

To Whom it may concern,

I am Brenda Emerick, mother of a young man that has been sentenced to die in prison. A sentence I believe to be cruel and unusual punishment. My son was 22 yrs. old, he was along for a trip to a carnival with a newly acquainted, slightly older man and his (the other man's) girlfriend, on that evening a horrible crime was committed. I do not condone crime in any way, however I do believe the Life without Possibility of Parole is a Death Sentence. It is a sentence imposed on far too many individuals too easily. It is, has been, at times very overwhelming in so many ways. Not only to myself & my family, but the exhorbinante cost to society itself is astronomical, and continues to grow. Therefore Society pays a great cost, and it does not even deter others!!

The Department of Corrections, DOC, claims in ITS' mission statement that they are all about rehabilitation. I have not seen any evidence of this, or very little of it. In the 20 yrs my son has spent behind these walls he, himself, has taken it upon himself to rehabilitate. He sought to take college courses through the DOC, and was refused. While all other prisoners may take college courses for a mere \$50, Lifers must pay \$650.00 for the same course. When He came up with the money they told him there were not enough people signed up so the course wouldn't be offered. So he went outside the prison and took an electricians course through mail, provided by The Stratford Career Institute. Yes, because of his own efforts

he is a certified electrician. My son also sought studies from outside the prison to strengthen his religious beliefs and knowledge. In prison he was denied being able to sing in the choir, so he sought other teachers, outside the prison.

I have met many prisoners serving Life Without Parole Sentences, mostly by mail, however I have met some in person. One of those people is Marie Scott!! I had met her way before my son's incarceration. Marie is an amazing woman. She has been incarcerated for way too long. And when she was sentenced there was no Life without Parole sentences. She got thrown into that yrs later after they (the Prison) changed the law. That is cruel and unusual punishment. Marie Scott has written House Bills - 6 of them - and I believe 5 have been passed into law. Marie has self taught in the law, to be an artist, to be an addiction counselor, to name a few of her accomplishments. This woman has never stopped trying to help people, or herself. Currently Marie needs medical attention that is not being taken care of. This is cruel and unusual punishment to make any human suffer when treatment could be provided. To know this and not be able to help her get the treatment needed is a hard pill to swallow. She deserves so much better. All prisoners deserve better treatment. When our loved ones are mistreated, or not given medical treatment they need it also takes a toll on us, the family and friends of those prisoners.

There are so, so many Liters that have done such amazing things from prison. So much good things for both the betterment of the prisons, as well as the communities around the prisons. Yet this system continues to deny them a second chance. This is

cruel and unusual punishment, and it not only is devastating to the prisoner, but also to the family and friends. These prisons know that it's those very Lifers that are so giving that keeps the peace in these prisons. They are the teachers, the ones that develop programs and instruct those programs. They (prison officials) use these Lifers to keep the prisons running smoothly in many aspects, yet they refuse to give them a second chance. This is cruel and unusual punishment in my opinion.

What I can tell you that having my son, my sister/friend Marie, my friend/brothers Kevin Gans, Ronald Lee Smith, Melvin-Tro Williams, Russell Sewell, Charles Smith and others, have given me quite an education on exactly how these prisons operate. Not only are they cruel and unusual punishment for the prisoners, but to the family + friends too. I have been treated as a criminal just for visiting anyone in prison. I've learned just how barbaric and draconian the system is, especially here in Pa. I've learned just how broken our system is, how corrupt our system is.

Prisoners are people, not caged animals, we need to treat them as the people they are. The family and friends also need to be treated as people, not criminals. What ever happened to the old adage, "Treat All others as you wish to be treated" If a prisoner is following the rules, goes out of their way to help others, doesn't cause problems and rehabilitates themselves, they should be treated as the productive members of the community, being able to make their way back to being productive members of society. These are the prisoners that deserve to have that second chance