Life Chances: HIV Criminalization and Trans Politics

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According to the CDC, “in 2007 (the most recent year for which this information is available), the rate of confirmed AIDS cases among state and federal prisoners was about 2.4 times the rate in the general US population,” and “at year-end 2008, an estimated 5,733 inmates in state and federal prisons had confirmed AIDS.”

In a report released late last year in The Lancet, it was found “transgender women have almost 50 times the odds of HIV infection” than the general population.

When considering these things together, it is ridiculous how seldom when speaking about AIDS, we talk about prison or include trans politics. Even during this time when organizations approach HIV as both a health concern and an ongoing social justice crisis, we fail to make these vital connections. This lack of conversation is preventing us from taking life saving action.

To help facilitate these conversations, Visual AIDS has teamed up with QUEEROCRACY, the Sylvia Rivera Law Project, and the Sex Worker Outreach Project New York to present **Life Chances: HIV Criminalization and Trans Politics** on Wednesday April 24th at the Leslie Lohman Art Museum. Moderated by **Laverne Cox**, the discussion includes **Dean Spade**. **Sean Strub**, **Che Gossett** and **Mitchyll Mora**.

As part of the conversation, the panelists will explore what is meant by HIV Criminalization, and Trans Politics; discuss what the everyday implications of these things; and consider how we can work within a prison abolitionist framework to overcome transphobia and AIDSphobia that reduces life chances for so many Americans.

Providing an image to help bridge these conversations is the artwork of Kenny O, a person in prison whose work is featured on the event poster. In the letter above he discusses how he is happy to be part of the event, and provides a glimpse into his world.

It is our hope that Life Chances will have positive real world implications, improving the life chances for Kenny, and everyone else.

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http://beta.docker.poz.com/blog/life-chances-hiv-cri