

economists caveated conclusions and called for more rigorous examination – none of which appears to have followed.

I did not challenge these conclusions at the time and was happily surprised at their unanimity, given its novelty then. Since then, however, I have been more surprised at my own and their timidity, and would challenge some basic assumptions and conclusions that we all shared at that time. In summary, I believe we all failed to sufficiently account for (1) the huge subpopulations, especially of minority individuals, families, and communities affected, (2) the productivity loss considered far too small, ignoring clear data showing millions of inmates perfectly capable of market employment based on employment at arrest, and (3) failing to account for the immense barriers to productive work resulting from corrections and criminal justice policies inhibiting education, training, and efficient labor force use inside institutions. My own views since 1999 have become far more assertive than surfaced at that tentative “new” time.

#### **7. Attachment – 2019 Presentation to National Correctional Industries Association Conference.**

Attached is a presentation given to the **NCIA** in 2019 summarizing problems with and proposals for improving US correctional industries. NCIA is the trade association for US correctional industries. Although I now hold views likely very challenging to this organization and believe traditional prison industries having most to lose (and gain?) from fundamental change, I have worked with this organization for decades and greatly respect the efforts of these people and the challenges with which they deal every day. They have been extraordinarily welcoming and helpful to me, as exemplified by their welcoming me to make this presentation at their annual meeting in 2019.

However, the presentation does softpedal some points on the terrible situation today, at the time out of respect for my hosts, but moreso now because I’ve come to believe we need to be much clearer to all about the damage we are doing in the present system. If error is to be made, overstatement is the better side.

Although I see traditional correctional industries as among the primary obstacles to reform of inmate employment opportunity, I think it important to clarify some key points regarding traditional prison industries.

First, **We are the primary culprits:** True, traditional prison industries are in part hamstrung by their privileged (and inefficient) structure of monopoly, monopsony, and a powerless labor force, all of which have the effect of stultifying those industries. However, beginning with the most junior employee and upward through managers, prison industry directors, wardens, heads of state departments of corrections, and state public safety directors, and finally governors, the existence and operations of contemporary traditional prison industries reflect public (voter) cultures, beliefs, expectations, and permissions, and *no change can occur in prison labor absent public assent*. Woe be to the head of corrections or industries who ventures private sector change without support of those atop. And with security being the near exclusive priority of governors, any risk of escape or crime is unacceptable. So the real burden of change falls on us, not on traditional prison industries.

Second, I – and I think we – owe great debts of gratitude to traditional civilian prison and prison industry workers. Correctional work is emotionally challenging and evidence increasingly shows, damaging to health. While admitting that these folks have chained their careers to traditional prison industries, nevertheless I have continually found these folks to be skilled, preternaturally optimistic, committed, caring, hard-working, and truly devoted to succeeding, but tied to a system intrinsically incapable of success. Both many individual directors of prison industries and their staffs, and especially the National Correctional Industries Association (NCIA) have been unfailingly welcoming and giving of their time to me in my research over the decades, and I am deeply grateful to them all.