

**For the Restoration of Human Rights:
Support the 22 Demands of Prisoners at SCI Coal Township**

In late June, in response to dramatic food cutbacks at the State Correctional Institute at Coal Township, over 1300 men staged a week-long boycott of the prison dining hall. At the end of a week of peaceful protest, with still no changes or promises for change forthcoming from the prison administration, participants released a list of 22 requests/demands. The prisoners are asking that prison officials at SCI Coal Township and across the PA Department of Corrections honor the basic human rights of people in prison. Among other things, these men are petitioning for: access to adequate food, the ability to hold cultural events, an effective grievance process, respectful medical care, and an end to policies that dehumanize and punish prisoners and their families. The complete list is included on the back of this paper.

In essence, these demands are seeking the restoration of human rights and dignity for the people held in PA prisons. We stand with the men at Coal Township and are asking that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections take immediate steps to meet these 22 demands.

PHONE[illegible]

Please return completed petitions to Decarcerate PA, PO Box 40764, Philadelphia PA 19107, or contact us by email at decarceratepa@gmail.com or phone at (267) 217-3372. To find out more about how to support this effort, visit <http://decarceratepa.info/22demands>.

We request that the State Correctional Institute at Coal Township:

1. Rescind its policy of cutting the food and condiment portions of our meals and return our portions to the level they were prior to Superintendent Mooney's memo from May 26, 2014 authorizing the cutting of our portions/rations for budget reasons. The meals we are getting at breakfast – often consisting of a half a cup of cream of wheat or oatmeal, 2 slices of bread and 2 packets of sugar – contain no nutritional value. We request the return of adequate meal portions and variety in the menu.
2. Rescind Staff Dining Hall entitlements and privileges. Staff should be served the same meals and portions that prisoners eat from on the DOC Master menu. The Staff Dining Hall should no longer offer multiple menus, desserts, numerous soda/juice/milk options, daily salad bars, gallons of specialty ice cream, etc. Staff Dining Hall entitlements are a waste of the DOC's budget which, if eliminated, would save far more money than cutting back on prisoners' already diminishing food portions.
3. Allow prisoners to form cultural associations and host cultural events in the institution's chapel/gym. SCI Coal Township presently has no cultural associations for prisoners to celebrate their culture and help younger prisoners focus on the positive attributes of their cultural heritages.
4. Process grievances by prisoners in a timely manner and stop destroying and/or obstructing the filing of grievances by either not responding to grievances or responding to grievances well outside the guidelines of DC-ADM 804 Inmate Grievances policy. Prisoners are often forced to wait weeks for their grievances to be processed and then, sometimes wait months for a response to those same grievances. Furthermore, we request an investigation into the manner in which SCI Coal Township's grievances are processed, including the backdating of grievance responses by staff members.
5. Pursue an investigation into the operation of SCI Coal Township's mailroom for delaying the delivery of prisoners' mail, not informing prisoners when their mail is denied or rejected, and arbitrarily denying or rejecting publications critical of prisons.
6. Stop using non-delivery of mail as punishment on day when the prison is under lock down for an emergency or for searches of prisoners' cells. SCI Coal Township could deliver the mail on these days.
7. Hire a Full Time Doctor in the medical department. Presently, prisoners are seen by a Physician's Assistant who has numerous grievances pending against him for the disrespectful manner in which he treats prisoners.
8. Stop charging fees for prisoners with Chronic Care symptoms when they sign up for Sick Call to see a Physician or Physician's Assistant to have a medical issue addressed that is associated with their chronic symptoms.
9. Rescind the 2/24/14 Photo Memo that restricts the type of photos which prisoners may take and send to their loved ones. This memo requires prisoners to take forward-facing, mug-type photos and prohibits prisoners from wearing t-shirts in the photos, requiring us to send photos home to our loved ones in state-issued Brown Uniforms. Photos sent to our loved ones should not be taken in a manner that forces unnecessary pain and depression upon them.
10. Put an end to the constant disrespect that our family members endure in the context of the SCI Coal Township visiting room. Board games and cards should be added to the visiting room, so that prisoners and their families can play family board or card games.
11. Change the seats in the visiting room. The present seats are uncomfortable and are not padded as at other institutions. Tables should be available for families of 4 or 5 so that prisoners and their families can see one another and sit across from one another, instead of everyone having to sit in a row.
12. When the visiting room Photo Machine is broken, SCI Coal Township should have an alternative photo-man employed from the general population to take pictures until the photo machine is repaired. The Photo Machine in the visiting room breaks down frequently and prisoners and their loved ones have no opportunity to take a photograph with each other when that happens. This is especially troubling for families who do not get to visit their incarcerated loved ones very often.
13. Stop exploiting the families of prisoners by requiring them to purchase a \$20.00 Venda-card in order to purchase soft drinks and snacks in the visiting room. Reduce the Venda-card minimum to \$5.00.
14. Eliminate the use of Red Lights that illuminate the prisoners' cells throughout the night. No other PA DOC institution keeps the night lights on constantly throughout the evening/night for general population cells. The constant illumination of prisoners' cells throughout the nights has been found to create depression, anxiety and other mental health problems.

We request that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections in general:

15. Allow prisoners to purchase alternative protein powder tubs and supplemental vitamins from approved vendors, so that we may supplement the nutrition that the Department of Corrections has taken away from our meals due to budget cuts.
16. Allow our families to mail in 50 pounds of food a month so we may supplement our nutritional needs. The Departments of Correction in New York, New Jersey and Ohio all allow this.
17. Conduct an investigation of SCI Coal Township's decision to spend money to pave the West Yard from 6/16-6/19 when the yard track was not in damaged condition and money used to pave the track could have instead been used on prisoners' meals.
18. Stop exploiting prisoners by refusing to sell us Amplified Digital Antennas and making us purchase Non-Amplified Digital Antennas that get no reception in rural/mountainous areas, forcing us to purchase cable at \$16.70 a month. We request the DOC make available Amplified Digital Antennas on its Master Commissary List.
19. Renegotiate its telephone contract with the Inmate Telephone Provider and reduce prisoners in-state call fees to \$2.10, instead of the current \$5.55.
20. Amend its Restrictive Housing Unit policies to allow prisoners in the RHU on Disciplinary Custody Status to order two boxes of crackers with their commissary order so they can supplement the poor diet they receive in the RHU, where the food served on prisoners' trays is absolutely dreadful and results in prisoners losing weight during stays in the RHU. Food should not be used as a disciplinary measure.
21. Begin audio recording all Program Review Hearings conducted on prisoners in the Restricted Housing Units, Special Management Units, and Special Needs Units to insure that Department of Corrections' policy is being implemented fairly.
22. Amend its H-Code policy to put procedures in place to insure prisoners are properly classified as H-Code Security Risks and so that a prisoner may appeal an H-Code placement. We also request the Department require institutions to stop discriminating against H-Code prisoners by restricting them from employment, as well as educational and vocational programs, thus adversely impacting their parole interests.