

THE DEMAND OF THE PRISONERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH
AS WELL AS THE DEMAND OF THE
FAMILY AND FRIENDS OF THE PRISONERS OF THE COMMONWEALTH

TO: Honorable Roderick Ireland
Chief Justice
Supreme Judicial Court
Commonwealth of Massachusetts

We, the prisoners of the Commonwealth, the family members of those serving prison sentences in the Commonwealth, as well as the friends of those serving prison sentences in the Commonwealth, make this DEMAND with standing as fully interested parties with legal rights in all three (3) branches of the government of the Commonwealth, that the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth revoke the funding and authority of Prisoners' Legal Services (formally Massachusetts Correctional Services), as well as ORDER that the agency's executive director, Leslie Walker, immediately CEASE & DESIST all actions and undertakings as far as the prisoners of the Commonwealth are concerned.

As grounds for this DEMAND we offer the Prisoners' Legal Services (hereafter PLS) has been derelict in their duty to represent the real interests, needs, desires, and legal rights of the prisoners, their families, and their friends here in the Commonwealth. PLS has become fully complicit in the abuse of prisoners by opting to work within the abusive framework of the Department of Correction while human rights violations continue to flourish with no end in sight.

When the Commonwealth was in the midst of a prison suicide crisis PLS chose to propose "treatment units" for the "sick" and "mentally ill" prisoners, rather than go after the perpetrators in the Department of Correction (DOC) who abuse men/women into a state where they would rather die than face another day of incarceration. When clear evidence arose that some purported suicides may not have been suicides at all, and in fact may have been homicides, PLS made a decision to suppress this evidence and avoid any adversarial interaction with the DOC who appeared to be at fault.

Repeated and ongoing medical abuse in the general prisoner population, the assisted daily living units, and the hospital units within the DOC has been all but ignored in its systemic failure by PLS. Each year, year after year, the same abuses occur in prison hospital units. PLS may take an individual case here or there, or work for a small class of prisoners, but the systemic failure, abuse and deadly negligent care are alive and well. This is another situation where it is clear PLS does not want to engage the DOC in an adversarial conflict. The same doctors provide deadly care each year. The same nurses afford substandard and negligent care each year. The same guards inflict abuse upon prison patients each year. PLS does absolutely nothing to hold these perpetrators accountable.

As of late the executive director of PLS, Leslie Walker, has joined the ranks of community and political organizations. Recently she has taken

a lead position on the Committee for Effective Public Safety. We offer that this is a real and actual conflict of interest. Since this Committee works for parole reform, and PLS and Leslie Walker has consistantly refused to litigate the parole malfeasance issues in the Commonwealth. It does not serve the constituency of the committee (prisoners, their families and their friends) to have the proven track record of failure that Leslie Walker brings to the table as far as parole is concerned taking a lead role in the committee's advocacy. Prisoners will die behind bars due to the fact that Leslie Walker and PLS dare not take the appropriate pro public safety aggressive stand on parole reform.

Guard upon prisoner abuse has long been prevalent in the Commonwealth's prisons. PLS has chosen to only go after individual cases rather than seek to expose the culture that fosters such abusive behavior. When the prison environment becomes a place where guards feel they can beat, torture and rape prisoners with impunity it is the DUTY of the advocates (PLS and Leslie Walker) to aggressively pursue the demolition of that draconian culture. Both PLS and Leslie Walker have failed miserably in their duty.

WHEREFORE, we DEMAND that the Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth immediately REVOKE the funding for Prisoners' Legal Services, ORDER that Prisoners' Legal Services immediately CEASE & DESIST their failed and ineffective representation of prisoners, further ORDER that Prisoners' Legal Services Executive Director, Leslie Walker, immediately CEASE & DESIST all actions and undertakings as far as the prisoners of the Commonwealth are concerned.

The Honorable Supreme Judicial Court of the Commonwealth should seek to immediately establish an advocacy group that represents the wishes and desires of the prisoners of the Commonwealth, their families as well as their friends, through mandating that those afore-mentioned parties with standing have real and effective input as to what types of advocacy will be afforded.

Respectfully Submitted,

Dated: ___/___/___

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