

Newsletter June, 2018

Please share this newsletter with others who did not receive one. Do send us your ideas & information for the next newsletter. We also love to receive your poems and drawings to post on our Facebook page or website! Our next newsletter will be due around October, 2018

Legal

Disability Rights Florida v. Jones - Disability Rights Florida, the state's federally-funded Protection and Advocacy organization that advocates for disabled individuals, settled a historic lawsuit against the Florida Department of Corrections over the FDOC's systematic failure to comply with federal measures intended to protect prisoners with physical disabilities. The lawsuit, filed by the Florida Justice Institute on behalf of Disability Rights Florida, includes accounts from 32 prisoners of being denied hearing aids, wheelchairs, or other devices in violation of the Americans with Disabilities Act and other federal laws. The 43-page settlement agreement changes how prisoners with disabilities are screened and treated by the FDOC. It specifically addresses the needs of deaf and hard of hearing (D/HOH) prisoners, "Inmates with Vision Disabilities" (IVD) and "Inmates with Mobility Disabilities" (IMD). It will allow the FDC up to four years to remedy the ordeals that incarcerated people with disabilities have suffered for years from the FDC's failure to comply with federal laws intended to benefit and otherwise protect individuals with physical disabilities. For example, the Settlement Agreement will require the FDC to provide qualified sign language interpreters and other auxiliary aids and services during critical interactions such as medical appointments, disciplinary hearings, and educational programs, and to provide meaningful telecommunications access to deaf prisoners so they can remain in touch with loved ones. It will require the removal of architectural barriers in many prisons for prisoners with mobility disabilities. The settlement agreement requires that recreation tracks at accommodating facilities "be paved so that they can be safely traversed by IVDs and IMDs." "There are thousands of people with physical disabilities in Florida's prisons who will benefit from this settlement," said FJI director Randall C. Berg, Jr. As Florida's Protection and Advocacy organization, Disability Rights Florida is empowered to investigate the treatment of people with disabilities and advocate on their behalf. Disability Rights Florida and its attorneys began work on this lawsuit over four years ago, and in the process reviewed thousands of pages of records and spoke to dozens of incarcerated people about their mistreatment. The parties hammered out the settlement agreement in court ordered mediation which spanned over 5 months in an effort to avoid a lengthy trial and an appeal had the case not settled. Note: there should be no charge (co-pays) for sick calls when related to your disability

Democratic candidate for governor of Florida Chris King

Democratic gubernatorial candidate Chris King unveiled his criminal justice reform platform. His six-point plan include: Restoration of Voting Rights, and Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline. "So his 6 point plan is: 1) Abolish the death penalty in Florida. 2) Reducing Mass Incarceration. 3) End private prisons. 4) Legalize medical marijuana. 5) Ending the School-to-Prison Pipeline. 6) Restore voting rights for ex convicts who have paid their debt to society. There are currently 1.6 million ex convicts who have not had their voting rights restored. King's campaign has left him languishing in deep fourth-place in public opinion polls among Democratic candidates for governor, not much above the polls margins of errors, while he and his campaign have talked about having time to turn things around before the August 28 primary. He's facing former Miami Beach Mayor Philip Levine, former U.S. Rep. Gwen Graham, and Tallahassee Mayor Andrew Gillum in the Democrats' race.

Of Information:

- **Fans** - If you are without a fan or your fan has broken down, and you are without the means to buy one, please let us know and we will try and help you. Please understand that we do need to check whether you have already a working fan in your possession. We heard there are a few guys without a fan, you need to contact us if that is the case!
- **Medical** - The DOC's prison healthcare contract with Centurion of Florida LLC expires on June 30. Julie Jones prepares to sign a new contract with a private vendor to provide health services. Centurion is the only medical vendor that bid on the DOC's FY 2019 contract. Secretary Julie Jones, said "First and foremost, it's our responsibility to ensure the security of individuals in our custody and to make certain their human and constitutional rights are upheld while incarcerated. Health care is one of these constitutional responsibilities, and

in my tenure, I've held vendors accountable for ensuring these services are provided at an adequate and appropriate level, that is in line with required standards. Like every state agency, we must make fiscally sound decisions to operate within our legislatively appropriated budget." "In order to secure a health services contractor, fund the increased pharmaceutical budget, and adjust for reductions, we've unfortunately had to make some very difficult decisions. At the start of the next fiscal year, we will be reducing some of our current contracts with community providers. Additionally, we are reducing operating costs to include maintenance, repair, utilities, and working to find every possible internal solution to reduce costs in order to maximize services for inmates and offenders. It is our hope that these decisions, while necessary given the circumstances, are temporary and a positive working partnership with our community partners can continue in the future."

