

Declaration of Undersigned Prisoners

We, the Undersigned Persons, committed to the care and custody of the Louisiana Department of Corrections (LDOC), hereby submit the following declaration and petition bearing witness to inhumane conditions of solitary confinement in the N-1 building at the David Wade Corrections Center (DWCC).

Our Complaint:

We, the Undersigned Persons, declare under penalty of perjury:

- (1) We, the undersigned, are currently housed in the N-1 building at DWCC, 670 Bell Hill Road, Homer, LA 71040.
- (2) We are aware that the Constitution, under the 8th Amendment, bans cruel and unusual punishments; the Amendment also imposes duties on prison officials who must provide humane conditions of confinement and ensure that inmates receive adequate food, clothing, shelter, medical care, and must take reasonable measures to guarantee the safety of the inmates.
- (3) We are aware that Louisiana prison officials have sworn by LSA-R.S.15:828 to provide humane treatment and rehabilitation to persons committed to its care and to direct efforts to return every person in its custody to the community as promptly as practicable.
- (4) We are confined in a double-bunked 6x9 or 54 square feet cell with another human being 22 hours a day and are compelled to endure the degrading experience of being in close proximity of another human being while defecating.
- (5) There are no educational or rehabilitation programs for the majority of prisoners confined in the N-1 building except for a selected few inmates who are soon to be released.
- (6) We get 1 hour and 30 minutes on the yard and/or gym seven days a week. Each day we walk to the kitchen for breakfast, lunch, and dinner which takes about one minute to get there. We are given 10 minutes to eat.
- (7) The daily planner for inmates confined in the N-1 building is to provide inmates 1 hour and 30 minutes on yard or gym; escort inmates to kitchen for breakfast, lunch, and dinner to sit and eat for approximately 10 minutes each meal; provide a 10 minute shower for each cell every day; provide 1 ten minute phone call per week; confine prisoners in cell 22 hours a day.
- (8) When we are taking a shower we are threatened by guards with disciplinary reports if we are not out on time. A typical order is: "if you are not out of shower in 10 minutes pack your shit and I'm sending you back to N-2, N-3, or N-4" – a more punitive form of solitary confinement.
- (9) When walking outside to yard, gym or kitchen, guards order us to put our hands behind our back or they'll write us up and send us back to N-2, N-3, N-4.
- (10) When we are sitting at the table eating, guards order us not to talk or they'll write us up and send us back to N-2, N-3, N-4.)
- (11) Guards are harassing us every day and are threatening to write up disciplinary reports and send us back to a more punitive cellblock (N-2, N-3, N-4) if we question any arbitrary use of authority or even voice an opinion in opposition to the status quo. Also, guards take away good time credits, phone, TV, radio, canteen, and contact visits for talking too loud or not having hands behind back or for any reason they want. We are also threatened with slave labor discipline including isolation (removing mattress from cell from 5:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.), strip cell (removing mattress and bedding and stationery from cell for 10 to 30 days or longer), food loaf

(taking one's meal for breakfast, lunch, or dinner and mixing it all together into one big mass, bake it in oven and serve it to prisoners for punishment).

- (12) When prison guards write up disciplinary reports and transfer us to the more punitive restrictive solitary confinement in N-2, N-3, N-4 or N-5, guards then enforce an arbitrary rule that gives prisoners the ultimatum of sending all their books and personal property home or let the prison dispose of it.
- (13) Louisiana prison officials charge indigent prisoners (who earn less than 4 cents an hour) \$3.00 for routine requests for health care services, \$6.00 for emergency medical requests, and \$2.00 for each new medical prescription. They wait until our family and friends send us money and take it to pay prisoners' medical bills.

