a constructive and long overdue response to the inequities, inefficiencies, and human costs of our current correctional practices, hereby expresses its support for these reforms, encourages our lawmakers to work vigorously for their passage, and encourages our lawmakers to continue to seek ways to improve the fairness and effectiveness of our criminal justice system.

**PROPOSED RESOLUTION:  
SUPPORTING NATIONAL CRIMINAL JUSTICE COMMISSION ACT OF 2009, S. 714**

WHEREAS the United States has 5% of the world's population but now houses 25% of the world's reported prisoners; imprisons four times as many people with mental illness as are treated in psychiatric hospitals; has increased the imprisonment of drug offenders by 1200% since 1980; has reduced educational and rehabilitation programs available to prisoners; and has imposed restrictions and barriers on former prisoners that make it difficult them to find housing and employment so they can become productive members of society; and

WHEREAS most people we imprison return to our communities, but more than half will be re-arrested within three years of release, reflecting a system that fails victims, families, offenders, and communities, and compromises public safety; and

WHEREAS mass imprisonment of illegal drug users, in particular, has not curtailed drug use but has spawned transnational criminal activity, much of it directed by violent gangs and cartels; and

WHEREAS the irregularities and inequities in our criminal justice system fall disproportionately on people who are poor, mentally ill, or members of minority groups, thereby diserving our country's commitment to fairness and equality under the law; and

WHEREAS the current state of our criminal justice system cries out for careful study and re-examination; and

WHEREAS, the National Criminal Justice Commission Act of 2009, S.714 introduced by Senator Jim Webb in March 2009, will create a commission to undertake an 18-month searching review of the system with the goal of proposing reforms designed to responsibly reduce the overall incarceration rate; improve federal and local responses to international and domestic gang violence; restructure our approach to drug policy; improve the treatment of mental illness; improve prison administration; and establish a system to improve the re-integration of ex-offenders; and

WHEREAS, the Princeton Community Democratic Organization believes this legislation provides an overdue response to issues of high importance to our community, to the state of New Jersey, and to the nation and accordingly believes that S. 714 deserves support,

THEREFORE, the PCDO respectfully resolves and encourages Senator Frank Lautenberg and Senator Robert Menendez to add their names to the Senate sponsors of S. 714. and to work vigorously to secure its passage.