

## PRISONS IN MICHIGAN

### Updated 2010

The LWVMI believes that the state's criminal justice system\* should utilize, as appropriate, the following principles:

- Restorative justice that emphasizes repairing the harm caused by criminal behavior.
- Therapeutic justice that addresses the offender's behavior as a problem requiring non-traditional sanctions and/or social services in addition to traditional sanctions.
- Retributive justice that punishes those who break the rules.

The LWVMI supports the following:

- I. The use of alternatives to incarceration in the following circumstances:
  - A. For individuals who can be safely managed in the community.
  - B. For persons with mental illness who have committed crimes.
  - C. For juveniles, in order to end the practice of incarcerating juveniles in adult facilities.
- II. State funding of all of the costs of an indigent person's defense.
- III. Preservation of an incarcerated person's right to the following:
  - A. Access to the courts.
  - B. Protection under the Michigan Civil Rights Act.
  - C. Access to the Freedom of Information Act for requests that do not compromise public safety.
  - D. Access to the vote following incarceration.
- IV. Oversight of the prison system that includes the following:
  - A. An ombudsman.
  - B. Media access to prisons.
  - C. Policies that encourage visitation.
  - D. Careful oversight of privatized services with penalties for nonperformance.

- V. The prison system's responsibility for ensuring the following:
  - A. Humane conditions in the state's prisons.
  - B. Mental health services that meet community standards.
  - C. Health care that meets community standards.
  - D. Rehabilitative programming that is available on a timely basis.
  - E. Provision of assistance to incarcerated individuals in transitioning to the free world.

\*Please note that this position applies to the Michigan criminal justice system and cannot be applied to County jails.

- VI. The parole board's responsibility for the following:
  - A. The use of objective rationale for holding someone past his or her minimum sentence.
  - B. Ensuring that all individuals are released early enough to provide some transitional supervision.

- VII. The LWVMI supports the Michigan constitutional prohibition on enactment of the death penalty.

\*Please note that this position applies to the Michigan criminal justice system and cannot be applied to County jails.