Our Concerns:

- (14) How much public monies are appropriated to the LDOC budget and specifically allotted to provide humane treatment and implement the rehabilitation program pursuant to LSA-R.S.15:828?
- (15) Why does Elayn Hunt Correctional Center located in the capitol of Louisiana have so many educational and rehabilitation programs teaching prisoners job and life skills for reentry whereas there are no such programs to engage the majority of prisoners confined in the N-1, N-2, N-3, and N-4 solitary confinement buildings at DWCC.
- (16) It is customary for Louisiana prison officials and DWCC prison guards to tell inmates confined in the prison's cellblocks to wait until transfer to prison dormitory to participate in programs when in fact there are no such programs available and ready to engage the majority of the state's 34,000 prisoner population. The programs are especially needed for prisoners confined in a 6x9 or 54 square feet cell with another person for 22 or more hours per day.
- (17) Why can't prisoners use phone and computers every day to communicate with family and peers as part of rehabilitation and staying connected to the community?
- (18) Why do prisoners have to be transferred miles and miles away from loved ones to remote correctional facilities when there are facilities closer to loved ones?
- (19) Why are prison guards allowed to treat prisoners as chattel slaves, confined in cages 22 or more hours per day, take away phone calls and visitation and canteen at will, and take away earned good time credits for any reason at all without input from family, one's peers and community?
- (20) Why do the outside communities allow prison guards to create hostile living environments and conditions of confinement that leaves prisoners in a state of chattel slavery, stress, anxiety, anger, rage, inner torment, despair, worry, and in a worse condition from when we first entered the prison?
- (21) Why do state governments and/or peers in the community allow racist or bigoted white families who reside in the rural and country parts of Louisiana to run the state's corrections system with impunity? For example, DWCC Warden Jerry Goodwin institutes racist and bigoted corrections policies and practices for the very purpose of oppression, repression, antagonizing and dehumanizing the inmates who will one day be released from prison.
- (22) David Wade Correctional Center Colonel Lonnie Nail, a bigot and a racist, takes his orders from Warden Jerry Goodwin, another racist and bigot. Both Goodwin and Nail influences subordinate corrections officers to act toward prisoners in a racist or bigoted manner and with an arrogant

attitude. This creates a hostile living environment and debilitating conditions of confinement for both guards and prisoners and prevents rehabilitation of inmates.

- (23) In other industrialized democracies like Norway, Denmark, Sweden, Germany, the Netherlands, et al, it is reported that no prisoner should be declared beyond reform or redemption without first attempting to rehabilitate them. Punitive or harsh conditions of confinement are not supported because they see the loss of freedom inherent in a prison sentence as punishment enough. One Netherlands official reported that their motto is to start with the idea of "Reintegration back into society on day one" when people are locked up. "You can't make an honest argument that how someone is treated while incarcerated doesn't affect how they behave when they get out," the official added.
- (24) Additionally, some Scandinavian countries have adopted open prison programs without fences or armed guards. Prisoners who prove by their conduct that they can be trusted are placed in a prison resembling a college campus more than a prison. The result is a 20% recidivism rate, compared to a 67% rate in the United States.
- (25) The National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC) in a position statement says: "Prolonged (greater than 15 consecutive days) solitary confinement is cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, and harmful to an individual's health."

What We Believe:

- (26) We believe that when the greater portion of public monies goes to war and the military, this leaves little funds left for community reinvestment and human development. The people have less access to resources by which to get a better idea of human behavior and rely on higher education instead of prison to solve cultural, social, political, economic problems in the system that may put people at risk to domestic violence and crime as a way to survive and cope with shortcomings in the system.
- (27) We believe that investing public monies in the rehabilitation program LSA-R.S.15:828 to teach prisoners job and life skills will redeem inmates, instill morals, and make incarcerated people productive and fit for society.
- (28) We believe that confining inmates in cellblocks 15 or more hours per day is immoral, uncivilized, brutalizing, a waste of time and counter-productive to rehabilitation and society's goals of "promoting the general welfare" and "providing a more perfect union with justice for all."
- (29) We believe that corrections officers who prove by their actions that incarcerated people are nothing more than chattel slaves are bucking the laws and creating hardening criminals and these corrections officers are, therefore, a menace to society.

