



# Jailhouse Chatter

**AFGE Local 1612**

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## **NO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT?!**

A Senate Panel has called on federal and state prison authorities to ban the use of solitary confinement for juveniles, pregnant women and the mentally ill.

Senator Dick Durbin of Illinois is spearheading the movement and has said, "the extreme conditions contribute to the gradual deterioration of prisoners' mental health." According to Durbin, half of all prison suicides are from offenders housed in solitary confinement. Mr. Durbin has referred to solitary confinement as a "human rights issue we can't ignore."

Ironically, the Subcommittee Panel was held a day after the one year anniversary of the murder of Officer Eric Williams and the day of the murder of Lt. Osvaldo Albarati.

Council of Prison Locals President Eric Young has testified at the subcommittee and has been speaking out stating "Isolating and removing violent and dangerous inmates from general population settings is a vital tool to ensure the safety of prison staff and other inmates. We must be able to restrict and restrain inmates before their behavior escalates. And we must have deterrent mechanisms in place to control inmates' behavior before it creates anarchy in a prison setting. We cannot have staff and inmates being targeted for assaults and certainly cannot allow anyone to be murdered without consequence."

According to BOP Director Charles Samuels, "6.5% of the bureau's 215,000 inmates are confined in some form of "restrictive housing." Of that number, only one is a juvenile and 197 are women. Mr. Samuels said, "there are inmates, such as gang leaders, who must be separated from the rest of the prison population." According to Bureau statistics, in the 119 institutions, over 20,000 inmates are associated with gangs and more than 400 have been identified as international or domestic terrorists. The Bureau houses large numbers of drug offenders, "many with ties to international cartels and major narcotics traffickers, as well as assorted weapons offenders, sex offenders, murderers and robbers." The Bureau actually houses inmates others, such as state penal institutions cannot handle.

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# This Month in Labor History

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In 1894, a treaty between the United States and China prevents Chinese laborers from entering the U.S.

An Industrialist known for his cruel treatment of workers, which included long hours and horrible working conditions at his steel plants and shooting down efforts to Unionize, turns philanthropist and donated \$5.2 million for construction of 65 branch libraries in New York City. The millions were barely a percent of his net worth. In all, he established more than 2,500 libraries between 1900 and 1919. Andrew Carnegie made \$500 million when he sold to J.P. Morgan, which made him the world's richest man in 1901.

In 1914, Henry Ford announced a new method to assemble cars using

continuous motion machinery. The process decreased the time to make a car from 12 and a half hours to 93 minutes.

The Supreme Court approves 8-Hour Act in 1917 due to the threat of a national railway strike.

New York City bus drivers go on strike in 1941. After 12 days of no buses, Mayor La Guardia orders arbitration.

Coal miners begin a nationwide strike in 1948. The strikers were demanding pension plans.

Transport Workers Union at American Airlines won their case after an 11 day strike in 1950. The win was big as it was the first severance pay clause in industry.

The Los Angeles City Council passes a living wage ordinance. The ordinance required city contractors to pay a minimum wage of \$8.50 an hour, or \$7.25 if the employer was contributing at least \$1.25 toward health benefits along with annual adjustments for inflation.

In 2005, Wal-Mart agrees to pay \$11 million to settle a civil case for using undocumented immigrants to do overnight cleaning at stores.

## Local Happenings

- The arbitration case regarding light duty will continue on October 22 and 23, 2014
- A case regarding the 12-day suspension of a bargaining unit staff member is pending dates for arbitration
- The 1-2 Clinic Sleep Study case has arbitration dates set for August 13 and 14, 2014
- An arbitration case regarding workplace accommodations is pending dates
- The ratification of the Master Agreement vote was mailed in
- Scholarship applications were due by March 14, 2014
- If staff have not been reimbursed for leave taken during the inclement weather on February 1-3, 2011, please notify Karrie Wright or Bekki Stafford
- Notify Karrie Wright if you have been denied light duty.

## Solitary Confinement Continued...

In reference to the supermax facility in Colorado, it was noted only approximately 413 inmates were housed there out of the total of 215,000 inmates the Bureau of Prisons currently houses, which helps show “judicious placemen” according to Mr. Young. Of those 413 inmates, 194 have a history of homicide in the community, 121 have a history of homicide while placed in a Control Unit and 58 have a history of murder while housed in general population.

According to Mr. Young, “Decisions that our staff make each and every day in terms of whether inmates should remain in general population or be transferred to restricted housing units have real implications for the safety and well-being of our sworn law enforcement officers. The theories, research and positive sentiments expressed on behalf of the inmates who are isolated from the general population are certainly worth of discussion and debate. But at the end of the day, the security of our prisons and the safety of our staff, the general inmate population, and the American public must be paramount. We have the most violent inmate populations of any correctional system in the world today, and, we do so while ensuring their humane treatment and also providing opportunities for self-improvement.”

Other witnesses who testified at the hearing included several former inmates and the American Civil Liberties Union. Author Piper Kerman who wrote “Orange is the New Black,” a memoir based on her experiences serving time in prison also testified. Kerman claimed women in prison are reluctant to speak up about rape and abuse within the prison systems due to the fear of retribution and being moved to confinement.

## Council of Prisons Local

Council of Prisons Local (CPL 33) and the Agency continued with national policy negotiations in Seattle, Washington. One policy being negotiated involves streamlining of paperwork/forms currently completed by Case Management in regards to notifying offenders of their requirement to register.

Recently the Psychology Services Joint Policy Committee (JPC) Workgroup, which included the Union’s North Central Regional Vice President Mike Rule toured MCFP. Specifically, the group looked at the operations of the Mental Health Units. This committee focused on the draft policy, “Treatment and Care of Inmates with Mental Illness,” which had been released for the 30-day comment period. Comments received by the Union and Management were discussed in detail. Based on feedback, proposed edits to the policy were drafted to provide greater clarification and/or address concerns raised by the field.

The committee agreed to continue with discussion of revisions to the Early Release Procedures Under 18 USC 3621(e) policy at the next meeting.

## What is an Unfair Labor Practice?

An unfair labor practice or “ULP” refers to certain actions taken by employers or unions that violate the National Labor Relations Act (NLRA) and other legislation. These types of violation are investigated by the National Labor Relations Board (NLRB).

The Federal Service Labor-Management Relations Statute outlines rights and obligations on the part of unions, agency management, and employees. If any of the parties fails to perform its obligation to the other party, a ULP charge may be filed. A ULP charge may also be filed if either labor or management interferes with the rights each has been given under the Statute. Employees may also protect their rights under the Statute by filing ULP charges against labor or management with one example being if an agency retaliates against employees for seeking Union representation. Neither an agency nor the Union may refuse to bargain with the other in good faith.

Title 5 Chapter 71 outlines Labor - Management Relations and **it is the law!** To read the statute, visit the link: <https://www.flra.gov/statute>

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### Knowledge is Power!

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**AFGE Local 1612**

We're on the Web!  
[www.local1612.com](http://www.local1612.com)

**We are only as strong as our members! We rely on our members to help us identify violations of our Master Agreement and past practice in order to ensure our rights are upheld! Votes are held at meetings! Come and vote for matters that will affect you!**

**The next meeting has been rescheduled to Monday, April 14th at 4:30 pm.**

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