

District of Columbia

In the nation's capital there is no parole board. Prisoners from Washington DC fall under the US Parole Commission. When the 1997 Revitalization Act bill was introduced and implemented under the Clinton administration one of the provisions was the abolishment of the parole board and the closing of Lorton, VA prison.

Thus, two things occurred that would have riveting long lasting impacts on prisoners and their families. First, with the closing of the Lorton, VA prison, DC prisoners would be shipped across the nation to various prisons, at times under the category of federal prisoners. Second, with the DC parole board established, prisoners would now have to seek parole from the US Parole Commission. With DC prisoners enmeshed within the web of the prison industry, the process of parole became complicated and lengthy, thus adding decades onto DC prisoners who were incarcerated during the 1994 Revitalization Act.

US Parole Commission Members

Patricia K. Cushwa was nominated to the United States Parole Commission and the United States Senate confirmed her nomination in November 2004. She was sworn in as a member of the Commission on December 12, 2004. In August 2015 she was designated Vice Chairman by Chairman Patricia Smoot. Prior to her appointment to the U.S. Parole Commission, Patricia Cushwa served for 12 years on the Maryland Parole Commission, seven of those years as Chair.

Charles T. Massarone was sworn in as a member of the U.S. Parole Commission on August 16, 2012, by the Honorable Karen K. Caldwell, U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Kentucky. On May 23, 2011, Mr. Massarone was nominated by President Barack Obama. The United States Senate confirmed the appointment on May 24, 2012. Commissioner Massarone has 30 years' experience in law enforcement. Prior to his confirmation to the U.S. Parole Commission, Mr. Massarone spent over three years serving as a Member of the Kentucky Parole Board. As a Member, Massarone conducted approximately 16,000 state parole hearings each year.

Compiled by: Tomiko Shine; Aging People in Prison Human Rights Campaign (APP-HRC)

DC Clemency Board

In 2017, the 'Clemency Board Establishment Act of 2017' Council of the District of Columbia was established. This was achieved due to the efforts of family/friends of the incarcerated, activists, and prison groups who led the way in getting the Mayor, DC City Council, and Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton to see the need to establish a clemency board. The clemency board will be able to advance local control over the clemency process by reviewing

applications for pardons and commutations for District of Columbia offenders. This type of local city clemency board is the first of its kind in the United States.

Sources

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