

## News Roundup

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I've been busy with New Prosecutors' School this week. As always, it has been humbling and inspiring. But the world didn't stop turning. Here are some of the week's top stories:

1. **The General Assembly takes on juvenile law.** The *News and Observer* reports [here](#) that the legislature is considering a bill that would require judges to transfer Class B1 through D felony cases involving juveniles age 13 or over to superior court upon the State's motion. Transfer is currently mandatory – even without the State's request – for Class A felonies, but discretionary for other felonies. The bill is [H 217](#). Meanwhile, the legislature is also considering [H 725](#), which would increase the juvenile age to 18, but only for misdemeanors.
2. **Acquittal in internet sweepstakes case.** The first trial under [G.S. 14-306.4](#), the video sweepstakes law, has resulted in an acquittal. Apparently, the defense was that the sweepstakes in question used a pre-reveal system and so was not conducted through an entertaining display. The *News and Observer* has the story [here](#).
3. **Amnesty international death penalty report.** Amnesty International, an anti-death penalty group, publishes an annual report on the death penalty around the world. The 2012 report is [here](#). Regardless of your point of view on capital punishment, the report contains lots of interesting raw data, including the number of countries carrying out executions (at least 21) and the number of executions worldwide (at least 682, not counting the likely thousands of executions carried out in China). Both numbers are about the same as last year. The *New York Times* reports on the report [here](#).
4. **Condoms in prison.** The California legislature is considering a [bill](#) that would make condoms available to inmates in every state prison. The author of the bill notes that “[n]otwithstanding the supposed ban on sexual activity in prison, it is no secret that inmates commonly engage in sexual activity. Some of the activity is consensual; some of it is forcible. But whatever the genesis of the act, the fact is that prisoners with HIV/AIDS are spreading the disease to others in the institution and then to additional partners upon release. This is a vicious cycle of disease that can be immediately improved by introducing condoms in prisons.” It's an interesting proposal, and I'd be interested in informed comments about the wisdom of it.
5. **Attorney General Holder on incarceration.** Over at Sentencing Law and Policy, Professor Doug Berman [reports](#) on a recent speech by United States Attorney General Eric Holder, who said in part that “[t]oo many people go to too many prisons for far too long for no good law enforcement reason.” Similar sentiments inspired the Justice Reinvestment Act here in North Carolina. It will be interesting to see what reforms, if any, come from Washington.
6. **Funny business.** I enjoyed [this short piece](#) in the *News and Observer*: “The Senate made fast work this week of Sen. Neal Hunt's proposal to raise the top speed limit on North Carolina highways to 75 mph. ‘It's a reasonable idea to let the professionals decide if traffic can move a little faster than we let it go now,’ Hunt said Thursday. . . Hunt, 70, knows what it's like to go faster than DOT thinks is appropriate. His driving record includes five speeding convictions in five different counties between 1988 and 1998. A legal limit of 75 mph would have helped him in a couple of cases, but officers clocked him driving a little faster than that on three occasions. ‘Be sure to point out that I haven't had a speeding ticket in 14 years,’ Hunt said. Asked whether he was driving more slowly these days – or just lucky, he chuckled and said: ‘No comment.’”