



PRISON LAW OFFICE

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WHO WE ARE:

We are lawyers who work to protect the rights of people in California and Arizona prisons and some California county jails. We do not work for or within the prison system.

We get hundreds of letters asking for help or information every week. We read every letter and try to answer each one as soon as we can. Unfortunately, there are many issues for which we cannot provide individual advice, advocacy, or representation. However, we may be able to provide a self-help information packet to help you understand your rights and how to protect them. There are a few matters for which we can provide individual assistance, but even if one of our class action lawsuits covers your issue, there is no guarantee we will be able to advocate for you. Also, in most situations, you must try to resolve your concerns through an administrative grievance/appeal (such as a CDCR 602-1/602-2, CDCR 602-HC or CDCR 1824 form or a jail grievance form) before we can assist you.

WE MAY BE ABLE TO ADVOCATE FOR YOU OR REPRESENT YOU IF YOU HAVE A PROBLEM WITH:

- **Medical care.** We represent all people in California prisons with medical care needs in a class action lawsuit known as the *Plata* case.
- **Mental health treatment.** We represent all people in California prisons who have major mental illnesses in a class action lawsuit known as the *Coleman* case.
- **Discrimination due to disabilities.** We represent all people in California prisons and on California parole with mobility, hearing, vision, kidney and learning disabilities in a class action lawsuit known as the *Armstrong* case.
- **Discrimination due to developmental disabilities.** We represent all people in California prisons with developmental disabilities in a class action lawsuit known as the *Clark* case.
- **Race-based lockdowns.** In the *Mitchell* case, we enforce a settlement agreement that prohibits CDCR from using race-based modified programs or lockdowns and requires individualized assessments to decide who will be put on a modified program or lockdown.
- **Denial of parole suitability.** We handle a very small number of parole cases for people serving indeterminate sentences (life with the possibility of parole).
- **Conditions in some California county jails.** We are investigating problems in many county jails in California, and we have filed lawsuits against the counties of Fresno, Riverside, Santa Clara, San Bernardino, Sacramento, and Contra Costa about issues such as poor medical and mental health care and disability discrimination.
- **Health care and isolation conditions in Arizona prisons.** We represent all people in Arizona state prisons regarding medical, dental, and mental health care, and regarding living conditions in Special Management Units, in a class action lawsuit now known as *Jensen*.

WE CANNOT ADVOCATE FOR YOU OR REPRESENT YOU IF:

- You have a prison or parole issue that does not fall under one of our class action cases.
- You want to pursue a criminal appeal.
- You are seeking representation or assistance with a state or federal habeas corpus case.
- You are seeking representation or assistance with a lawsuit for money damages or for a court order.
- You are seeking assistance with divorce, child custody, or child support cases.
- You want individual legal advice or a referral for individual representation.
- You want a print-out of case law, statutes, or internet resources.
- You would like us to send mail to third parties.
- You are having problems in a federal prison, a jail in a state other than California, or a prison in a state other than California or Arizona.

WE CAN PROVIDE SELF-HELP INFORMATION ON MANY TOPICS

We have several hundred self-help information packets on a wide variety of topics for people who are in California prisons or jails, in Arizona prisons, or on parole or Post-Release Community Supervision (PRCS) in California. Those packets discuss various types of legal rights and what actions can be taken to protect those rights. The issues include prison conditions and policies, parole suitability hearings, parole/PRCS conditions and revocations, criminal law, immigration, and family law. We also have packets focusing on how to file legal actions such as administrative grievances and appeals, direct criminal appeals, state habeas corpus petitions, federal habeas corpus petitions, money damages lawsuits, and small claims court actions.

If your letter raised an issue for which we have an information packet, we tried to enclose that packet with this letter. If you want information about another topic, write to us and we will send you a free packet if we have one that covers your issue. Many of our information packets also are available on the Resources page at www.prisonlaw.com.

In addition, we publish *The California Prison and Parole Law Handbook*, and update it periodically. The *Handbook* should be available in California prison law libraries and may be available on tablets. It also is available for free download on the Resources page at www.prisonlaw.com. If you want to buy a paper copy or be put in a drawing for a free paper copy, write to us and we will send you more information.