

LOCKED OUT

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

What is your group about?

Locked Out is a group of people who are committed to ensuring that people of our community, the Transgendered, Bisexual, Lesbian, and Gay community (or "Queer" community for short), are treated fairly, humanely, and equally while they serve time in prison. We start very simply by making sure they have reading materials, such as books and magazines, while they pass the time. These reading materials are donated by individuals, bookstores, and publishers and are sent free of charge upon request from the inmate. We have no paid staff; all monies raised by and for us go directly into helping the organization function and grow. We operate internally on non-hierarchical, democratic, and progressive principles, which allows everyone to participate to the best of their abilities. Our group is welcome to everyone who is committed to the cause of queer prisoner human rights.

Aren't people in prison for a good reason?

Yes, some are. Although, among those that are in prison, around 75% are in for non-violent offences, mostly non-violent drug offences. The crime of drug use was invented by our government in the late 1960's as a solution to "undesirable" populations; undesirable populations such as the growing radical gay, feminist, labor, and people of color movements. Due to the "get tough on crime" campaigns by right and "left" wing politicians this solution has grown tremendously into what today is referred to as the Prison Industrial Complex. Whether a person is imprisoned for reasons good or bad, the fact remains that these correctional institutions exist to torture, dehumanize, and ultimately murder people, not rehabilitate or "correct" them. Serious reforms must happen before we can legitimately say that prisons are an ethical resource for taking violent and anti-social elements out commission in hopes of their betterment and ours. We want to work for such reforms.

Why do you focus on queer prisoners?

Even though homosexual sex and transgenderism occur naturally among many "straight" inmates in prison, the general population and prison administration despise openly queer inmates. They are raped and attacked into submission by their fellow inmates, often with the supervision and participation of prison officials. Queers are often segregated and denied equal opportunity to the few benevolent programs allowed, such as getting exercise in the yard. And fundamentalist, homophobic religious groups are allowed to come in to convert and influence a captive audience, while a number of prisons officially ban anything from the outside that doesn't automatically condemn homosexuality and transgenderism to hell. We are here to let those on the inside know that we hear their voices. We haven't abandoned them. And while we are here, we will not allow our public resources to be used against our community. This is our country too, and these "public servants", with their prejudices and phobias, are misusing the system

How can I help?

You can help by coming to one of our meetings, where you can send books, write letters, read current information about the prison system, and talk to one of us about your ideas and goals. You can help in a big way just by letting people who are in prison or know people in prison know that we exists to serve them. We can use help in the most remarkable of ways. So just ask!

Meetings STARTING SOON!