

LET CHANGE COME

On March 13, 2013, the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania filed a civil rights action in Federal Court against our new Department of Corrections Secretary, John Wetzel. They make claims against him, stating that he has been deliberately indifferent to the needs of mentally ill prisoners by confining them in prolonged isolation for months and even years at a time.

The battle of the minds has begun. Who will win? The focus should not be "Who will win?" It should be "Who was it that suffered psychologically, physically and who died the many slow painful deaths to make this battle possible?"

Since the first prison was built in the state of Pennsylvania, solitary confinement has been the forefront of psychological torture. Meant to curb criminal conduct, solitary confinement created insanity. The same practices continue even to this day. Not only have the practices of the Department of Corrections continued to be similar in nature, but the behaviors of prisoners have also remained the same as a result of the psychological torture solitary confinement has bred.

The Pennsylvania prison system has adopted many programs from other states that fit their overall need for security. Why hasn't the Department of Corrections adopted a method to limit the use of solitary confinement? Other states have created methods which have turned out to be successful as well as beneficial to their correctional environment. Any prison system, no matter in what state, is designed and operated based on the same principles. If one state can implement methods to reduce the use of solitary confinement, so can the state of Pennsylvania. However, with the state of Pennsylvania, methods like the one questioned above seem to only be created after prisoners die.

A specific pattern of behavior, especially one that has been practiced for hundreds of years is nearly impossible to break. The Battle of Minds is a battle against abusive patterns of behavior, lack of trained professionals, the lack of economic resources, and the heartless individuals who support this entire psychologically and physically abusive system. People who support this kind of system are just as guilty of criminal acts as anyone else duly convicted.

To view who is fighting this battle for us, anyone can order a copy of the actual lawsuit filed by writing to the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania, William S. Nealon, Federal Building & U.S. Courthouse, 235 N. Washington Avenue, P.O., Box 1148, Scranton, PA 18501 and request a clear copy of this lawsuit. Below is the appropriate citation to use when requesting your copy:

Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania vs. John Wetzel, Case
1:13-CV-00635-JEJ.

The cost is \$4.70.

Educate yourself in order to let change come. We as prisoners are the only ones who can change our situations. This lawsuit alone shows who is out there, willing to assist us in obtaining change.

Don't allow these individuals to fight alone. Realize what they are fighting for. They are fighting for the change we need, that we must have to live psychologically healthy lives.

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