

ORIGINAL: 2544

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July 13, 2006

Mr. David B. Farney, Assistant Counsel
Department of Corrections
Office of Chief Counsel
55 Utley Drive
Camp Hill, PA 17011

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INDEPENDENT REGULATORY
REVENUE COMMISSION

Dear Mr. Farney:

I have reviewed proposed changes published in the PA Bulletin regarding county correctional institutions. While many of these changes seem well thought out and necessary, there is one in particular that I am concerned about.

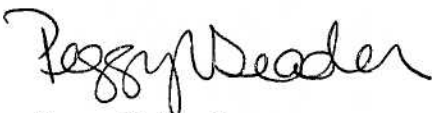
Section 95.237.Religion (2) proposes, "Screening and selection must include qualifications associated with *clinical pastoral education or equivalent specialized training* and endorsement by the appropriate religious certifying body."

Although appropriate training is important, requiring any specific degrees or education would severely limit our access to religious programs. With our small county budget, we are not able to pay anyone to come in for religious services. We rely entirely on volunteers. Our volunteers are wonderful and very capable. They have been working with our facility for many years; however, very few possess any credentialed training. There is a yearly training done by our head chaplain, Mr. Meryl Musselman, which has been a great success in preparing volunteers.

Religious programs are some of the very few programs we are able to offer to inmates; therefore, they are a large part of our available resources for changing inmates' criminal patterns. I frequently hear testimonials from the inmates about how beneficial they find the programs. They have stated that the services have significantly changed their attitudes toward jail and rehabilitation.

Although these guidelines do not state specific requirements, I would like to discourage any excessive or post graduate educational requirements for chaplains and other religion-based volunteers. The religious activities are very important to the inmates, both in and out of jail. I believe that many counties across the state would have the same concerns. Please do not limit our already very restricted programming.

Respectfully,



Peggy V. Leader
Treatment Specialist
Bedford County Jail