

## **Introducing the Wisconsin Committee for the Ethical and Humane Treatment of Prisoners (WCEHTP)**

*Enclosed:*

*General cover letter*

*Mission statement*

*Endorsement form*

*Two forms for prisoners to fill out- Complaint, stress evaluation*

To whom in Concern

2) We are forming a committee of concerned citizens, The Wisconsin Committee for the Ethical and Humane Treatment of Prisoners ( WCEHTP). This committee will be made up of made up of volunteers to review submissions by prisoners requesting an independent public review of their long term seg/AC /Supermax control unit placements. These volunteers will be people who are not employed or in any way associated with corrections.

3) We need and welcome all volunteers we can get. We particularly could use professionals from some of the following disciplines to sit on the committee:

- a) prison/corrections reform
- b) sociology
- c) psychology
- d) penology
- e) civil and criminal law
- f) universal spiritualists
- g) and those just concerned for humane treatment of fellow beings.

4) For more information, contact us at the address below. Also see the enclosed WCEHTP mission statement sheet and information sheet for documents from prisoners.

5) As first step, we ask you to sign the endorsement form enclosed, which states that you support the mission and general outline of the committee. This is not a commitment to help- but will help us attract the experts and professionals we need to do the in -prison testing and investigating of conditions.

6) Together we shall form “vox Humana” (voice of humanity) and “Vox Pouli” (public opinion) that the psychological damage and suffering these prisons cause pose public policy and health concerns. We are a check on “misprision.”

Thank you and we look forward to hearing from you.

WCEHTP

c/o

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# Wisconsin Committee for the Ethical And Humane Treatment of Prisoners (WCEHTP)

## 1) Mission Statement:

To monitor, screen and review why prisoners are being held in extreme and uncivilized conditions of confinement for indeterminate periods of time.

A fresh and independent re-evaluation of the psychological and social damages of the "SHU" and "supermax" conditions.

2) Motto: A nation's standards are judged by its treatment of its most vulnerable citizens. Our present system strips the citizens in prison of the ability to protect themselves. It is therefore our obligation as citizens to be the "watch tower" to prevent and hold accountable all visible and invisible forms of "misprison".

3) Committee composition:

a) Ideally an assemblage of independent professionals and citizens with no WI DOC ties. Under no circumstances will these members be employees of the DOC, paid lobbyists or part of the guard union.

b) Members should include a diverse group of professionals with backgrounds in mental health, sociology, education, rehabilitation, penology, corrections reform, community services and prisoner rights.

c) Non professional members of the community should be well represented and efforts shall be made to keep the committee reflective of the ethnicity of the prison population.

d) In the interest of fairness, prisoner's family members and close friends will be welcome to help with processing prisoners' applications and doing other intake work and will be able to advocate for their loved ones at committee sessions but will not be part of the final decision making committee.

e) The committee will work with other advocacy organizations to most effectively use resources.

f) All gatherings of committee members shall have a moderator, to be chosen by the committee, to help maintain open discussion.

## 4) File review Eligibility:

Because a large volume of review requests are anticipated some standard for review must be established. Files will be reviewed of those prisoners in **one or more of these categories**:

a) have been in segregation or administrative confinement for 5 years or more

b) are being denied programs that would allow them to be released to less confined status or are otherwise needed.

c) are showing "decomposition traits", i.e. who are showing signs of severe psychological stress

d) have predetermined psychological concerns before being placed in indeterminate segregation status.

e) more shall be added to this clause as the committee become more firmly rooted and oriented to the problems.

## 5) Duties

a) The committee will review case files of long term prisoners confined in segregation or administrative confinement for five years or more or who otherwise fit the criteria outlined in above section(4).

b) This assemblage will use documents supplied by the prisoner and verify those documents with open records requests. The committee shall review the documents that are being used by the prison to keep the prisoner locked down as well as documents submitted by the prisoner showing why the prison administrations findings are oppressive. This assemblage will have the discretion to request any other documents needed either by open records request to the prison or direct request to the prisoner. For health records, each prisoner must sign a release of information permission form stating that the prison can reveal health information to the committee.

c) When appropriate, prisoners will be visited by appropriate experts and independent evaluations made.

d) The committee will work with other advocacy organizations to most effectively use resources.

## 6) Results:

a) The committee shall make their recommendations in a report of the prisoner being reviewed. The prisoner shall also be provided with a copy and shall determine if he would like the committee to send a "certified" copy of the recommendations to the prison administration.

b) If the committee has determined a prisoner is being inappropriately confined or denied programming, and that the placement is damaging to the prisoner, the committee as public policy authority, may file court action in support of the prisoner and his release from inappropriate confinement. Such legal actions will be determined by the committee and at the advice and counsel of the committee's legal consultant.

#### 7) Legal methods:

a) Once the committee is properly fitted and seated, they should seek out the appointment of a legal coordinator from among them or a volunteer who shall serve as a lay person legal consultant. This person or persons can be a member of the committee or not and should have a sound degree of legal knowledge; Volunteer lawyers, paralegals at the lower bar, judges or law professors.

b) The legal coordinator shall provide the committee with the proper venue and assess which cases are worth litigating in regards for humanitarian relief for the prisoners in US courts, the UN, the World Court etc. The legal consultant will apprise the committee of the relevant prison litigation law and the state of the law in germanous to the file on review. As the committee reviews files, patterns will be revealed and class actions are possible.

d) Other non legal actions by the committee are possible such as public reports, advocacy campaigns and the like. These will be determined as the committee gets its bearings.

#### 7) **Agency Structure**

Once the bones of this humanitarian agency are perfected the committee will have the discretion to add to its staffing, duties and permissions as long as it remains constant to the mission and integrity of the entity.

At base, group order and cohesion will be maintained whenever the committee convenes to discuss a case, file or agency, with these positions:

1) Committee secretary: who in accordance with Wisconsin common laws of incorporation, take notes, dates, minutes.

2) Supply and resource officer: to make arrangements to receive donated materials, funds and services. Shall record all resources the agency receives. Assistants and fill in staff will be available when these people are not in attendance.

3) Intake person//persons- this needs to be a designated person or persons to receive WCEHTP mail coming in from prisoners . If more this task is done by more than one person, there needs to be coordination between them. These people will read incoming mail, designate it to proper volunteers, and report on it at committee meetings.

**Endorsement Statement**

Please fill out this form if you would like to help us build a strong network of concerned citizens, organizations and experts. Besides groups and individuals to serve on the committee, we also need to attract psychologists, psychiatrists, and legal expert s that would come in at the committee's request to test and reevaluate prisoners of the committee's choosing.

In this endorsement, we are asking you to state your approval of the general aims of the committee. This is not a commitment to work with us. We will keep you informed of our progress and will later include here a list of organizations and individuals who give their endorsement .

I, \_\_\_\_\_, support the aims and general outline of the Wisconsin Committee for Ethical and Humane Treatment of Prisoners (WCEHTP). I also give the core forming group permission to use my name \_\_\_ my organizations name \_\_\_ in their general cover letter in hopes of attracting others to this important work.

(optional) Enter a personal statement here.

Your name, address, phone, email \_\_\_\_\_

organization's(optional) name; address , phone , email

sign and date:

\_\_\_\_\_

Organizations endorsing the proposals as of 12 -7-11:

Michelle Hughes of Disability Rights Wisconsin

