

I wish to register a complaint against the following named employee(s) of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation:

Employee(s) Name	Description (Job title, ID number, vehicle and license number, home address, etc. if known)	Employee's Work Location (if known)
Lt. Shawna Robinson		CMC-East-Visiting
Sgt. E. Valencia		CMC-East-Visiting

June 28, 2024 Noonish CMC-East-Visiting
Date(s) of Incident Time of Incident Location of Incident

Details of Complaint (Include nature of complaint, names and address of witnesses and other involved parties, names of any law enforcement or social services agencies, doctors, or attorneys contacted, a chronology of the events, etc. It is important to include as many factual details as possible so that your complaint may be thoroughly investigated. Attach additional sheets if necessary.)

Please see the attached memo
plus supporting materials

In order that the Department may contact you relative to your complaint, please provide the following:

Name: Angela Cotellessy Cell Home Phone: (213) 804-5157
Address: 6200 Rolling Rd, #523142 Springfield, VA 22152 Work Phone: ()

If your complaint is against a Department peace officer, you must read and sign the following statement:

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE A COMPLAINT AGAINST A PEACE OFFICER FOR ANY IMPROPER PEACE OFFICER CONDUCT. CALIFORNIA LAW REQUIRES THIS AGENCY TO HAVE A PROCEDURE TO INVESTIGATE CITIZENS' COMPLAINTS. YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO A WRITTEN DESCRIPTION OF THIS PROCEDURE. THIS AGENCY MAY FIND AFTER INVESTIGATION THAT THERE IS NOT ENOUGH EVIDENCE TO WARRANT ACTION ON YOUR COMPLAINT; EVEN IF THAT IS THE CASE, YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO MAKE THE COMPLAINT AND HAVE IT INVESTIGATED IF YOU BELIEVE AN OFFICER BEHAVED IMPROPERLY. CITIZENS' COMPLAINTS AND ANY REPORTS OR FINDINGS RELATING TO COMPLAINTS MUST BE RETAINED BY THIS AGENCY FOR AT LEAST FIVE YEARS.

I have read and understand the above statement.

Angela Cotellessy
Signature

8/15/24
Date

Your complaint may be submitted to any supervisor or manager of the Department, or may be addressed to the Department's Office of Internal Affairs at any of the Regional Offices indicated on the reverse side of this form.

For Departmental Use Only:

Official Receiving Complaint

Office/Institution

Date Received

TO: California Department of Corrections, Office of Internal Affairs

FROM: Dr. Angela Cotellessa

DATE: August 19, 2024

SUBJECT: Concerns about repeated misconduct and abuses at the California Men's Colony (CITIZENS COMPLAINT ADDENDUM)

CC: CDCR Secretary Macomber, Governor Gavin Newsom, Inspector General Roy Wesley, California Attorney General Rob Bonta, San Luis Obispo Mayor Erica Stewart, California Senator John Laird, California Assembly Member Dawn Addis, US Department of Justice – Civil Rights Division, California State Auditor, California State Board of State and Community Corrections, Federal Bureau of Prisons, Prison Legal News, Maurice Chammah (The Marshall Project), American Civil Liberties Union, Matt Fountain (The Tribune), KSBY News, Laurel Rosenhall (CalMatters), Marisa Lagos (KQED), Sheila Dewan (The New York Times), Jessica Pishko (freelance journalist), Eli Hager (ProPublica), Ken Armstrong (ProPublica), Mother Jones, The Intercept, Sam Stanton (Sacramento Bee), Scott Budnick (Anti-Recidivism Coalition)

Introduction and Purpose

I am writing to provide additional documentation to support the citizen's complaint I have filed previously against Lieutenant Shawna Robinson and Correctional Officer Montes by extending my complaint about Robinson, in particular.

With this new form/submission, I am adding Sergeant E. Valencia to my complaint regarding events that occurred on June 28, 2024, during my visit to the California Men's Colony.

Incident on June 28, 2024

On June 28th, my visit with my spouse, Shawn Rodriguez (V16387), was unjustly denied due to improper actions taken by Lieutenant Robinson and Sergeant Valencia, who were on duty and in charge of visiting that day. This was particularly devastating because I had flown cross-country from Virginia to San Luis Obispo with my young daughter, only to have not only the June 28th visit canceled but also our entire summer plans, including a Family Visit that was scheduled, canceled.

