

PS

4179 Foxwood Lane  
Williamsville NY 14221  
March 15, 2012

Ms. Betty Jean Grant, chair Erie County Legislature  
790 East Delevan Avenue  
Buffalo NY 14215

Dear Ms. Grant,

Our Social Justice Committee from St. Joseph's University Parish would like to support the Erie County Holding Center Advisory Committee's request that an ombudsman be appointed to oversee the treatment of persons held in that facility.

We are aware that the sheriff is opposed to this suggestion and that he has appointed two men to report back to him on conditions at the jail. We agree with the Advisory Committee that this is inadequate and even disingenuous. Persons reporting to the sheriff can hardly be expected to be totally candid. The concept of an independent ombudsman is the only acceptable solution to the issue of assuring the public that our tax dollars are not misused to hold citizens in conditions unacceptable to most decent people.

If there is no issue of mistreatment or denial of civil rights, no one who works at the Holding Center should fear this appointment but should welcome the opportunity to provide the public with a true and honest appraisal of how respectfully and civilly persons in that facility are treated. It is to everyone's advantage to appoint such a neutral individual to avoid misunderstanding among the Sheriff's office, the deputies at the prison, families of the prisoners and the general public whose taxes support the system.

Sincerely,



Gloria McLaughlin, chair sub-committee on Prison Reform

6M-16