Our Demands:

- (30) We are demanding a public conversation from community activists and civil rights leaders about (i) the historic relationship between chattel slavery, the retaliatory assassination of President Abraham Lincoln, and the resurrection of slavery written into the 13th Amendment; (ii) the historic relationship between the 13th Amendment, the backlash against Reconstruction,

- Peonage, Convict Leasing, and Slavery; (iii) the historic relationship between the 13th Amendment, the War Against Poverty, the War on Drugs, Criminal Justice and Prison Slavery.
- (31) We demand that the Louisiana legislature pass the Decarcerate Louisiana Anti-Slavery and Freedom Liberation Act of 2020 into law and end prison slavery and the warehousing of incarcerated people for the very purpose of repression, oppression, and using prisoners and their families and supporters as a profit center for corporate exploitation and to generate revenue to balance the budget and stimulate the state economy.
 - (32) We are demanding that Warden Jerry Goodwin and Colonel Lonnie Nail step down and be replaced by people are deemed excellent public servants in good standing with human rights watchdog groups and civil rights community.
 - (33) We are demanding that the LDOC provide public monies to operate state prison dormitories and cellblocks as rehabilitation centers to teach incarcerated people job and life skills 5 days a week from 7:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
 - (34) We are demanding that the LDOC release a public statement announcing that “from this day forward it will not support punitive or harsh conditions of confinement,” and that “no prisoner should be declared beyond reform or redemption without first attempting to rehabilitate them.”
 - (35) We are demanding that the prison cellblocks be operated as open dormitories (made in part a health clinic and part college campus) so that incarcerated people can have enough space to walk around and socialize, participate in class studies, exercise, use telephone as the need arise. Prisoners are already punished by incarceration so there is no need to punish or further isolate them. Racism and abuse of power will not be tolerated.
 - (36) We are demanding an end to unjust policies and practices that impose punishments and deprive incarcerated people of phone calls, visitation, canteen, good time credits, books and other personal property that pose no threat to public safety.
 - (37) We are demanding that LDOC provide incarcerated people cellphones and computers to communicate with the public and stay connected to the community.
 - (38) We are demanding the right to communicate with reporters to aid and assist incarcerated persons in preparing a press release to communicate to the public Decarcerate Louisiana’s vision and mission statements, aims, and plans for moving forward.
 - (39) We are demanding the right to participate in the U.S.-European Criminal Justice Innovation Project and share our complaint, concerns, and demands for a humane corrections program.
 - (40) We are only demanding the right to enough space to create, to innovate, to excel in learning, to use scientific knowledge to improve our person and place and standing in the free world. The rule of law must support the betterment and upliftment of all humanity. As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., said: “injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.”
 - (41) We demand that the responsibility for prisoner medical care be removed from DOC wardens and place it under the management of the state’s health office; increase state health officer staff to better monitor prisoner health care and oversee vendor contracts.
 - (42) We have a God-given right and responsibility to resist abuse of power from the wrongdoers, to confront unjust authority and oppression, to battle for justice until we achieve our demands for liberation and freedom.

We, the undersigned, declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct.

Executed on this 28th Day of January, 2019.

1. Ronald Brooks #385964
2. David Johnson #84970
3. Freddie Williams #598701
4. Earl Hollins #729041
5. James Harris #399514
6. Tyrone Carter #550354
7. Kerry Carter #392013
8. Ivo Richardson #317371
9. Rondrikus Fulton #354313
10. Kentell Simmons #601717
11. Jayvonte Pines #470985
12. Deandre Miles #629008
13. Kenneth P. #340729
14. Brandon Ceaser #421453
15. Tyronne Ward #330964
16. Jermaine Atkins #448421
17. Charles Rodgers #320513
18. Steve Givens #557854
19. Timothy Alfred #502378
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