

## **GRAND JURY REPORT CHRISTIAN COUNTY**

November/December, 2013

We would like to thank Lynn Pryor and her staff, officers and detectives in the Hopkinsville and Oak Grove Police Departments, and the Christian County Sheriff's deputies and Jailers, for the professional preparation and presentation of cases to come before the Grand Jury. This made our job much easier.

The primary concern of this Grand Jury is the widespread use, sale and manufacture of drugs. In addition to the drugs themselves, the drug trade appears to have a strong impact on the number and severity of other crimes committed locally.

We found it unfair that, after the enormous amount of time involved and resources used by law enforcement, the Commonwealth Attorney's Office, and the citizens serving on the Grand Jury, to investigate, present and hear these cases, that a lot of the same offenders are involved time after time. And we know the work does not end with our indictments. For this reason, it is our opinion that repeat offenders should not be considered for parole before their full time is served, especially in cases where charges were reduced as a result of plea bargains. At the very least, the State Parole Board should give more consideration to the opinion of the Commonwealth Attorney who is familiar with and has prosecuted these offenders. Based on the number of crimes we heard involving repeat offenders, it might appear the benefits of the crimes outweigh the risks of punishment for committing the crimes.

More emphasis might be placed on granting parole and suspended sentences as encouragement to inmates to volunteer for and complete programs designed to help them with substance abuse and transition to work programs.

The testimony of fraud to obtain food stamps and welfare and other state benefits was troublesome. We learned that there is currently one investigator to cover the half of the state in which Christian County is located, and that there are currently a total of four investigators for the State of Kentucky as a whole. Considering the volume and dollar amounts of fraud cases presented, we feel the hiring of more investigators may be cost effective. Investigations of eligibility prior to granting benefits would be desirable. The attempt to recover ineligible benefits after they are paid does not seem realistic.

We especially commend the Kentucky State Police investigator(s) for their diligence relating to the 1994 cold case "massage parlor murders" for which we returned indictments on three individuals.

We appreciate the efforts of Lindsey Adams and the Christian County Attorney's Office for improving procedures to collect delinquent child support payments and its persistence in pursuing offenders.

Cases we heard involving abuses of children were especially heartbreaking. Certain cases begged the question if parents should be held more accountable for their carelessness in protecting and negligence in detecting abuses of their children.

Shoplifting is a greater problem locally than the jury members were aware. It was surprising to us to learn how easy it is for customers to walk out of a store, even with large-ticket items, without being detained. We do understand, however, that this policy protects the store from liability and insures employee safety.

While service on the Grand Jury has been an educational and positive experience, it has proved a hardship for some jury members, and we recommend compensation for service be increased from the current \$12.50 per day.

DATE:

---

---

Foreperson