

**AUGUST, 2010****LIFER-LINE****VOL. 1 ISSUE 5****THE NEWSLETTER OF LIFE SUPPORT ALLIANCE****IN-DEPTH LOOK AT BPH PSYCHOLOGISTS
FIRST RESULTS**

Responses from the survey questions included in the last *Lifer-Line* are coming in and we are in the process of extracting and organizing the information. The response has been good so far but we continue to urge all lifers to send us their experiences with the BPH. It won't be too late until all presently unconfirmed commissioners have participated in confirmation hearings before the Senate. And that will be several months away.

Using the survey form isn't necessary, regular paper will do, but please expound on the questions regarding comments made by the commissioners and psychologists. Responding that they made inappropriate comments is helpful, but detailing those comments provides us with the factual information we need. Details, please!

LSA has spent significant time over the last several weeks looking into the backgrounds and actions of the psychologists in the Board of Parole Hearing's Forensic Assessment Division (FAD). The FAD was created in 2008 with the express purpose of providing psychological evaluations to life term prisoners prior to their next scheduled board appearance.

Although there is no legal requirement for prisoners to submit to another pre-hearing psych eval, most prisoners are given the understanding, by statement or implication, that they must participate in the interview. While psych evals are listed as being among the evaluation tools commissioners can use in determining suitability many prisoners and attorneys have voiced the suspicion that these "new" evaluations (using a different set of assessment criteria, about which more later) have served to elevate the alleged risk of the prisoner and contribute a finding of unsuitability.

The experiences of many lifers responding to the survey provide us with the figures we need to help substantiate that suspicion.

Our own research on the various psychologists has produced significant information on the background and actions of these individuals, much of it troubling. We have by no means covered all those involved in the FAD, but the following summarizes some of the information gathered.

- The Evangelical Psychologist who is currently involved in a fundamentalist Christian program to reach out to prisoners, a group that proclaims on its website "There is no rehabilitation only regeneration through Jesus Christ." We question how she can objectively evaluate prisoners who have religious convictions different from hers or who have no religious affiliation, particularly in light of her group's proclamation they do not believe in rehabilitation without religious conversion.
- This same psychologist challenged a prisoner's rehabilitation based on his faith through comments including "I hope you're not one of those Black Muslims" and asking if he was a Muslim in favor of blowing up Americans.