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To: Editor of Abilene Reporter-News

John Allen Chalk

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December 14, 1970

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The Editor
Abilene Reporter-News
Abilene, Texas

Dear Sir:

Adult Probation Officer Bill McCay has my commendation and sympathy. I wish he would tell us how he "keeps his cool" under the load of 475 more adult probationers than Texas State guidelines recommend.

An apathetic and uninformed public often asks two questions that Jon Standefer's excellent article answered: Why do our judges place so many law-breakers on probation? and Why do some probationers commit further crimes? To the first question I heard Standefer say that in 1969, 87 per cent of McCay's probationers stayed within bounds. And the second question was answered, if I understood Mrs. Standefer, by the simple fact that our present probation system does not effectively aid the law-breaker in returning to productive citizenship.

The least that enlightened county government can do, it seems to me, would be to spend the \$30,000 in probation fees collected this year in the three counties mentioned on guidance and support of the probationer's return to lawful citizenship. A more primitive approach to criminal justice than the present collection than the present collection of \$10 monthly probation fees that wupport other functions of county government, I cannot imagine, unless it would be public whippings. But I don't want that subject introduced because some of us "good" citizens would stand in line to administer the stripes!

In hearings conducted by the Governor's Committee on Human Relations, the subcommittee on the Administration of Justice-Law Enforcement found a number of obvious ways that Criminal Justice in Texas is heavily weighed toward those who never need it -- except to protect themselves and their holdings.

Page 2, The Editor, Abilene Reporter News
December 14, 1970

Has any society in history lasted long on the principle of self-centered greed? Why do we systematically and deliberately refuse to attempt rehabilitation of criminals?

Sincerely,

John Allen Chalk

JAC:lc

P. S. The Sunday editorial spoke well to the purpose of probation and, therefore, the reasons probationers' fees should either be abolished or used solely for probationer help.

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