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June 30, 2011

Mary Elizabeth Heffernan  
Secretary of Public Safety  
One Ashburton Place  
Room 2133  
Boston, MA 02108

Re: BARRIERS TO REHABILITATION AT MCI SHIRLEY

Dear Hohorable Secretary Heffernan:

Please allow me to direct to you my sincere concerns about what I know is one of the most pressing barriers to rehabilitation here at MCI Shirley. Though there are many such barriers here the one that I will describe herein is easily curable and would work to lessen some of the other barriers which create high recidivism rates.


At this facility we are subjected to a consistant pattern of delayed and late movements. MCI Shirley already has the least amount of out of cell time of any Level 4 facility in the state. Attached to this letter you will find a detailed log of the delayed movements here at the facility between the dates of 04/04/2011 and 06/04/11. As you will see through a cursory review of this document the movements here at the facility are consistantly delayed, sometimes substantially. This becomes a serious barrier to rehabilitation as there is not enough time left in the movement periods to participate in effective programming, educational, and other rehabilitative offerings. By the time classes and groups get started it is time to return to our housing units. This is a serious public safety issue as the men here at this facility are not being allowed to secure the mandated rehabilitation they are to be afforded under the law, and the citizens of the Commonwealth are placed squarely in jeopardy due to the fact that unprepared prisoners are being released to the streets of our cities and towns. It is in fact that serious.

The delay in movement also creates an attitude of indifference in many of the prisoners here. Men feel that if these prgrams and classes offered here are not important to the administrators that makes them not worthwhile at all. This attitude permeates the idle prisoner population and men instead engage in anti-social, pro-criminal behaviors such as drug use, gambling glorification of violence. As a level 4 facility MCI Shirley must be providing prisoners with effective skills that will afford them the best possible chance at successful reentry. I am very sad to report to you that exactly the

opposite is true here at this facility. You would not believe the number of idle prisoners who make no effort to engage in programming, educational or other pro-social rehabilitative offerings. These young men will undoubtedly return to society with little to no chance of success, but much more scary is the fact that some of these men will return to our cities and towns and commit murder. How can we stand by and let this happen? We cannot.

Please instruct your subordinates at the Department of Correction to immediately address the serious situation concerning the late movements at MCI Shirley. As I have described to you herein this seemingly small failure can lead to death on the streets your office is bound to protect. When the prisoners are the Commonwealth can effectively engage in pro-social offerings while incarcerated lives are saved. Please help us to save lives.

Very Respectfully Yours,



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cc: file/D. Patrick/ACLU

ATTACHMENT