- If you want FDRAG to contact Medical on your behalf please sign a medical release form (DC4-711B Consent and Authorization for Use and Disclosure Inspection and Release of Confidential Information (HIPAA Form) giving medical permission to discuss your care. You can sign the form to Geesje de Jong & Diane Thornton (addresses at bottom)

- **Yard balls** - FDRAG has contributed to new yardballs for UCI

- **Photos** - If you don't get regular visits or your visitor doesn't arrive before the photo guy leaves at 11.00 AM you can send a request to the P Dorm law library SGT. He is the one that makes the list of guys needing photo's and brings you to the visiting park to have your photo taken. The scheduled day for photo's is the 2nd Tuesday of each month.

- **Funds & Stamps** - Please don't ask us for money or stamps, we can't help you with that.

- **WARNING:** Some death row inmates may have been exploited/manipulated/taken advantage of by individuals who claim to be their "friends", they may even visit you. They have auction houses and websites where your letters, art, writings are being sold for profit. These so called Murderabilia dealers are especially trying to make contact with inmates whose cases have made public attention, they try to get memorabilia (letters, art), put them on websites and sell them for profit. We encourage you to remain vigilant and aware so you too don't become a victim of these people. If you know or suspect you are a victim of these practises you can let us know.

- **Inmate Food & Property Packages** - we inquired about new dates for the packages program. The contract with Access and Union was not renewed and FDOC is currently evaluating service providers for a new package program. So unfortunately no packages this summer!

- **Thank you** to the guys who have been sending us cards, and stamps to Tammy & Kari to help out with postage and to use for guys who don't have funds to include stamps. Very generous of you and it's much appreciated! Also thank you to the guys with suggestions for the newsletter.

Issues addressed by FDRAG

(Some issues are ongoing and we are still working on them, please keep us updated from your side)

- **Inmate Trust Funds** - The **proposed rule** about the Inmate Trust Funds will require that individuals seeking to deposit monies into inmate accounts must be on that inmate's approved visitor list. While physical visits are not required, being on the approved visitor list will become a requirement. The rule amendment is still in the proposal stage. We contacted the inmate bank June 25, 2018 for an update, the reply: "We are planning on making this change but I believe it will be several months before it is implemented."

- **Medical/ sick calls procedure**- Issue: Inmates have to sign up for sick call at least 3 times to see a nurse, before being referred to a doctor. We contacted DOC about this and reply: "The sick call process is to be used for non-urgent needs. If an inmate has a medical emergency they may declare that at any time. If during a sick call evaluation the nurse determines that it rises to level of needing a referral to the provider they will do that. If an inmate is seen 3 times for the same issue they will automatically be referred to the provider to be seen. So to say that an Inmate has to see the sick-call nurse three (3) times prior to seeing the physician is incorrect. We understand the importance of addressing emergent medical needs of our inmates and have 24 hour nursing to ensure all medical needs of Inmates are met. This is not a new rule and has always been the sick call procedure."

- **Non-prescription drugs** - One of you wrote us: "It has always been the policy that when the nurse makes her rounds each day you can ask her for non-prescription medication like Aspirin, Tablets for colds, Ointments etc. Starting June 4th, 2018, you have to sign up for sick call, which costs \$5.00 each time" We inquired about this: reply warden Anderson: "Thank you for expressing your concerns. We always try to be very open and responsive regarding any issue raised by your advocacy group. I would like to clarify the procedure we have for dealing with over-the-counter medications. Security staff has a small number of over-the-counter medications which they issue to inmates upon request. These include medications for minor pain, specifically Ibuprofen and Acetaminophen. They also have medications for minor stomach upset. All of these can be issued to inmates by security staff without charge to the inmate. All the inmate has to do is make a verbal request to a security staff member. The officer takes down the inmate's name and the requested medication is recorded on a log for accountability purposes. An inmate with a headache would not have to wait for sick call to receive a medication. The inmate should have no problem receiving these medications unless he requests an inordinate amount. For any other type of over-the-counter medication, however, the inmate would have to sign up for sick call and the \$5 co-pay would come into play at that time. Medications for colds or ointments would fall into that category"