Improper Actions by Lt. Robinson and Sgt. Valencia

Under Lt. Robinson's direction, on June 28, 2024, Sgt. Valencia told Shawn that he was not allowed to attend visiting in the state-issued blue clothing he was wearing, and he had to change into a different style/cut of state-issued blue clothing instead. Shawn explained that he no longer had that particular style of clothing in his possession; it was missing. Rather than simply providing a clean pair of the clothing they demanded, which could have easily been obtained from the nearby laundry room, Sgt. Valencia instructed my spouse to go to the Yard and find a random person to swap dirty clothes with. Exchanging property in this way with other inmates is against CDCR policy and is also highly inappropriate.

Health and Safety Concerns

Is it humane or appropriate to expect two strangers to swap dirty clothes? Dirty clothes can harbor bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens that can lead to skin infections, respiratory issues, or spread contagious diseases. The sweat, body oils, and other bodily fluids present in dirty clothes can exacerbate these risks. In environments like prisons, where hygiene can already be compromised, exchanging dirty clothing increases the likelihood of health problems, making it an obviously unsafe practice. I am not sure why a CDCR Lieutenant and Sergeant felt it was appropriate to demand Shawn exchange dirty clothes with another inmate off the yard and then penalize him when he requested a pair of clean clothing instead.

Denial of Visit Due to Non-Compliance with Inappropriate Demands

When Shawn refused to break the rules and/or jeopardize his health, they claimed he was "refusing the visit." Shawn did not refuse our visit; the staff on duty refused to provide the very clothing they require, and that is what caused this whole debacle. Despite our repeated requests for the required clothing to be provided, they would NOT provide it, leading to the cancellation of our visit.

Retaliation and Impact on Family

When I attempted to express my dissatisfaction and requested to speak to a higher authority, our visiting privileges were revoked for two months, and I was told that I have to reapply to become an approved visitor whatsoever, which is a time-consuming process. For no valid reason, Robinson essentially ruined our family's summer and forced me to waste the money I had spent for two of us to travel cross country to San Luis Obispo. My daughter and I were very upset that we were not able to see Shawn, especially after having our hopes up to be together; it was truly devastating to all of us.

False Documentation by CO Kessler and Sgt. Stewart

Approximately six weeks after these events, I have finally received the documentation regarding the removal of my visiting privileges; copies are included here for your review. As you can see, Correctional Officer B. Kessler filled out the "Notice of Visitor Warning Termination/Suspension/Denial/Revocation" form, stating that Shawn refused to visit and change into authorized clothing. However, Kessler was not present during the events and was in an entirely different building the whole time. I know for certain that Kessler was in the front check-in building, because on my way out, he asked me what happened; he had no idea what had occurred up until then. I briefly spoke with Kessler on my way out, explaining to him that our visit was canceled because the staff would not provide the newly required clothing to Shawn.

Also note: the documentation for the new rule that says only certain STYLES of state-issued blue clothing may be worn in Visiting is not posted anywhere nor was it distributed to inmates ahead of time.

It was only after I explained what happened to Kessler that he learned what had occurred leading me to leave CMC earlier than expected on June 28; this is how I know for sure, 100%, that Kessler was not present, because he had been checking in Visitors the whole time, and he only learned what happened once I explained it to him. Kessler was not even in the same building where any of the exchanges with Shawn occurred. I suggest you check which computer he was logged into on June 28 from approximately noon to 2 pm, and its physical location, in comparison to where Shawn would have been (certainly not in the public-facing front check-in building). You will see that Kessler was not even present for any of this, so why is he submitting an official government report about it?

Video Footage and Additional Evidence

Please also pull the video footage from these events. This all happened on June 28, 2024, from approximately noon to 2 pm or so. You will find my 7-year-old daughter repeatedly crying and requiring comfort because of the staff's refusal to let Shawn come visit us. You will also see that I was not "disruptive" nor did I "lay hands" on an officer as they originally claimed before changing their story to me being "disruptive."

Improper Suspension Notice by Sgt. Stewart

Additionally, a visitor suspension notice was issued by Sergeant Ann Stewart, who was off work that day. Please check your records, and you will find that E. Valencia was the Sergeant in charge of visiting that day, and Sgt. Stewart not working on June 28, 2024. Why are CMC staff who were off work completing official government reports for events that occurred when they were not present?

