

105TH CONGRESS
2D SESSION

H. CON. RES. 256

Expressing the sense of Congress with regard to Lifer Groups.

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 31, 1998

Mr. CONYERS submitted the following concurrent resolution; which was referred to the Committee on the Judiciary

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

Expressing the sense of Congress with regard to Lifer Groups.

Whereas wardens have found that prisoners serving life terms (lifers) tend to be more reliable and less prone to disruptive behavior than most other prisoners;

Whereas lifers have been organizing themselves into Lifer Groups since the 1960's;

Whereas Lifer Groups have been vehicles for many imaginative and creative programs by prisoners, including—

(1) counseling programs for inner city youths at risk;

(2) workshop programs supplying prosthetic and other equipment to hospitals and health centers and toys to child care centers and children's hospitals; and

(3) providing entertainment and cultural awareness to their fellow prisoners in the form of dramatic productions and poetry groups;

Whereas the products and programs that Lifer Groups produce are conspicuous examples of prisoner accomplishment, achieved in democratic organizations, and therefore serve as models for other prisoners to emulate;

Whereas members of Lifer Groups are frequently able to calm and counsel young offenders, thus aiding the preservation of order in our prisons;

Whereas with the increasing number of life sentences and the virtual elimination of parole for lifers, those serving life sentences will make up an increasing proportion of our prison population;

Whereas with increasing numbers of lifers facing the certainty of dying in prison, there is danger that previously cooperative and dependable prisoners will become a less useful, and even antagonistic population;

Whereas a lively, vibrant Lifer Group will do much to prevent this result, at the same time providing prisoners with a chance to partially recompense society for the wrong they have done; and

Whereas Lifer Groups need as much autonomy, self-financing, and outside sponsorship as is consistent with security: Now, therefore, be it

1 *Resolved by the House of Representatives (the Senate*
 2 *concurring)*, That it is the sense of Congress that the de-
 3 partments of corrections of the various States and the Bu-
 4 reau of Prisons of the Federal Government should encour-

- 1 age the formation of Lifer Groups in penal institutions
- 2 and provide as much help for them as is possible and con-
- 3 sistent with their reasonable organizational autonomy.

