

MEMORANDUM

TO: Professors Andrea Armstrong and Nishi Kumar
FROM: Joshua Malone
RE: Pre-Litigation Memo
DATE: November 29, 2022

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Madison Parish Correction Center

Introduction

Madison Parish is one of sixty-four parishes in Louisiana. Madison Parish has an estimated population of 9,799.¹ Madison Parish has a majority African American population with African Americans making up 62.9% of the population.² Tallulah, LA is the parish seat of Madison Parish and has a population of 6,068 with African Americans making up 80% of the population.³ Madison Parish is home to three secure facilities: Louisiana Transitional Center for Women (LTCW), Madison Parish Detention Center, and Madison Parish Correctional Center (MPCC). All three of these facilities are operated by LaSalle Corrections.⁴

Jail Characteristics

Madison Parish Correction Center is a medium security private prison located at 158 Treatment Plant Rd, Tallulah, Louisiana 71282.⁵ Beginning in 2014, Madison Parish Sheriff contracted with LaSalle to run the facility.⁶ Pretrial and sentenced inmates from across the state are held here.⁷ The jail also houses sentenced prisoners with the Department of Corrections.⁸ Madison Parish Correctional Center is supposed to be for offenders sentenced up to twelve months.⁹ The warden of Madison Parish Correctional Center is Chris Stinson. Madison Parish Correctional Center houses 334 inmates. More than half of Louisiana's state inmates are housed at parish or local jails due to lack of space in state prisons. Those facilities are paid \$24.39 per day to house those inmates.¹⁰ Madison Parish has the highest number of people serving state time in jails in Louisiana with 1,187 people.¹¹ The inmates housed at Madison Parish Correctional Center are incarcerated by a private company contracted by a government agency and are paid a per diem or monthly rate, either for each inmate in the facility or for each bed available.¹²

¹ <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/madisonparishlouisiana>

² *Id.*

³ https://datacommons.org/place/geoid/2274690?utm_medium=explore&mprop=count&popt=Person&hl=en

⁴ <https://prisonfinder.org/louisiana/private-facility/madison-parish-correctional-center-lasalle/>

⁵ *Id.*

⁶ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_1c6edf38-35cb-11ec-a208-2f1f7eb9d93c.html

⁷ *Id.*

⁸ *Id.*

⁹ <https://www.inmateaid.com/prisons/madison-parish-correctional-center-lasalle>

¹⁰ <https://www.wafb.com/2019/03/12/kiran-sex-offender-found-working-home-west-baton-rouge-sheriff/>

¹¹ <https://www.incarcerationtransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/PWF-Data-Report-Final-Compressed-Nov-2022.pdf>

¹² <https://www.inmateaid.com/prisons/madison-parish-correctional-center-lasalle>

For inmates that show a willingness to learn new things, there are educational and vocational training programs here that will prepare them for a successful reentry when released.¹³ The goal for all LaSalle Corrections inmate programs is to change lives through the implementation and development of evidence-based and innovative programming solutions.¹⁴ From booking to re-entry, LaSalle offers a variety of programs and services to securely process, house, treat, and return inmates to society. In addition to offering typical activities like outside recreation, telephone communications, and commissary services, there are opportunities to pursue continuing education, participate in rehabilitative programs, develop vocational skills, and even earn additional income that are available to inmates.¹⁵

Specific programs offered include: GED, Literacy Training, CDL Computer-based training, Carpentry, Plumbing, Welding, Mechanical Training, Electrical Training, Heavy Equipment Training, Computer Training, Work-Release, Resume Training, Job Application Training, Offender Managed Newsletters, Freedmen Ministry; Faith-based Substance Abuse Programs (Celebrate Recovery, Breaking Out: Faith-based Recovery, Drawing Near; Secular Substance Abuse Programs (AA, NA, CA, Blue Walters 90 Substance Abuse Program, STAR 1 year Substance Abuse Program); and Multi-denominational Worship Services, Group and Individual Counseling, Bible Study Sessions, Reading Groups, Offender Choirs, Angel Tree Christmas Gift Ministry, Traveling Sport Teams, Bicycle Repair Program.¹⁶

Visiting hours at Madison Parish Correctional Center are: 8:00am-9:00pm Monday-Friday and 8:00am-3:00pm on weekends and federal holidays.¹⁷ No cellphones or personal belongings are allowed and visitors are searched before visiting.¹⁸ Persons under probation, parole, or other community corrections supervision must obtain the permission of both their individual supervising officer and the superintendent prior to a visit.¹⁹

Jail Leadership and Budget

Sammie Byrd is the Madison Parish Sheriff.²⁰ Sammie Byrd has been the Sheriff of Madison Parish since he won the election for sheriff in 2019 with 2,090 votes (53%).²¹ Sheriff Byrd makes an annual salary of \$161,778.²² Madison Parish has an annual budget of \$9,749,964.00 as of 2020.²³ Madison Parish Courthouse and Jails have a total budget of \$390,397.39 as of 2019.²⁴

¹³ *Id.*

¹⁴ *Id.*

¹⁵ *Id.*

¹⁶ *Id.*

¹⁷ *Id.*

¹⁸ *Id.*

¹⁹ *Id.*

²⁰ <https://www.lsa.org/madison-parish>

²¹ <https://www.thenewsstar.com/story/news/local/2019/11/16/madison-parish-byrd-wins-sheriff-finlayson-tallah- mayor/2577461001/>