Concerns About Manipulation and Misconduct

It is concerning that these two decent staff members (Kessler and Stewart) were manipulated by Lt. Robinson into completing and signing reports filled with mischaracterizations and outright lies for events they themselves did not even witness or were not present for. While I acknowledge that Correctional Officer Kessler and Sergeant Stewart were surely manipulated into this situation by Lieutenant Robinson and Sergeant Valencia, and are clearly in need of some refresher training, my complaint here is directed towards Robinson and Valencia, not Kessler or Stewart. I'm sure if you ask Kessler or Stewart why they completed either of these forms, they will tell you that they were instructed to do so by their superior officer, Robinson.

Pattern of Misconduct by Lt. Robinson

Lt. Shawna Robinson has consistently been abusive to me and my husband ever since she discovered in 2023 that Shawn testified in a trial against Correctional Officer abuses last year. This situation here is yet another example of her repeated misconduct while wearing a CDCR badge. Robinson was in charge and directing all of this to occur. This is clearly a way of Robinson trying to cover her tracks and avoid accountability or transparency by forcing more junior staff to fabricate reports for events they were not even present for. Lt. Robinson has unethically and immorally abused the power afforded to her title, power, position, and badge in order to harass and bully me and my spouse for reporting staff misconduct.

Impact of Robinson's Actions on Families and CDCR Integrity

Robinson's actions have repeatedly demonstrated a pattern of misconduct, mismanagement, and unprofessional behavior that consistently harms incarcerated persons and their families. Robinson's conduct has severely impacted my family repeatedly, and her continued employment in such capacities without accountability undermines the integrity of the CDCR.

Request for Investigation and Accountability

I respectfully request that your office thoroughly investigate these matters and hold Lieutenant Robinson and Sergeant Valencia accountable for their actions, in addition to CO Montes, whose behavior was reported in a prior Citizen Complaint.

Concerns About Suicides at CMC

The level of abuse and corruption at CMC is severe. Please also look into how many people are dying there via suicide. I believe it's around 10 deaths just since last winter. I am fairly confident that CMC's rate of suicides is much higher than in other prisons. Why do you think this is the case? Please consider requiring body cams at CMC, especially for any staff who have had misconduct complaints submitted against them.

Retaliation Against Staff Misconduct Reports

Anyone who reports staff misconduct at CMC is severely retaliated against—my family is an example. Others are afraid to speak up. Because Shawn was a whistleblower before, and because I am also a whistleblower who dared to report Montes' misconduct earlier this year, Robinson has gone out of her way to make our lives hell and keep our family apart.

Obfuscation of CDCR Policy to Send Staff Misconduct Complaints to the Office of Internal Affairs

CDCR policy requires that staff misconduct complaints be sent to the CDCR Office of Internal Affairs so investigations may be done impartially and professionally; that is not happening. CMC is failing to submit staff misconduct complaints up to the Office of Internal Affairs, instead opting to cover up and dismiss them locally. What's worse, there is a consistent pattern of abusive bullying tactics for families like mine who have done the right thing and spoken up when we have seen wrongdoing done so unprofessionally and unethically. ***The message from CMC staff has been clear: if you report misconduct, you will be abused.*** How many staff misconduct complaints has CMC sent up to the Office of Internal Affairs? How many have been covered up locally instead, as is the case here?

Failure to Implement the California Model at CMC

The California Model—which CMC's Warden, Danny Samuel, has said he voluntarily has implemented, is absolutely not happening. If the California Model were more than a Public Relations campaign and actually taking place at CMC, then Shawn would have been given a clean pair of the required clothing, and our family would have been allowed to visit. If the California Model were being followed at CMC, then staff misconduct complaints would be handled properly, not covered up. The level of abuse and retaliation my family has endured for reporting staff misconduct is unacceptable and abusive. If the California Model were taking place at CMC, this would not be happening. If the California Model were even remotely close to being implemented at CMC, then Shawna Robinson's abusive, bullying tactics would not be tolerated by her colleagues, even more junior staff. Robinson has wielded her power and position to get junior staff to fabricate reports for events that occurred when they weren't even there; this is NOT the California Model.

