

Memorandum

To: Board of Correction

From: Martha Kashickey, Coalition to Raise the Minimum Standards at NYC Jails

Re: Commentary from Dilma Deliole on conditions at Rikers Island

Ms. Delma Deliole called me on April 18th, the day after the public hearing, to find out what she could do to express her concern over the proposed revisions to the minimum standards. I volunteered to interview her and take down her testimony to submit to the Board of Correction official record of public commentary.

Telephone Interview with Dilma Deliole

Monday 23 April 2007 11:30 AM

Phone number: 718-932-9590

The prisoner I visited at Rikers was the son of my friends. I visited him once at Rikers Island and was very upset about the conditions. I called you after I read a newspaper article [about the proposed revisions to the minimum standards]. I wanted to express my outrage at these proposals.

The man I visited has been at Rikers Island from February and will get out April 25th. There was no possibility for the family to get him out on bail. After his release, he will probably have to go through immigration services. He is 28 years old.

Visit

I visited the man once together with his father and mother. We arrived at Rikers Island at 2 PM, and we came out at 8 PM. We had seen their son for 30 minutes. All the other time we spent waiting. This was very upsetting for all of us. We had to wait in different lines every time. There were dogs that had to check on marijuana. There was machine screening. You had to open your belt. You had to open your mouth. Everything was checked.

The people were not rude. It was clean. They were treated nicely; however some other people had problems with assistance. It was all very bureaucratic.

I thought it was abuse to let people wait so long. The parents have a restaurant, so for them it is very difficult to visit.

Language

The young man is doing well. He doesn't speak English, only Spanish, and now he had found more Spanish speakers, and therefore did better than before. In the beginning he didn't get respect from the other prisoners, because he didn't speak English.

Emotional Reaction

I felt that it was not fair that the young man had to be at Rikers Island together with really criminal people. There was not enough evidence against him, and therefore he will be released soon.

I was also upset about the fact that at Rikers Island there is nothing to do for the people in there. For example, why can't they learn English? I am a nurse, so I know that the mental condition of people is very important. I suggest that they give the prisoners something to do: to learn something. They become sick because of doing nothing. They are in a bad mental state.

Uniform

During the visit the young man was wearing a uniform.

Going to court

Another thing that was very upsetting for me was the court proceedings the young man told me he had to deal with. He was brought to a court in Brooklyn at 8 AM. He was put in a space that seemed like a garage. It was cold there and he didn't get food. He had to wait there for his court appearance. He didn't see his lawyer. And he also didn't get to see a judge. After waiting in that space, cold and without food all day, at 8 PM he was taken back to Rikers Island without having seen a judge. This happened three times!

Violence

The young man told me he cannot talk about violence while he is still in there; that will happen when he comes out.