

GREY OWLS COMMITTEE

NEWSLETTER

This sub-committee will be composed of individuals age 50 and over interested in having mature conversations on certain issues. Send all request slips to the Attention : Anthony Brown, HFC Treasurer and Grey Owls founder.

ACLU's At American's Expense: Part 2

Demographics Of A Rapidly Graying Prison Population

There is an overwhelming consensus among correctional experts, criminologists, and the Nation's Institute of Corrections that 50 years of age is the appropriate point marking when a prisoner becomes "aging" or "elderly". The lack of appropriate healthcare and access to healthy living prior to incarceration, added to the heavy stress of life behind bars, accelerates the aging process of prisoners so that they are actually physically older than average individuals. This report therefore uses age 50 and older to define the population of aging prisoners and provides data on this age group.

Approximately 16% of the National Prison population is age 50 and older. There are several jurisdictions with far higher percentages of aging prisoners including West Virginia (20%), New Hampshire (20%), Massachusetts (19%), Florida (18%), and Texas (18%), Pennsylvania is (9.5%).

There are 246,600 aging prisoners nationwide. The four jurisdictions with the highest actual number of prisoners age 50 and older are California (27,680), Texas (27,455), Florida (17,980), and Pennsylvania (11,000). The population of prisoners age 55 and older is expected to increase by 4,400% from 1981 to 2030. In 1981, there were only 8,853 prisoners age 55 and older. Corrections experts project that by 2030,

there will be over 400,000 such prisoners, amounting to one-third of the prison population. This astronomical projection does not even include those prisoners ages 50-54 and is therefore a lower projection than the actual future elderly prison population.

As is the case with the overall American Prison population, America's Elderly prisoners are overwhelmingly male. Women make up a mere 6% of aging prisoners.

Black prisoners comprise the largest segment of aging prisoners (42%). However White (33%) and Hispanic (15%) of aging prisoners are over represented, meaning they make up a far higher percentage of aging prisoner population than they do the general U.S. population.

LOWER PUBLIC SAFETY RISK OF AGING PRISONERS

- The elderly prison population is increasingly comprised of individuals sentenced to prison for long periods of time (20 years or more) and increasing remain in prison into age. In 1979, only 2% of aging prisoners fell into this category nationwide.

Data collected from jurisdictions shows that this percentage is far higher now. For example, the percentage of aging prisoners falling into this category is now 15% in PA.

- The majority of aging prisoners are not incarcerated for murder, but are in prison for lower level crimes. For example, in PA., 65% of aging prisoners are in prison for nonviolent drug crimes, property crimes, and other nonviolent crimes.
- Research has conclusively shown that by the age of 50 most people have significantly outlived the years in which they are most likely to commit crimes. For example, arrest rates drop to just over 2% at age 50 and are almost 0% at age 65.
- There is also overwhelming evidence that prisoners 50 and older are far less likely to return to prison for new crimes than younger cohorts.

- The statistics taken together strongly suggest that the increasing of aging prisoner is not due to any "ELDERLY CRIME WAVE" but rather due to younger prisoner who are sentenced to longer terms in prison, often for not so serious crimes.
- As is the case with the overall American prison population, America's elderly prisoners are overwhelmingly male. Women make up a mere 6% of aging prisoners.
- **CONCLUSION:** The crisis of our aging prison population is not an accident but the result of policy choices that hurt incarcerated people their loved ones, families and communities fortunately we can address these policy missteps. States should follow the lead of advocates who are fighting to reduce sentencing like life without parole, and expand release mechanisms like elder parole, ensuring people have safe places to live in our communities.

Tools to reduce the aging prison population remain underutilized

While attention to the crisis has grown in recent years many of the available tools - such as parole and compassionate release - have been underutilized. The failure to release older adults from prison has had deadly repercussions. From 2001 to 2018, over 30,500 people aged 55 or older died in prison and almost all these deaths (97%) were due to illnesses

Burt Cain, Warden of Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola.

You actually create victims by not letting elderly prisoners go and using your resources on rehabilitation for the one that are going to get out... When I came here and saw the elderly population, I SAID "GOD. WELL WHY ARE THEY HERE? Our name is Corrections to correct deviant behavior but there's nothing to correct in the guys; They're harmless...

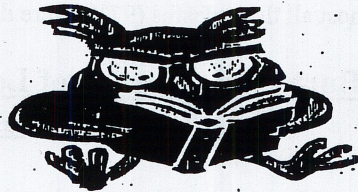
Promote A Lifestyle of Wellness with David Marks

Get adequate sleep, flex your sleep muscles. When you don't sleep enough, the brain cannot do its housekeeping of removing cellular waste products. The resulting abundance of debris in the brain can eventually result in excess inflammation. Inflammation, as seen in study after study, exacerbates depression, anxiety, and a host of other mental health conditions. Very few of us can go to sleep based solely of willpower; you need to invite relaxation in. That could be through a ritual like taking a shower, reading a book, or journaling. If anxiety keeps you up, try progressive muscle relaxation. Lying in your bed, breathe in and tense a muscle group for about ten seconds. When you exhale, completely release those muscles. Take a few breaths and move on to the next muscle group. Start with your hands; move up your body and then down. Some people do three rounds - whatever it takes to help your body relax, which is one of many steps toward a lifestyle of wellness.

Gregory Scott Brown, M.D.
Men's Health May/June 2022

We want to thank all the Grey Owls members and non-members; especially the Youth for taking time to read and digest these Newsletters. And also I would like to thank for all the positive feedback, encouragement and support coming in from SCI Forest.

Chairman- Anthony Brown
Co-Chair- David Marks



Grey Owls - Mission Statement:

We aim to address certain issues pertinent to the more mature members of the elderly community. Through wisdom, fortitude, and resilience, we will seek to advance the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual well being of our members and in doing so benefiting our immediate community.

GREY OWLS Est. 2020 a Subcommittee of the
Lifer's and Long-Termers Committee
Founder: Anthony Brown, Co-Founder David Marks
Co-Founder: William "Cool Pop" Abbott (Deceased)


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