



October 27, 2007

Help for Drug Addicts

To the Editor:

Re “Rational Sentencing” (editorial, Oct. 25):

One aspect of New York’s drug laws that feeds the prison rolls with low-level, nonviolent substance abusers is this group’s inability to achieve a drug-free lifestyle.

Thousands of people with addictive personalities who are caught in the criminal justice system are routinely sent back to prison by drug courts, parole boards and probation officers after they test positive for substance use, despite being employed and having a stable residence, and without consideration of the type of substance used.

With laws and policies that leave no room for discretion, we punish these people because of their disease and destroy their hope for a better life.

Were New York to invest more in alternatives to incarceration, many of these people could receive help in their community at much less cost than sending them back to prison.

Howard Josepher

New York, Oct. 25, 2007

The writer is founder and executive director of Exponents, a nonprofit organization that helps people with drug problems and H.I.V./AIDS.

[Copyright 2007 The New York Times Company](#)

[Privacy Policy](#) | [Search](#) | [Corrections](#) | [RSS](#) | [First Look](#) | [Help](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Work for Us](#) | [Site Map](#)