Corruption and Abuse at CMC: Code 4 Charity

There is a non-profit called Code 4 Charity registered in 2020 near San Luis Obispo to raise money for Correctional Officers "in their time of need." Code 4 Charity makes money by taking orders for food from prisoners, bulk buying items from Costco or other vendors, and selling these items at a notable markup in price to inmates. Prisoners are by definition trapped with limited food/canteen options. The charity is registered by the spouse of a Correctional Officer at CMC. That means, Correctional Officer Lomelli, and her husband, are making a profit off prisoners who are desperate for decent/fresh food. With the profits, CO Lomelli and her husband spend thousands on meats and

BBQ fare so CMC staff can have free parties while at work, to avoid running programs, and all of this is funded by money paid for by prisoners and their families. Most prisoners are from lower socio-economic status backgrounds. Overcharging them for food so staff can party while they're supposed to be working is very immoral and an abuse of their power.

Fraud, Waste, and Abuse at CMC

CMC also recently got many very large, expensive Traeger BBQ grills. Who paid for them? Did taxpayers fund this? If so, this is another glaring example of the corruption and abuse at CMC—and all the staff just go along with it. It's a similar thing when Corrections staff confiscate property from prisoners, like TVs or fans, and then use them in their offices (you can tell it is inmate property when it's made of clear plastic). This practice is also rampant; walk into a CMC office and you are likely to see what is obviously inmate property being used by staff so they can have free equipment paid for by prisoners and their families.

Request for Close Examination of CMC

I would greatly appreciate you taking a close look at what's occurring at CMC. CMC has a culture that they do things THEIR way (not the CDCR way); they pride themselves on this. In doing so, they're jeopardizing the CDCR and putting the CDCR in a poor light by failing to abide by CDCR policies and regulations while also simultaneously abusing incarcerated persons and their loved ones in the process. This is unacceptable and must be remedied. Please help.

Conclusion

Thank you for your attention to these serious issues.

Sincerely,



Dr. Angela Cotellessa

6200 Rolling Road, #523142

Springfield, VA 22152

213-804-5151

Acotellessa@gwmail.gwu.edu

P.S. My original Citizens Complaint may be found here, for ease of reference:

www.helpfreeshawn.com > Documents > Final Submission of Repeated Staff Misconduct and Coverups at CMC updated 8.1.24 (pdf).



NOTICE OF VISITOR SUSPENSION

VISITOR COPY

Inmate Name: RODRIGUEZ, SHAWN M.

Application Date: 06/28/2024

CDC#: V16387

Facility: CMC-Facility C

Visitor: ANGELA J. COTELLESA

6253 Rolling Spring Court
Springfield, Virginia 22152-2242

Permission to visit was suspended on 06/28/2024 for:


Disruption of the Visiting Area

Suspension due to disruption in the visiting room and visiting processing area. Per Warden

This suspension will expire on 08/27/2024 after which time the visitor may reapply by writing the Warden.

Action taken by: A. Stewart

Date: 06/28/2024

Signature: 

Visitors may appeal any action taken above by following the established appeal process outlined in the California Code of Regulations, Title 15 Division 3, Section 3179, Appeals Relating to Visiting.

All supplemental information sent must include a copy of this notice.

Sgt. Stewart who dated
this form 6/28/24, when
the problems occurred -- and she
was OFF WORK and not
present whatsoever for the events
that occurred that day.

NOTICE OF VISITOR
WARNING/TERMINATION/SUSPENSION/DENIAL/REVOCATION

DISTRIBUTION:
ORIGINAL - Visiting File
CANARY - Inmate
PINK - Visitor

INMATE'S NAME	CDC NUMBER	INSTITUTION	UNIT
PONCEIVER, SHAWN	V40387	CME	622

REGARDING: (Name of Visitor)

COTELLES, ANGELA

VISITING VIOLATION

ACTION TAKEN (Check the box(es) that apply):

☐ Verbal Warning _____
DATE

☐ Written Warning _____
DATE

☒ Termination For The Day

6/23/24
DATE

☒ Other: _____
DATE

DESCRIPTION OF VISITING VIOLATION INCIDENT:

INMATE REFUSED VISIT

REASON FOR ACTION TAKEN:

INMATE REFUSED VISIT (REFUSED TO CHANGE INTO AUTHORIZED CLOTHING)

Action taken by B. Kessler on 6/23/24
PRINT NAME OF OFFICIAL
[Signature]
SIGNATURE OF OFFICIAL

C.O. Kessler was in an entirely different building the entire time checking in incoming visitors. Kessler did not interact with Shawn at all in visiting that day.

