

Friends and Families for the Honor Program
P.O. Box 25299
Los Angeles, CA 90025
prisonhonorprogram@hotmail.com

December 21, 2011

Matthew Cate
Secretary, CDCR
1515 S. Street
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Secretary Cate:

In November 2011, CSP-LAC administrators made changes to the structure of operations on the Progressive Programming Facility/Honor Program, which are detailed in the attached document, *Inmate Program and Activity Schedule for Facility 'A'*. These changes included adjusting (shrinking) yard times to be consistent with all other facilities at LAC. Limiting access to programs for prisoners deemed not "PPF qualified," and creating a two-tiered operating system on the facility that is not in the best interests of the men, the staff, or the institution. The Friends and Families for the Honor Program (FFHP) consider the implementation of such a plan extremely harmful and potentially dangerous to the operations of the PPF/Honor Program.

During the past several months, CSP-LAC administrators have permitted nearly every programming option on the facility to either be shut down or minimized to a point where the various groups that constitute the "programming" aspect of the PPF/Honor Program have been rendered not functional.

One of the guiding principles of the PPF/Honor Program is the belief that all men are capable of becoming better than their worst acts. The doors to self-improvement should *always* remain open. Back when the supervisors on Facility 'A' supported this ideal, men were actually "sentenced" to participate in various peer-to-peer self-help groups for disciplinary violations. The programs of this facility are not rewards. They are tools to achieving rehabilitation. Since rehabilitation is one of the primary "Mission Goals" for the CDCR, excluding individuals from rehabilitative programming decreases the likelihood of transformation and rehabilitation.

Additionally, FFHP categorically rejects the idea that men ordered to live on this facility are somehow not "qualified" to participate in the PPF/Honor Program. The entire facility is the PPF/Honor Program. Any man assigned to this facility, by mere fact of being housed there, is qualified to be there and, therefore, qualified to participate in the programs offered on the facility. Any other approach is a denial of reality.

The creation of an excluded underclass of men is not authorized by the approved Operational Procedure for the PPF (OP # 605, please see attached), nor is an unprecedented, potentially dangerous, action of this nature authorized by the Department Operations Manual or Title 15 of the California Code of Regulations. OP # 605 specifically identifies Housing Units 1, 2, and 3 of Facility 'A' (600 beds) at LAC are designated to exclusively house prisoner participants in the

Level IV Program Facility. There is not an exclusion clause written in to the Operational Procedure, and the institution's inability to transfer prisoners who are not within the realm of OP # 605 criteria is not the fault of the population that does meet the criteria.

As to the issue of limiting yard times to achieve some sort of "consistency" with other facilities at CSP-LAC, FFHP objects to this on the simple grounds that the PPF should be inconsistent with the other facilities. The expectation of enhanced programming opportunities, which necessitates expanded out of cell time, is inherent in the idea of a programming facility. The reality is programming time has already been drastically reduced for no good reason at all. (Please see attached chart for more detailed information.) At one point in the history of the program, yard time was 0830 hours until 1130 hours for morning yard and then 1230 hours to 1530 hours for afternoon yard. This means, adding in the loss of 30 minutes of programming time from evening dayroom, fully two-and-a-half hours of programming time has already been lost, for no good reason at all. The proposed changes will shrink the available programming time down by one-third, again, for no good reason at all. FFHP strongly urges you to take immediate action to ensure CSP-LAC administrators reinstate the previous times, as noted above, to restore the full programming potential of the PPF/Honor Program.

In conclusion, FFHP strongly contests the outrageous plan to arbitrarily create an excluded underclass, deemed "Not Qualified" to participate in self-help, rehabilitative programming. OP 605 (3)(C) "Enhancement of the Progressive Programming Facility" states that program participation is not optional on Facility 'A.' All prisoners must participate in a program, whether educational, vocational, work, and/or personal development projects. Upending this foundational principle is ill advised. Further, FFHP challenges the additional erosion of available programming time on the grounds it is in direct contradiction to the idea of the PPF/Honor Program, which was designed to operate on positive incentives.

Overall, the CSP-LAC administration's recent restrictions have led to a tremendous loss of programming time and a logistical isolation of the General Population. This equates to a de facto dismantling of the infrastructure for providing positive programs. In fact, these actions amount to the wholesale abandonment of the proven principle of positively incentivizing conforming behavior. As implemented now, the "Progressive Programming Facility" is lacking all positive incentives of the former Honor Program (yard time, ILTAGs, classes), and, in that sense, is virtually not any different from any other standard Level IV. FFHP strongly opposes this action and advocates for you to mandate an immediate reapplication of the *proven* model of incentivizing positive behavior, and not to permit CSP-LAC administrators to preemptively enact punitive measures that will certainly demoralize the prisoners on the facility.

Sincerely,

The Friends and Families for the Honor Program

cc: Robert Barton, Inspector General
Members of the California Rehabilitation Oversight Board