

August 22, 2011

Dear Secretary Tate & the CDCR,

We, the undersigned, are officers on the Executive Board of the Pajaro Valley Federation of Teachers. We represent over 1100 certificated teachers, counselors and psychologists in the Pajaro Valley Unified School District in South Santa Cruz County, California.

Many of our students and families are affected by the policies and procedures of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. They have loved ones locked up or may even have been incarcerated themselves at one time. We are a rural, agricultural community which is over 50% Latino, has approximately 27% of it's citizens unemployed and is facing the same budget cuts to education and social services that other counties across the state face. Many of our students face the "school-to-prison pipeline."

We strongly urge you to allow more educational programming to inmates in the Secure Housing Units of the CDCR. As educators, we understand the value of meaningful and productive academic work. We support inmates using the time they have while incarcerated to contribute to their own self-development and to their own educational programs. They should be able to do correspondence courses with proctored exams that end in a degree or certificate being granted to the student. They should also be allowed to do other types of "in-cell" study programs that are workbook based.

Educational programs in the SHU will greatly help the community to which these inmates return. It will improve inmates overall moral and enable inmates to expand their minds and plan for their lives after their release. Although, they may have years until their release, if they have a release date at all, we still support the right of these people to acquire a quality education.


We also believe that educational opportunities in the SHU will keep the staff and other inmates safer. If studying and learning, inmates will be less likely to commit irrational, angry acts of violence. They will be driven to something more positive, a goal bigger than the solitary conditions they face for 23 hours a day.


We appreciate your time and attention to this grave matter. Please contact Jenn Laskin, Grievance Officer, with any questions, concerns or requests for more information.

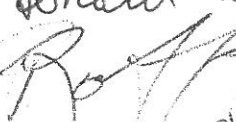
Sincerely,


 JENN LASKIN, VP Grievance

 JACK CARROLL, VP NEGOTIATIONS

 ANDY HSIEH-CORON, VP H.S. (former chair ~~Unit 3~~ Unit 3 SEIU, Local 1000)

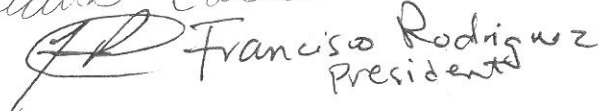
 DONALD BROWN, VP South Zone

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