FINAL ACTION TAKEN (If applicable):

☐ One (1) Month Suspension

☐ Six (6) Month Suspension

☐ Three (3) Month Suspension

☐ Twelve (12) Month Suspension

☐ Twenty-four (24) Month Suspension

REASON FOR FINAL ACTION TAKEN:

A sixty day suspension has been imposed due to visitor Angela Cotelles conduct while in the visiting room and gatehouse. Your visiting privileges will be reinstated on 8/27/2024.

[Signature]
SIGNATURE OF DIRECTOR / WARDEN / DESIGNEE

7/9/2024
(DATE)

The Termination/Suspension/Denial will expire:

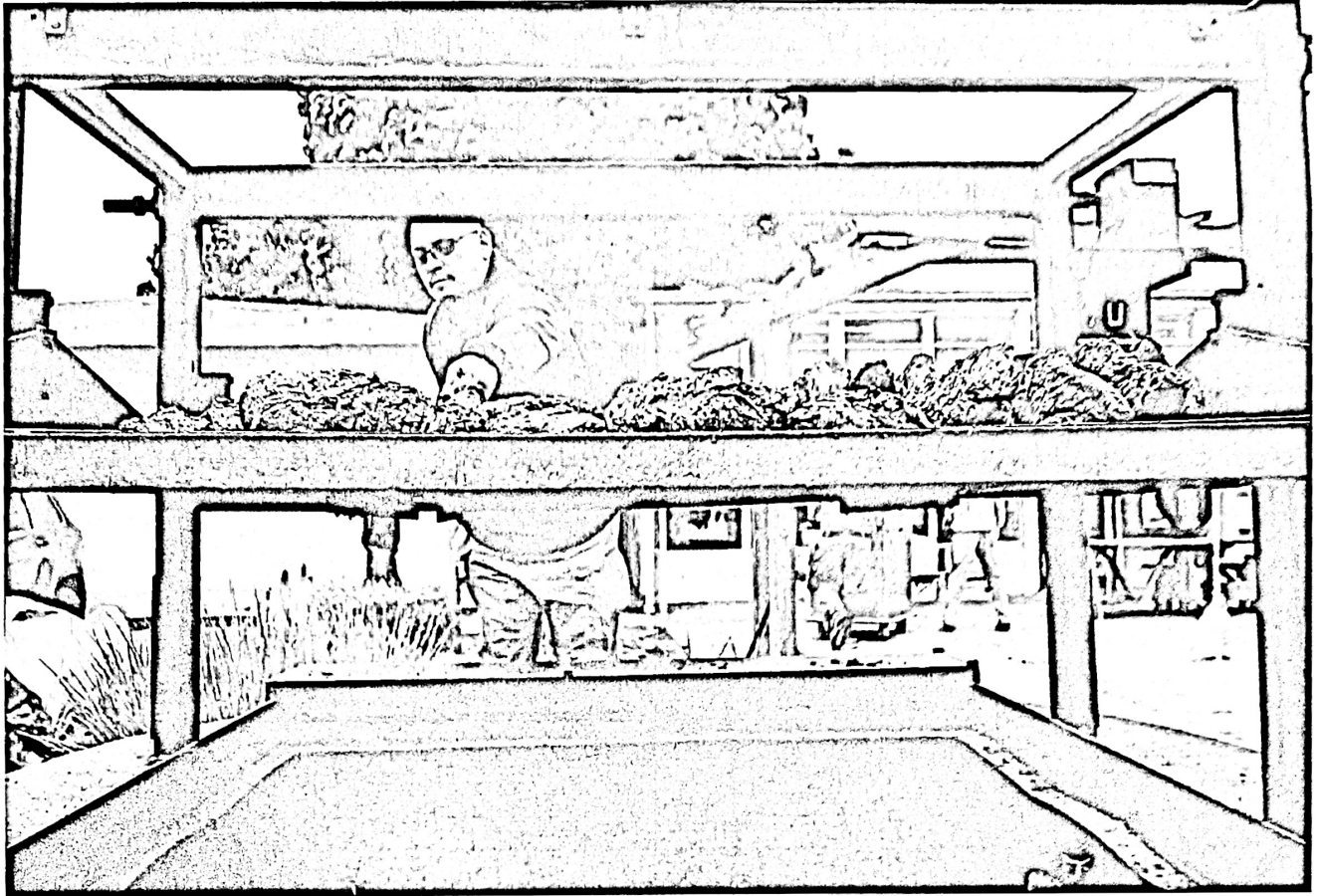
☒ ON (DATE) 8/27/2024 after which time you may continue to visit, provided you adhere to all rules and regulations related to visiting within the facility.

