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DATE: Aug 10, 2009
TO: DAVID SHAPIRO
FROM: BILL HEFTY
RE: _____
FAX NO: 202 393-4931

Total Number of Pages: _____ (including cover page)

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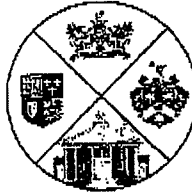
Copy of letter sent August 4.
If you are going to do a press release,
I would appreciate a copy.
Call me w/ questions.
Bill

Note: This transmittal is privileged and confidential, and is intended only for the person or organization named above. Copying, re-transmittal or other distribution by any other person is strictly prohibited. If you have received this message in error, please notify us by telephone and mail the message back to us at the address shown above.

Thank you.

RAPPAHANNOCK REGIONAL JAIL

SERVING:
CITY OF FREDERICKSBURG
KING GEORGE COUNTY
SPOTSYLVANIA COUNTY
STAFFORD COUNTY



P. O. BOX 3300
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA 22555-3300
(540) 288-5245
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rrjadmin@rrj.state.va.us

JOSEPH HIGGS, JR.
SUPERINTENDENT

August 4, 2009

David M. Shapiro
Staff Counsel
915 15th St., NW, 7th Fl.
National Prison Project of the
American Civil Liberties
Union Foundation
Washington, DC 20005

Dear Mr. Shapiro

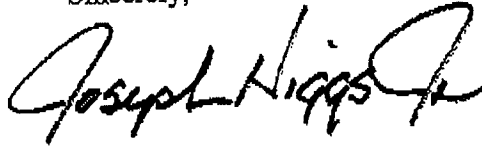
Thank you for your letter of July 9. In response to the concerns you raised in that letter, the Rappahannock Regional Jail does not, and has not, attempted to keep religious materials from being sent to inmates because of their religious content. The Jail's policy, which has been in place for several years, has been to not allow inmates to accept mail which includes material copied from the Internet. This includes religious materials, but it also includes any other material, such as information about automobiles, politics or any other subject. The policy was adopted to address the issue of family members sending large numbers of copies of Internet material to inmates. This created security and safety concerns as well as placing an administrative burden on jail staff.

Following the receipt of your letter, and upon consultation with the Authority's attorney, I have changed the policy relative to the receipt of inmate mail. Inmates are now able to receive information copied from the Internet, specifically including religious material, subject to the condition that they can only retain mail in their cell that can be stored neatly within the storage bin of the bunk and is not a fire hazard. All mail will be delivered to inmates (subject to some classifications of mail such as pornographic material, gang information or information which would otherwise be a security concern). Mail that exceeds the storage limit will be placed with their property at their request.

In response to your specific requests, this is to guarantee that the Rappahannock Regional Jail will not censor Biblical passages from letters written to detainees, that the Inmate Mail Policy has been revised to state that letters will not be censored merely because they contain religious material, and that the Inmate Mail Policy has also been revised to state that letters will not be censored because they contain material printed from the Internet or "cut and pasted" from the Internet into letters (subject to the limitations mentioned above).

Thank you for bringing this matter to my attention. Again, it was never our intention to prevent inmates at the Jail from receiving religious material. I trust that these actions will resolve the issue. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to call me.

Sincerely,



Joseph Higgs, Jr.
Superintendent

- cc: Mr. Daniel Mach, Director of Litigation, ACLU Program on Freedom of Religion and Belief
- Ms. Rebecca K. Glenberg, Legal Director, ACLU of Virginia
- Mr. Eric C. Rassbach, National Litigation Director, the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty
- Ms. Ruth Flower, Legislative Director, Friends Committee on National Legislation
- Mr. Pat Nolan, Vice President, Prison Fellowship
- Mr. John W. Whitehead, President, The Rutherford Institute
- Rev. C. Douglas Smith, Executive Director, Virginia interfaith Center for Public Policy
- Sheriff Paul W. Higgs, City of Fredericksburg, Chairman, RRJ Authority Board
- Mr. C. Douglas Barnes, County Administrator, Spotsylvania County
- Mr. Beverly R. Cameron, Interim City Manager, City of Fredericksburg
- Mr. Travis Quesenberry, County Administrator, King George County
- Mr. Anthony Romanello, County Administrator, Stafford County
- Chief David Ney, Chief of Police, City of Fredericksburg
- Sheriff C.W. Dobson, King George County
- Sheriff Howard Smith, Spotsylvania County
- Sheriff Charles Jett, Stafford County
- Mr. Joseph Grzeika, Board of Supervisors, City of Fredericksburg
- Mr. William F. Neely, Commonwealth's Attorney, Spotsylvania County
- Mr. George H. Schwartz, Board of Supervisors, Stafford County
- Mr. William Hefty, RRJ Authority Legal Council