

No More Paralegal, Library or Legal Library.

I got a notice from the paralegal Mark Binde here at the Jameson Annex of the South Dakota State Penitentiary that as of October 1st, 2017 there is no longer a paralegal here to help us with legal work.

The notice stated his office is being defunded by DOC because prisoners now have tablets with Lexis Nexis on it that can help with legal work.

There also is a posted notice that states the law library is no longer being updated with legal materials because prisoners have tablets to look up information. There ~~was~~ is no longer any legal or regular library, the prison shut it down completely.

This action is a mistake. Prisoners still need to be able to ask about legal questions to somebody like a paralegal. Most prisoners know nothing about filing legal work.

Prisoners have been instructed to go to unit staff to have legal copies made and get paperwork notarized. The problem with that is there is no enforceable confidentiality. The prison staff can and will discuss prisoners legal matters with other staff and prisoners.

I know this from experience with Unit staff constantly discussing details of my active 1983 civil rights lawsuit with each other, correctional officers and prisoners.

Prisoners need the law library and regular library to do legal research. Prisoners need to be able to get out of their cell and socialize too. The prison administration is using the e-tablets as an excuse to cancel library and regular library, keeping us locked up even more. This needs to be stopped.