



CSOR

*Though I have fallen,
I will rise. - Micah 7:8*

38th Edition

March 2023

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CSOR Newsletter
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CHANGE

As creatures who enjoy our comfort, change is frequently difficult. We get used to the people who work with us, play with us, live with us, go to school and church with us. Moving on to new friends and helpers, belonging to different organizations, gaining a new roommate or in some of your cases, a new cellmate, is not easy. In fact, sometimes, it seems as if life as we once knew it has flown away from us.

God created us to enjoy each other, the world around us and the creatures that inhabit it – our dogs, cats, horses and so on. Besides the changes that come to pass as we age such as not hearing or seeing as well, not moving around as we used to and so on, our lives can be devastated by losing friends, co-workers, family – all of whom have filled incredibly important places in our lives. For people in prison, changing cellies, getting a new case manager, hearing that a parent or a child on the outside is not well or is in the hospital, working for a different C.O. in the kitchen, can pretty much mess us up.

I recently experienced such a loss in my life. Moving forward with the same vigor as in the past has been hard because of this loss. Feeling less productive and more helpless than in times recently past, I have cried and wanted to give up at times.

However, as I continue to rise to a new day, meet new people through letters, meetings and various get togethers, my hope is renewed that in spite of the fact that things in life have changed, and we sometimes feel that we will never recover, God provides hope. That can happen through a new friend, a new job, a new helper, a new case manager or Executive Director of CDOC. I remember losing a co-worker and thinking that life would surely end because of that, when along came a new supporter and co-worker.

As things change, there can be new hope and satisfaction. Sometimes you feel as if it will never come, life will never be the same, but God provides a way for us to move forward.

I recently resigned from my position as Western Regional Coordinator for NARSOL (National Association for Rational Sexual Offense Laws), feeling that I want my work during my later years of life to be toward things that will “get better” in my lifetime. I don’t believe, unfortunately, that the Registry will go away before my life on earth is over. I decided instead to focus on changes that I may be able to help make with co-workers who care what happens to people who once went astray in terms of specific harmful behaviors. That means more letter writing, more newsletter writing, more meetings with peers who have intelligent ideas regarding how to create new housing options for our population of folks who are not welcome in many communities.

Change – it “ain’t” easy. It can cause tears, frustration, feelings of aloneness and sometimes total helplessness. There is a verse in the Bible that says “Trust in the Lord with all your heart and do not lean to your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will direct your paths.” While it may feel at times during life’s journey that there is no hope and that no-one cares, as it has felt for me recently, and even when our enemies are throwing darts of various kinds at us, we must not despair, but go forward, as a new dawn will soon appear!

LEGISLATIVE LANGUISHING!

It is that time again. After last year's fiasco, D.A.'s and victim advocates shouting down those of us attempting to advocate for our men and women both in prison and on the outside, it felt a bit fruitless at 1:30 in the morning as we all wearily left the Legislature. We are back at it seven months or so later, as the legislators begin to make decisions based on DORA (Department of Regulatory Agency) recommendations for our men and women. Here are the recommendations made by DORA after meeting with those of us standing up for people who have our particular offense in their background.

1. Continue the SOMB for 7 years. This is pretty much a consistent recommendation from DORA each year and echoes a belief by most that the SOMB is a necessary entity ongoing.
2. Create a mandate that probation and parole officers be subject to the SOMB Standards and Guidelines.

-It may be a bit confusing to try to figure out exactly what this means, so I went back and read some more regarding the discussion that DORA had on this. The challenge to "putting" Parole and Probation Officers under the ruling hand of the SOMB is that a) parole officers are "managed" by their own rules and regulations which may at times not confer with the rules and regulations of the SOMB; and likewise probation officers as we are all too aware, are directed by the courts and what they call "SOISP etc. Probation officers, at times, try to convince the court that SOISP requirements must be followed as if those "required conditions" by the court ARE found in the SOMB Standards and guidelines, which they are not!

3. Allow clients to choose among all providers. This is easily understood.
4. Require standards compliance reviews on at least 10% of providers every two years.

By the time you get this newsletter, these decisions will all likely have been made. My guess is that #1 and #3 may pass, and #2 and #4 may not. We will see what happens! I would like to see #4 pass.

A note from someone in the know! What has been decided so far is just what DORA recommended. Any real action will be through amendments which are yet to come! Let's wait and see what happens - I will keep you informed as decisions are made.

NEW PUSHES FOR HOUSING IN DENVER

I was invited to a meeting downtown by Leslie Herod's run for Mayor. I am not sure how I got invited, but I did. One of the discussions was regarding enlarging the housing options for those in Denver who cannot afford single family dwellings and need what has come to be called "low-income housing" After the presentation was made by three housing providers/builders, I decided it was "now or never", and I raised my hand to put the housing needs out there for our men and women.

"Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies." -Ernest Benn

The room went suddenly quiet as you can imagine. Leslie knows me vaguely from the Legislature and said a few words about seeing me at the Legislature etc., but none of the three housing gurus stepped forward to say a word or two regarding housing for “our” population.

Since then, each time her organization has sent out ads asking for money for her mayoral run, I have reminded them that for me to give to her campaign, I would need some assurance that she would be pushing for housing for our particular men and women. So far, after giving that reminder following 3 – 5 requests for money on my part, no-one has stepped forward to offer hope that out of all of this new push on low-income housing, our population would be included. Because of that, Leslie’s campaign has gotten no new money from me!!!

A recent newsletter from Southwest Denver’s Councilman Flynn, shared a notice about housing called “ADU’s” which Councilman Flynn stated would be coming to District 2 (my district). These ADU’s (Accessory Dwelling Units), also known as “back yard cottages” or “mother-in-law suites” will be presented and discussed at the meeting in my area of Denver, District 2 at a meeting on February 9. I totally plan to attend! Of course, the same issues that always arise with our men and women will arise in this situation, as we will be talking about folks living in “a neighborhood”. However, like Elon Musk’s metal fold-up houses that sell for \$50,000, and the little “beetle looking R.V. type “cottages” that are surfacing, Denver is beginning to realize that single family dwellings are NOT the “cat’s meow” anymore. Of course, single family dwellings will continue in Denver, but many of them will be “sharing” their space with other types of housing, in order to get folks off the streets and out of the shelters.

I hope I live to see some of this actually happen. It is important that we continue to stress that our men and women who have: 1) pro-social support; 2) a job; and 3; housing, are much less likely to commit another offense! I am excited, and hope that we will be able to open doors for these unique kinds of things to happen.

I would not mind having an ADU in my back yard at all – we already have 4 people living in our house, so the more the merrier. Caution: this is still a bit of a “dream”, but could fast become a reality. I will keep you posted via the next newsletter as to how the meeting in District 2 goes regarding this “ADU” discussion.



Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU)



Elon Musks \$50,000. Prefab home

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style. - Maya Angelou

Disclaimer: Opinions expressed in this newsletter are CSOR's. Any concerns about overall content may be sent to: Susancwalker1@gmail.com.