

Update from Life Support Alliance, June 2010

Least anyone think LSA has been idle in the weeks since the Assembly Public Safety hearing let me bring all of you up to date on what we've been doing.

In addition to two issues of the Lifer-Line newsletter we have produced written handouts summarizing the hearing and results which we have used in our visits to legislative offices since the hearing. We are also now on Facebook, which has generated some additional inquiries from prison family members on our purpose and how they can assist.

We met with a representative from Sec. Matt Cate's office and that meeting has lead to efforts to schedule a joint meeting with CDCR and Martin Hoshino, administrator of the Board of Parole Hearings. It looks as though that meeting will be held within the next 2-3 weeks and we have many questions for Mr. Hoshino on the workings of the board, training, court reversals and budgetary issues.

We've also been able to correlate and synthesize significant budgetary inform on on the BPH which we have used to graphically make our point that the BPH is spending a huge amount of money and producing little in the way of results. All of this is the sort of information needed to prove our point to the legislators that the BPH is not doing its job but is spending our money.

We have received significant interest from some members who are now starting to question how monies in CDC—and BPH is part of CDC—are being spent. Some legislators have even suggested questions to be posed at our meeting with Mr. Hoshino.

We are exploring proposing legislation of some form for next session that would provide oversight of the BPH. In order to do this we have to get all our facts in order, produce a draft of the bill and find a legislator who is willing to introduce it for us. Not easy tasks, but changing law and performance is not easy or pretty—just necessary.

Activities this past week have been greatly impacted by the announcement of visiting cancellation. We were able to speak with 6 legislative offices about the visiting issue and leave them with our written objection to the cancellation as well as a list of reasons why decreasing visiting is a monumentally bad idea.

An update on parole commissioner confirmation hearings is in the offing for this week, and we have again been asked to testify on behalf of Sen. Leno's SB 1399 Medical Parole bill as it moves through the Assembly.

We continue to need input from everyone on commissioners' performance—what reasons and language were used for denial, did the commissioner mistake facts of the case, what sort of psyh evaluation was submitted, by whom and when was it done? Who were the commissioners and deputy commissioner at the hearing (we're finding a few hinky things about deputy commissioners), who was the attorney of record and how was his/her performance?

If you have any specifics, we need them. If you don't want your name and the name of your prisoner used, we will respect that.

So while the bustle of the public hearing may have subsided our efforts to keep lifer parole in the spotlight and on the minds of the legislature has not waned. And while we cannot visit offices in the capitol with a "posse" of people we continue to need your support, input and information on all issues. If you haven't chimed in to your state Senator or Assembly member about visiting cancellation, do it now. The June newsletter is attached, with information on how to do so.

Another update will be sent as situations or time warrants. Thanks to all of you for your interest and support.

