



FLORIDA ELDERLY INMATE ABUSE BY PRISON GANGS

Violence and extortion toward the elderly Florida prison inmate is escalating because of the proliferation of Florida prison gangs. Prison gangs prey on the elderly inmates more than any other group of inmates. Old men are being robbed of all their possessions, forced to spend their money on these thugs in the canteen, sexually assaulted sometimes and beaten up if they refuse to cooperate with these gangs. The solution to this growing inhumane condition is to segregate the elderly from these ruthless and vicious gangs and other predators that populate almost all the prisons, especially the reception/medical centers like Lake Butler. Butler is so bad for elderly abuse that inmates needing medical care are refusing to go there.

It is not realistic to think for one moment that the Florida Department of Corrections can correct this elderly abuse problem by policing their prisons better. For one they don't have the man power to police every nook and cranny in the prison compounds or in the housing units; most Florida prisons are understaffed. Then you have some correctional officers that allow the elderly abuse so they can get along with the gangs themselves. You also have few rogue correctional officers that are on the pay rolls of these gangs. The solution to the problem is to turn about ten Florida prisons into elderly prisons. It's the surest and simplest way to correct the elderly abuse problem. There are presently 3 elderly prisons that house about 2,000 elderly inmates, only a fraction of the elderly. There are over 20,000 inmates in Florida prisons that are 50 or older and this number is rising quickly. The 85% sentencing laws in Florida have caused this rising elderly prison population. The Florida prison system has more elderly inmates locked up than any other prison system.

The ten prisons that would be designated elderly institutions should be located closest to the four prison reception centers, especially the *Lake Butler Receiving Medical Center* and the *Miami South Florida Reception Center* because of their medical facilities. Since elderly inmates have most of the medical problems it would make sense to house inmates close to reception centers to cut down on transferring them long distances for medical attention when you can just van them over to a reception center for medical treatment. Yearly elderly medical costs are four times higher than younger inmates. Yearly medical cost for an elderly inmate is around \$11,000.

Another suggestion: all four reception centers should have elderly designated dorms since elderly inmate abuse by gangs is high in the reception centers. The South Florida Reception Center already has an elderly medical dorm on the main compound. This is a good thing but they also need a reception and transfer dorm. Each reception center needs to have an elderly dorm or two that are for reception, medical and transfers; inmates that are passing through the reception center on transfers.

The prison gangs aren't going away but if the Department of Corrections creates more elderly prisons and elderly dorms in the reception centers, we can eliminate most of the abusive conditions for the elderly who deserve to be treated with justice and respect for their human dignity.

Elderly Prisoner Watchdog

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pat Johnson". The signature is stylized with large, flowing loops.