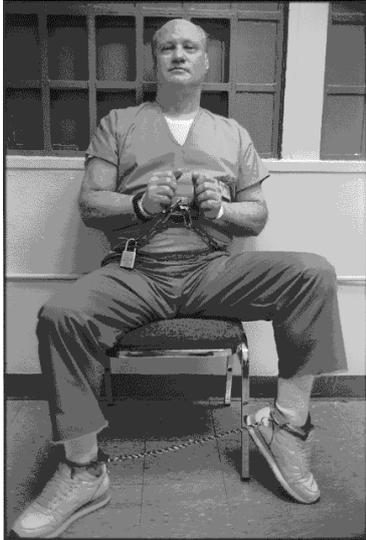
- **Towels/washcloths** - We heard from some of you in UCI that your towel and washcloth have to be removed from the pegs on the wall during inspection. We asked about that, reply assistant warden: "they have to be removed during cell inspection. This is only a short time. After the cell inspection is complete they may put the towel and washcloth back on the pegs". Keep us updated if there are problems with this.
- **Tablets** - We contacted JPay for you about the tablets. JPay is in the final stages before they announce the introduction of the JPay Tablet to their Florida customers. JPay will share this information with inmates as soon as they have a firm date. The funds you have on your media accounts will remain in your accounts and the funds will be available to you as soon as the kiosk are up and running again. If you have any concern about the tablets once they become available you can let us know and we will contact JPay on your behalf. The complete **Player Purchase Terms and Conditions and Warranty Policy** is available online. <https://www.jpayers.com/html/DigitalMediaPlayerTermsAndConditions.html> You can ask family/friends to print it for you or contact us and we'll send it to you.
- **Kiosks** - we received letters (before the kiosks were shut down) about there not being a seat in front of the kiosk and no protection from the sun - bad visibility of the screen. We inquired about this and the reply: "Each kiosk has an individual box built around the unit to provide protection for the kiosk and inmate from all of the weather elements. A chair for the Inmate to sit on is assigned and available for each Kiosk unit. This is a new process that we are all learning about. We have made the inmates aware that there will be some issues that we will have to work out as there is with any new process. Kiosks that are installed on the Death Row recreation yards have been disabled. Per FDC rule, Death Row Inmates are not permitted to use the email service." You wrote us also about other kiosk issues (not enough kiosks, not enough time) we'll address that again once access to kiosks is allowed again.
- **TV Antenna UCI not working** - We contacted DOC in May about this. "The maintenance department repaired several coax cables in the last two (2) weeks. Also, a man-lift has been requested in order to reach the height of the TV antenna to make necessary repairs. Estimated time of arrival for the man-lift is tentatively the week of May 14th". Antenna should have been fixed by now!
- **Class A Uniform Rule-** Same issues as summer last year. We asked about it again. Reply: "Inmates are only required to be in Class "A" uniform during housing inspections and anytime that official visitors are present on the wing. Once the visitors have exited the wing and the housing inspection has concluded, inmates are allowed to be in Class "C" uniform which is a t-shirt and shorts, not underwear. On an average, a housing inspection takes approximately 20 minutes to complete" Please keep us updated on this.
- **Cell Inspection New Rules - Some of you in UCI contacted us about these "new rules" and that "if at any time an inmate does not comply with these said rules all T.V's will be turned off via a switch in the quatered deck control room. If this happens then all of the fans will be turned off as well, because they are on the same circuit".** We contacted DOC about this and here the reply of assistant warden: "These are not new rules they are just being enforced more strictly. We were recently assigned a new Warden and he is focused on ensuring that everyone, staff and inmates, follow the rules. I understand that changes can cause everyone stress but these rules are not unreasonable and will be followed. The inmates are given ample notice of cell inspections which gives them time to be in compliance. There were several inmates that chose not to be in compliance even after being told several times by the Correctional Officers. If they make the decision to be out of compliance they will be written disciplinary reports. TV's and fans are not switched off as a means of punishment. TV's are a privilege and are taken when an inmate is placed in administrative confinement." Please keep us updated on this.
- **Yard time cut short** - ongoing issue, we contacted DOC for you: "Recreation is only cancelled or shortened due to in climate weather, count or Institutional emergencies. In the event that this occurs, every effort is made to ensure that any missed recreation time is made up" Please keep a record when & how often yard time is cut short and amount of missed yard time and let us know.

