

W H E N I S E N O U G H E N O U G H ? ? ?

BY Francis Soffen

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I am dying. Hurts me to admit it, but the truth is often times quite painful. I have been locked up in the Massachusetts prison system since 1971. I have been "eligible" for parole since 1987, but my captors have not thus far seen fit to release me. One time I saved a guards life. Have saved many men from the end of a prison shank as well. Now I am not claiming to be a model convict, sure I have fallen short of that mark on many occasions, but by anyones opinion I have done my time, 40 years now, and it is certainly time to say enough is enough.

Today I lay in my bed in the isolation cell of the Hospital Secure Unit at MCI Shirley. I cannot get out of bed and into my wheelchair without someones assistance. I cannot use the bathroom without assistance and am forced to wear an adult diaper. It is humiliating sometimes, but most days I am too sick to be humiliated. My legs are in such bad shape that talk of amputating them has come up as of late. You can never know how that makes your stomach feel, to think of a leg being cut off, it is incomprehensible. My liver cannot filter some of the chemicals my body naturally produces. My amonia level rises and I get drowsy. People think I am on pain medication, and I probably should be, but that is not the case. I am just drowsy from liver failure. Some days it feels like knife punctures when I move, but the strongest pain reliever I can get is Motrin. I suffer for most of my waking hours. If you knew me in my heyday you would be shocked. i was a bull of a man with a very healthy appetite for life. Now I can barely keep my food down.

The time has come for compassionate release here in Massachusetts. Why are the taxpayers being burdened with my expensive care? Keeping me in prison, and affording me healthcare in this environment, is like the inner city families who have to go to emergency rooms at the local hospitals for their healthcare. It is the highest costing way for them to have their ailments treated. I have to be transported to outside hospitals by armed guards, afforded very expensive care through that process, and then returned each time a follow-up or additional procedure is required. Just like the inner city family this is the most cost-ineffective way to afford me care. If I was allowed to live in a manged care facility the cost of my care would only be a fraction of what it currently is. I no longer pose any type of threat to society, I cannot hold an ink pen let alone a knife or a gun, and keeping me in prison serves no purpose. I require medical release.

Senator Patricia Jehlen has filed Senate Bill No. #SB-1213, which would make a provision in the law for the medical release of prisoners who no longer pose a threat. The time has come for the passage of this measure and I need you to contact your local state senator and urge them to support it. Make a call to their office. Send them an Email. Drop them a line through the mail. Please have compassion for the men who have served their time and are suffering in prison hospital units. It us up to you to strengthen the moral fabric of society with such mercy.

T H A N K Y O U ! ! !