☒ ON (DATE) 8/27/2024 after which time you may write a letter to the Warden requesting to have your visiting privileges reinstated. You must also submit a CDC Form 106, Visiting Questionnaire.

Visitors may appeal any action taken above by following the established appeal process outlined in the California Code of Regulations, Title 15, Division 3, Section 3179, Appeals Relating to Visiting.

CMC shows staff appreciation

JUNE 1, 2023



Correctional Officer A. Flores serves as grill master while preparing tri-tip for CMC staff.

The California Men's Colony (CMC) staff appreciation barbecue was a success thanks to generous donations from multiple organizations.

Organizations and individuals contributed \$13,500 toward the annual barbecue, including:

- Code 4 Charity Foundation (C4CF)
- California Correctional Peace Officers Association
- California Men's Colony (CMC) Employee Benefit Fund (EBF)
- and CMC staff members.

*Funded by overcharging prisoners for
Costco food & other
fare*

Held May 24, the feast included nearly 1,000 pounds of Santa Maria-style barbecued tri-tip and thousands of dollars in prizes for CMC staff.

The nearly 70 individual prizes included gift cards, camping gear, earbuds, a television, corn hole game sets and a \$500 Costco gift card.

Code 4 Charity making profits
to fund staff BBQs by overcharging
prisoners for food

Sponsor: New Life K-9s

Purpose: Charity Non-Profit

Method of Fundraising: Selling Food Products

Vendors: G Brothers Smokehouse and Carpas

Distribution of Proceeds: New Life K-9s and Code 4 Charity Foundation

Delivery Date(s): July 19, 2024

CDCR#	(Please Print) LAST NAME, FIRST NAME	YARD	HOUSING
-------	--------------------------------------	------	---------

There will be a limit of per item. If over the limit on an item order will be voided.

FOOD ITEM	Limit	Sale Price	Qty Ordered	Total Price
BBQ Chicken Sandwich	3	\$16.00		
Pulled Pork Sandwich	3	\$16.00		
Turkey Sandwich	3	\$16.00		
Cheeseburger	3	\$16.00		
Cashew Clusters (2lbs)	3	\$14.00		
Watermelon Gummies with Chili Powder Seasoning	10	\$7.00		
Pecan Rings with Chili Powder Seasoning	10	\$7.00		
Tofu Wax (64oz)	4	\$18.00		
Cookies Assorted (24pk)	3	\$14.00		
Kirkland Assorted Chocolate (90 oz)	3	\$27.00		
Pistachios Kernels Roasted & Salted (1.5 lbs)	3	\$20.00		
Kirkland Steak Strips (Jerky) (12 oz)	4	\$15.00		
Protein Bars Peanut Butter & Chocolate Chip (42 Bars)	3	\$20.00		

GRAND TOTAL: 115.00

ORDER FORMS DUE:	TRUST ACTION	DELIVERY DATES: (tentative)	If the total price of grand total is inaccurate, the order will be voided, unless your total is more than the correct total. That money will be considered an additional donation.
June 12, 2024	Between June 17-21, 2024	July 19, 2024	

MUST READ BELOW BEFORE SIGNING.

Notice: I understand and agree that I must personally pick up this order on the delivery date. If for any reason this order is not picked up by the close of delivery time (i.e. Medical Quarantine / Isolation, Ad-Seg/Transfer/Parole Hospital/Visiting etc.), the entire order will be considered a donation. I understand that if any item is unavailable, it will be substituted with an item of equal value. Food items identified above with an * are NOT Religious Diet Program approved. I understand that if I am a participant of the Religious Diet Program, purchase and/or consumption of these items will result in a written warning and possible removal from the Religious Diet Program.

INMATES SIGNATURE: (Sign When Submitting Order Form)	DATE:	ORDER PICKED UP BY: (Sign When Order is Picked Up)
---	-------	---

[Faint handwritten notes and signatures at the bottom of the page]