

Key Correctional Issues

By Roslyn Muraskin

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For courses in introduction to corrections and issues in corrections This combination text/reader discusses a broad range of topical correctional issues to present instructors and students with reference points for further discussion. Placing corrections in historical and social contexts, this unique book seeks to connect correctional issues to broader questions concerning the meanings of and rationales for punishment in the 21st century.

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Key Correctional Issues By Roslyn Muraskin Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #5736676 in Books
- Published on: 2004-02-09
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 2
- Dimensions: 9.19" h x .77" w x 6.95" l, 1.33 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 384 pages

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Editorial Review

From the Back Cover

Corrections is a large component of the criminal justice process; a process that consists of an incredible complex and fragmented blend of many agencies and programs among federal, state and local jurisdictions.

The nation's prison and jail population has risen to a record 2,166,260 this past year. It is an increase that has come when crime rates appear to be falling. Yet the price of imprisonment of combined federal and state facilities has grown 2.6 percent. One out of every 143 residents of this country is behind bars. Our incarceration rates are the highest of any nation. Why? This work is neither a text written by one author nor is it primarily a reader, but rather a combination. It highlights those issues relevant to the study of corrections:

- *history*
- *goals*
- *prisoner re-entry*
- *suicide*
- *religion*
- *mental illness*
- *technology*
- *alternatives*
- *constitutional rights*
- *building design*
- *women and minorities*
- *death penalty*
- *terrorism*
- *the future*

We have gone from a philosophy of "hands-off" to "hands-on." Prisoners no longer have the status of "slave of the state." This text explains the relationships that exist in corrections from both an historical and twenty-first century point of view. ***Key Correctional Issues*** is an important work that presents a reference point allowing for future discussion.

About the Author

Dr. Roslyn Muraskin received her Ph.D. in criminal justice from the Graduate Center of the City University of New York. Her Masters' degree is from New York University, School of Government, and her B.A. degree is from Queens College, where she majored in Political Science-Speech. She is a Full Professor at the C.W Post of Long Island University, where she teaches criminal justice. She was an Associate Dean in the College of Management for nine years and now directs the activities of the Long Island Women's Institute, College of Management, as well as the activities of the Alumni Chapter, also for the College of Management. She currently holds the position of Trustee of Region One for the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences. She is a past President of the Northeast Association of Criminal Justice Sciences (NEACJS).

Her works include *Visions for Change: Crime and Justice in the Twenty-First Century* (Prentice Hall, 4th edition, forthcoming); *It's a Crime: Women and Justice* (Prentice Hall, now in its 3rd edition); and *Morality*

and the Law (Prentice Hall). She is the Women's Series editor for Prentice Hall as well as the editor of the refereed journal published quarterly, *A Critical Journal of Crime Law and Society,* published by Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group (formerly *The Justice Professional*). She is the author of many published papers and articles and is often quoted in the media as an expert in women's issues and issues of criminal justice.

She is the recipient of many awards, including Woman of the Year, Award for Excellence from the Minorities Section of ACJS, and the Fellow Award from the NEACJS. She has been honored for her work with AIDS education by the Long Island Association for AIDS Care.

This work represents Dr. Muraskins tenth text in the field of criminal justice.

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This work is not your typical Correctional Text. It is neither a text written by one author nor is it primarily a reader, but rather a combination. It highlights those issues relevant to the study of corrections, and is done so in a fashion that is not tedious to read.

Corrections continues to be a relevant part of the American Criminal Justice system. It is a complex system fragmented by many programs, agencies, and laws that govern both on the federal and local levels. Many of the facilities as they now exist are overcrowded, barbaric to an extent and have varying philosophies depending on who is in charge. Do we have correctional facilities to punish, to rehabilitate, to do both or neither? Is the death penalty fair and just? Are all "residents" of the correctional facilities treated equally or on a par with each other? Should they be?

If prisons are to rehabilitate then why do we have continued recidivism? Why are the sentences in this country longer than any other? and for what purpose? The public seems to know little about the correctional facilities other than the fact that this is where we send *bad* people. Yet, from a budgetary point of view, corrections is a low priority item. Are prisoners entitled to rights and which rights?

Our sentencing process is complex. If we assume that we are to punish *all* who break the law, why then is it not done on an equal basis? Accordingly "to begin at the elementary beginning, we have an almost entire absence in the United States of legislative determinations — of 'law' — governing the basic questions as to the purposes and justifications of criminal sanctions. Without binding guides on such questions, it is inevitable that individual sentences will strike out on a multiplicity of courses chosen by each decision maker ... The result can be chaos" (Krantz, 1983, pp. 7-8). This material written almost twenty years ago has not changed what goes on today.

Historically, the courts held that a prisoner had the status of "slave of the state" with no rights *(Ruffin v Commonwealth, 62 Va. (2,l Gratt) 790, 796, 1871* as found in Krantz). There existed a philosophy of "hands off." Members of the judiciary believed that once an individual was sentenced, it fell to the correctional officers to direct the activities of the inmates and determine the conditions of confinement. That philosophy ended when the; courts recognized the atrocities that were present in the correctional facilities.

This text explains relationships that exist in corrections from both ail historical and twenty-first century point of view. It discusses correctional issues, such as prisoner reentry, changing goals of corrections, suicide, religion, mentally disordered, technocorrections, constitutional rights of prisoners, alternatives to incarceration as well as the concerns of minority prisoners and the death penalty. *Key Correctional Issues* links important issues that present a reference point and allows for further discussion.

To all those who contributed to this text, my heartfelt thanks. Each has their own area of expertise, aid

therefore bring to the forefront ideas that are fresh and exciting.

Many thanks to all my editors at Prentice Hall, including Sarah Holle, who is very dedicated and works so hard with each of her authors. Special thanks to Frank Mortirner, editor, who has been extremely patient with me while developing this text.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Vanessa McGinty:

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