114th KZGN News Talking Points Editorial

What happened to the old adage, if you do the crime, then you have to do the time?

That’s the theory I was taught as a child. My parents told me that. School teachers told me that. The church taught that. If you do the crime, then you have to do the time. It used to be shameful to break the law. Families emphasized that you should never tarnish the name of your father and grandfather. Breaking the law was tantamount to damaging the good name of your heritage.

Now, what do we see? Politicians feel guilty when people who break the law actually have to go to prison. Politicians feel that most of the time, it’s not the criminal’s fault he/she broke the law. It’s society’s fault. They just couldn’t help it. When people riot now, the politicians just let them loot and burn and whatever. Even after all the video showing these people doing all the mayhem, rarely is anyone arrested for it. Why is that? Last time I checked, it was against the law to break into stores and steal their merchandise. It was against the law to burn buildings and police cars. Or, has someone decided that it’s ok to break the law under certain circumstances? Who has that authority? Who has the authority to not enforce certain laws? Last time I checked, the police are supposed to enforce the laws as written equally and fairly, without prejudice. The courts then are to decide on a person’s guilt or innocence. Since when can a mayor or some other politician decide to turn a blind eye to people breaking laws? If there are no consequences for breaking the law, then what’s to stop people from doing it over and over again?

Now, there is a huge effort to lower prison sentences. Some feel that some sentences are too harsh, and are arbitrarily shortening sentences. Because the prisons are overcrowded, prisoners get early releases. Then, they come back into their communities to do more mayhem, and then go back to prison again. Here is the clincher. The politicians are all up in arms because more minorities are in prison than whites. How does that happen? Could it have something to do with if you break the law, then you go to jail? How about this philosophy? If you don’t break the law, then you don’t have to go to jail.

Now the liberals will come in with this story, and they will say ‘more minorities go to jail than whites because most of them cannot afford good legal counsel, like white folks do.’

To that argument I offer this, have you ever sat in a court room and watch what goes on? The parade of people charged with crimes and public defenders assigned to represent those who cannot afford an attorney? I have. I’ve seen minorities and whites get court-appointed attorneys to defend them when the whites couldn’t afford an attorney either.

Some will say there are cities, like Baltimore, that has more minorities being arrested than whites. If the city is made up of 80% minorities, then what would you expect to see? Even with that argument, it has to go back to the old adage: If you do the crime, then you have to do the time. It’s no one else’s fault but yours. It’s not my fault or society’s fault. It’s the criminal’s fault.

Then we get this report. Governor Brown has a ballot measure he wants to submit to the voters of California. This measure would reduce the state’s prison population with new release terms for felons, and have fewer juveniles tried as adults. The measure would increase sentencing credits for inmates that complete rehabilitation programs. The proposal would also allow nonviolent felons to seek parole quicker than current rules.

This is another political solution to coddle people that break the law. If the sentences are too severe for the crime, then change the law. Why are the politicians always trying to shorten the sentencing? Do it right. Have the legislatures, which are empowered, to write laws, change the laws. Mayors, governors, and presidents should not be rewriting laws. Politicians should present their proposals to the legislatures, and let them decide.

However, I do not mean this as an editorial to get rid of the initiative process. I’m a strong believer in this process. This is truly government by the people. What I’m concerned about is a governor with $24 million dollars available to support this crime sentencing reduction philosophy. Who will have the funds available to fight this measure? Stanford law professor Joan Petersilia said about 20,000 of the state’s 127,000 inmates currently serving time for drug or property crimes, are the most likely candidates for release under this measure. Politicians continue to feel sorry for these criminals. How about feeling sorry for the victims of these criminals? The ones that had their houses broken into, cars stolen, broken families due to drug abuse, or school kids affected by parents who are not sober to properly raise them. Many kids ultimately follow in their parents footsteps. Let’s not forget the victims of these criminals. They have rights too. They have the right to peaceful enjoyment of their lives, home, and property, without fear of criminals.

In conclusion, if you do the crime, then be ready to do the time. It doesn’t matter your race, religion, or any other classifying criteria. You made the choice to break the law. So, suffer the consequences. Hopefully, when you get out, you’ve learned to not break the law.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. I’d like to know what you think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.