

“The prisoners at Pasquotank Correctional Institution are in solidarity with BLM and our hearts, prayers and condolences go out to George Floyd, Brianna Taylor and Keith Scott’s families, to the protesters in Portland and to all of those who have fallen victim to police brutality. A brutality that takes many forms, from the unjustified beatings of American citizens and rubber bullets, to wrongful convictions, solitary confinement, censorship of correspondence, excessive sentencing and to turning a blind eye to organized violence within our prisons.

At Pasquotank CI over the last two years there have been nearly a dozen suicides, countless overdoses, and innumerable brutal life threatening stabbings, extortion, robberies, five on one beating, all as a result of pervasive racism, gang violence and the corruption of the prison officials. Our living conditions inside and outside of solitary confinement are deplorable. 55% of all our incoming correspondence is rejected by prison mailroom officers, N. Fennell, Pitzer and D. Hathaway. It’s no use appealing these rejections because correspondence appeal reviewers Larry Dunston and Darcell Carter who are stationed in Raleigh NC uphold these restrictions.

The majority of the rejections are justified by officer Fennells favorite exaggerated response, “Unknown Substances or Smears”, which usually includes the crayon drawings from our children and grandchildren expressing their love for their fathers, perfume from our wives to remind us of home and her scent or an accidental smudge from the fallen tears of our loved ones. Just recently, legal research that was sent to a prisoner working on his case was rejected by Fennell on the grounds that it posed a threat to the security of the prison. No matter how we struggle to improve ourselves of the conditions of our confinement, our slightest efforts are frustrated, impeded and severely punished by this administration.

Additionally many of us who used to get financial support from our family members, our friends, the church or good samaritans in the community are now destitute because of the racist Feb. 5, 2019 JPAY prison policy that targets minorities, people of color and the poor, and now limits all monetary gifts to prisoners to only DPS approved visitors. Which excludes undocumented immigrants as well as the families of prisoners who are unable to visit or who do not have ID’s necessary to become an approved visitor. So many of us can no longer purchase food from prison canteens, effective hygiene products, stamps or phone time to call home or to maintain or establish community ties. Because of so many prisoners losing their ability to receive money from their outside supporters, it has caused an economic strain on the incarcerated community which has resulted in a scarcity of funds and a rise in gang violence, assaults, robberies and extortion of prisoners and their families.

No one is safe at PCI or in any other NC prison because of gang violence, and the prison officials turn a blind eye. No one is thinking about rehabilitation because we are all too busy trying to survive through all the daily oppression, bullying, violence and an “anything goes” environment in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Those of us who were able to circumvent officer Fennells unreasonable censorship of mail filed grievances with the US DOJ on May 7, 2020. US Attorney General William Barr has refused to respond to our National Grievance Petition.

We are frustrated and tired of this unconstitutional interference with our communication with our families, the public and our legal research.

We are tired of the public being shut out and the government ignoring the inhumane living conditions, bullying and gang violence.

We are tired of living in constant fear and being punished for reaching out to the public urging improved prison conditions.

We want an answer from William Barr addressing the issues presented in our National Grievance Petitions.

We want the Feb 5, 2019 JPAY policy repealed.

No one has organized or encouraged anyone else to organize or incite or encourage anyone inside of this prison to do anything. This hunger strike just happened because hunger pains are nothing in comparison to the physical and psychological pain of living like a wild animal and watching other men killing themselves and each other behind Corona Virus, unjustified censorship, racial over sentencing, gang violence, long term solitary confinement, social distancing, bullying, idleness and the PTSD brought on by years of living in fear of Correctional Officers, gang members and from living in a pervasive, widespread and long standing blood war zone.

This hunger strike is not about rebellion, breaking prison rules or a group demonstration, it's about holding someone accountable for our brutal conditions of confinement and lack of rehabilitation and educational resources that we need in order that we will be able to return to society.

So in response to these barbaric conditions of confinement one or more prisoners are going on a 14 day hunger strike from Oct. 1 to Oct. 14 2020, to get the governments attention. We are requesting that each refused food tray be donated to a local homeless shelter or to someone in need of sustenance in the community.”

Prisoners at PCI