²² [https://app.lla.state.la.us/publicreports.nsf/0/6936f331a2fe112d862587820062e238/\\$file/00024e75.pdf?openel ement&.7773098](https://app.lla.state.la.us/publicreports.nsf/0/6936f331a2fe112d862587820062e238/$file/00024e75.pdf?openel ement&.7773098)

²³ <https://www.incarcerationtransparency.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Madison-Parish-Budget.pdf>

²⁴ *Id.*

Public Records Request and Inmate Mortality

There have been a total of 14 deaths at Madison Parish Correctional Center since 2014. The first reported death was in 2018.²⁵ I submitted a public records request for death records of inmates that died between 2019-2022. The facility's legal counsel (Provosty, Sadler, & deLaunay) initially responded to me saying that there were no responsive documents to my request. I sent them a new public records request asking for all records of inmate deaths for that time frame and they sent me documents for thirteen deaths that occurred during that time. All of the deaths that occurred were men. The majority of the deaths were of black men, accounting for at least ten of the fourteen total deaths. The majority of these deaths occurred in 2020 and 2021 with six deaths occurring in 2021 and five deaths in 2020. The majority of the inmates that died were found "unresponsive" and were pronounced dead shortly after being transported for medical attention.

Jail News Coverage and Transparency

There was an article released on February 6, 2021, that talked about an inmate, Cecil Williams, that died while in custody at Madison Parish Correctional Center.²⁶ Cecil was only twenty years old at the time of his death. Cecil died from an asthma attack while awaiting trial on an attempted murder charge after corrections staff ignored his pleas for life-saving medical care.²⁷ The family of Cecil Williams filed a wrongful death and negligence lawsuit against LaSalle Corrections, LLC.²⁸

Another article was published on October 27, 2021, that talked about a lawsuit being filed against Lasalle, Corrections, LLC because of multiple inmates being stabbed at Madison Parish Correctional Center.²⁹ The lawsuit claims that three inmates were stabbed at Madison Parish Correctional Center because staff were deliberately indifferent to their safety.³⁰ Attorneys with the Roderick and Solange MacArthur Justice Center and Casey Denson Law say inmates at the Madison Parish Correctional Center in Tallulah were able to attack each other repeatedly over the span of five months. They blame a lack of oversight in the prison, which is managed by LaSalle.³¹

All three men were sent to lockdown after their attacks, where they were not given the chance to exercise, and artificial lights remained on 24 hours a day.³² Despite these conditions, the complaint says the inmates asked to be placed there to avoid J-Dorm. DOC secretary Jimmy LeBlanc, Madison Parish Sheriff Sammie Byrd and LaSalle Management are named as defendants in the lawsuit, along with more than 10 other employees at the jail.³³

Another article was released on July 15, 2022, where some families said their loved ones are being beaten, stabbed, and burned at Madison Parish Correctional Center.³⁴ They also say

²⁵ https://www.incarcerationtransparency.org/?page_id=233

²⁶ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_f159498a-672d-11eb-a708-5fb2a1a0dac1.html

²⁷ *Id.*

²⁸ *Id.*

²⁹ https://www.theadvocate.com/baton_rouge/news/crime_police/article_1c6edf38-35cb-11ec-a208-2f1f7eb9d93c.html

³⁰ *Id.*

³¹ *Id.*

³² *Id.*

³³ *Id.*

³⁴ <https://www.knoe.com/2022/07/15/allegations-abuse-madison-parish-correctional-center/>

their loved ones are not receiving the medical attention they need.³⁵ Colleen Griggs says she fears one day she's going to get a phone call saying her son is dead.³⁶ She says he told her he was burned and now he's in a holding cell not receiving medical attention.³⁷ Griggs' son is Donnie Sanders Jr. and she says he was on probation for possession of marijuana when he was caught with a firearm then placed in jail.³⁸ Soon after, he was transferred from Concordia Parish to Madison Parish Correctional Center. Since that transfer, he has been burned, stabbed, and hit in the head with a pipe.³⁹

Another inmate, Charles Washington, was attacked when he came up for parole.⁴⁰ Washington's family and his fiancé fear for his life. His fiancé told reporters that he was jumped by some prison guards and that he was also stabbed.⁴¹ KNOE reached out to the warden at Madison Parish Correctional Center, Chris Stinson, but he refused to make a comment.⁴²

Madison Parish Correctional Center does not have a website nor does Madison Parish Sheriff's office. It is difficult to find information on the facility or even the sheriff. Madison Parish has a website, but it is outdated and does not even show the current sheriff.⁴³ You can search for inmates currently housed at Madison Parish Correctional Center by going to inmateaid.org. There have not been any public briefings by jail officials or advocacy reports. There have not been any recent Parish council hearings or consent decrees. This facility is not very transparent. Many of the records I received were mostly redacted or vague in regard to cause of death.

³⁵ *Id.*

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Id.*

³⁸ *Id.*

³⁹ *Id.*

⁴⁰ *Id.*

⁴¹ *Id.*

⁴² *Id.*

⁴³ <http://www.madisonparish.org/elected-officials/sheriff>