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# OPINION

## Non-violent Drug Offenders Belong at Home

### Second chances are as American as baseball

BY JOHN KIRIAKOU

I love baseball. I have since I was a kid. And I'm lucky to be married to a woman who loves the game as much as I do.

We recently attended the 86th annual Major League All Star Game in Cincinnati. As part of the opening ceremonies, the Cincinnati Reds honored what they called the Franchise Four, the four greatest players in the team's history: Johnny Bench, Joe Morgan, Barry Larkin, and Pete Rose.

Bench, Morgan, and Larkin are members of professional baseball's Hall of Fame. Rose, on the other hand, is banned from baseball for life. Despite being one of the greatest hit-



ters and toughest players in the game's history, he may never get this distinction. Why?

Because he gambled. Rose admitted in the late 1980s that he'd bet on baseball games, including his own. Even though he bet on his team to win, and never threw a game, this broke baseball's rules.

The 50,000 fans in Cincinnati went completely crazy when Rose's name was called. Hearing them chant "Hall of Fame! Hall of Fame!" as he walked out onto the field, I thought about second chances.

I work in Washington, D.C. — the City of Second Chances. Just ask any politician caught cheating on his taxes, exposed for campaign finance fraud, or busted in an affair with an intern or underage page. They usually go before the voters, hat in hand, issue a mea culpa, and get on with their lives.

Most of the time charges are never even filed. That's true

even in high-profile security cases.

Former Deputy Secretary of State Richard Armitage, for example, was never charged for leaking the name of CIA operative Valerie Plame, whose husband had written a critical commentary of the last Bush administration.

the 3,278 Americans serving life sentences without parole for non-violent crimes that can be remarkably petty — including stealing a jacket or serving as the middleman in a \$10 marijuana transaction. Don't they deserve a second chance?

What about the hundreds of thousands of people current-

and sustaining their contributions to their communities. It might mean allowing them to maintain a relationship with their children or keep employing people in their businesses. It would also save taxpayers a bundle instead of wasting money to lock up people who aren't dangerous.

Politicians always seem to get second chances. Just ask David Vitter, Donald Trump, and Mark Sanford about that.

And Pete Rose — who still autographs baseballs with "I'm sorry I bet on baseball" — sure seems to have gotten a second chance from the people of Cincinnati, if not from Major League Baseball.

It's time to extend average Americans the same courtesy. Just as Pete Rose belongs in the Hall of Fame, non-violent drug offenders belong at home with their families.

*OtherWords columnist John Kiriakou is an associate fellow at the Institute for Policy Studies.*

*What about the hundreds of thousands of people currently incarcerated as non-violent drug offenders? They make up half of all federal inmates. Shouldn't they get a second chance too?*

Scooter Libby, a former aide to Vice President Dick Cheney, was convicted of four felonies related to the case. But thanks to President George W. Bush commuting his sentence, Libby didn't serve a minute in prison.

The same can't be said for

ly incarcerated as non-violent drug offenders? They make up half of all federal inmates. Shouldn't they get a second chance too?

A second chance for them might mean keeping their families intact, saving their jobs,

## It's Vital to Keep Our Youth Actively Engaged

### What parents must do this summer

BY DR. JAWANZA KUNJUFU

There is a three year gap between black and white students. Many people love to believe it's due to income, fatherlessness, educational attainment of the parent and lack of parental involvement. I believe a major reason for the gap is we continue to close schools for the summer as if we are an agrarian economy.

Very few black youth will be farming this summer. If you multiply three months by 12 years you will see the three year gap. There is nothing wrong with black youth if their schools remained open during the summer and/or their parents kept them academically engaged.



Middle-income parents who value education enroll their children in some type of academic experience during the summer. They also visit libraries, museums, zoos and colleges. Other parents allow their

children to sleep longer, play more video games, watch more television and play basketball until they can't see the hoop. These students will have to review the same work they had mastered in May in September.

Black parents cannot allow their child to lose three months every year. Black parents cannot say they cannot afford the library. It's free! Most museums have discounted days. A male friend of mine shared his experience with me when he took his family to the museum. He wondered why so many people were staring at him. His wife and children had to tell him he was the only black man in the building! I am appealing to every father to take his chil-

dren this summer to the library, museum, and the zoo. I am appealing to every mother if he won't, you will.

We need every parent to make sure their child reads at least one book per week and to write a book report. I am reminded of the formula Sonya Carson used to develop Ben Carson to become the best pediatric neurosurgeon. This low-income single parent, with a third grade education, had enough sense to tell her sons to turn off the television, read a book and write a report that her sister would grade!

I have a theory that I can go into your house and within five minutes tell you the type of student who lives there and predict their future. I believe that engineers, doctors, lawyers, accountants etc. need different items in their house than ballplayers, rappers, and criminals. I am very concerned when I visit a house that has more cd's and downloads than books.

My company African American Images has designed a special collection of books for boys. Research shows one of the major reasons boys dislike reading is because of the content. The set is titled Best Books for Boys. We also have one for girls, parents and teachers.

Enjoy your summer. Let's close the gap. I look forward

to your child's teacher asking your child what did you do for the summer? And your child answering we went to the library, museum, zoo, colleges and other great educational places.

*Dr. Jawanza Kunjufu is author of There is Nothing Wrong With Black Students, Changing School Culture for Black Males and Raising Black Boys.*

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