Trivia

Henry Sireci was the winner of the Trivia question from February (subscription to Time magazine), congratulations Henry. We have a new Trivia question: **Who was the second lady to be both first lady and the mother of a president?** The winner has a choice of one of the 3 following books: 1)101 chess questions answered, 2)Beginning Origami or 3)How to draw fantasy figures. Tammy Alpers has made this Trivia and is also offering the book. Thank you Tammy!

Please send your answer to us before August 31, 2018 (with your choice of book in case you win)

Exhibition "Noble is the Man" September 2018 - February 2019 - A photography exhibition by Rune Eraker, focusing on human rights violations and political prisoners at the Nobel Peace Centre in Oslo Norway. The Nobel Peace Center is a museum dedicated to the Nobel Peace Prize. Mike Lambrix will be part of the photo exhibition "Noble is the Man" by Rune Eraker. Mike is not with us anymore but his photos, taken by Norwegian documentary photographer Rune Eraker in 2016 in Florida State Prison, will be among the exhibition. This is one of the pictures that will be on display.



H.I.S Death Row Ministry & Support Writing and Art Contest - Calling all writers and artists on death row. There will be 2 winners, one from each category and you may submit to both but can only win one. Winners will receive a magazine subscription of their choice up to \$20 value. Entries must be submitted between June 10 - August 10 2018. Submit your entries to **H.I.S. Death Row Ministry and Support, PO box 409, Jarrell, Texas 76537**. Judging will take place the week of August 12-18.

Correspondence

Kari Jones is in charge of requests for correspondence. You can send your letters (with some information about yourself) directly to: **Kari Jones, PO Box 912, Englewood, FL 34295**. We comply with **Title 33 of the Florida Administrative Code** and do not place inmate ads soliciting pen pals or market advertising services.

Cards

Again, we have a new card lady! Sorry for the confusion this causes!! Also sorry for some of you who had their letters returned. Please send your requests from now to **Tammy Alpers, 473 Ellis 204, San Francisco Ca 94102**. We offer only cards for US Holidays, and the next will be Halloween, Rosh Hashana, Thanksgiving, Hanukah, Christmas. 5 cards and in English or blank cards only. Please include 4 stamps with every request to cover

Mailingaddress

Please send your letters to: **Janneke van Steenbergen** - Maasdijk 1c W/S LEBA - 5317KP Nederhemert, The Netherlands or **Geesje de Jong** - Maleme 17- 15237 Filothei - Athens, Greece, or **Diane Thornton** - 68 Queen Street. Withernsea. East Riding of Yorkshire. HU19 2HA. England. This is meant for **all** the mail, **except** card/correspondence requests (for that see addresses above). Alternatively, a fast option is to ask your family/friend/penpal to email us at **fdragflorida@yahoo.com** about any issue on your behalf.

FDRAG (Florida Death Row Advocacy Group) is dedicated to working to improve the living conditions on death row in Florida and we are here to try to help you with your concerns, complaints, issues etc. For those who would like help from FDRAG, we do ask that you contact us directly and we get back to you as soon as possible.

Website: <http://www.fdragflorida.com>
Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/fdrag.florida.5>

Email: fdragflorida@yahoo.com

Geesje de Jong - FDRAG Director- Maleme 17- 15237 Filothei - Athens, Greece. **Janneke van Steenbergen** - FDRAG Assistant Director- Maasdijk 1c W/S LEBA - 5317 KP Nederhemert, The Netherlands. **Diane Thornton** - FDRAG assistant - 68 Queen Street. Withernsea. East Riding of Yorkshire. HU19 2HA. England