

Letter to Governor Pataki, in the Matter of Al-Jundi, et al., vs. Mancusi, et al., United States District Court, Western District of New York

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DIVISION OF STATE COUNSEL
ALBANY NEW YORK OFFICE

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Governor George E. Pataki
State Capitol
Albany, New York 12224

Dear Governor Pataki:

I want to thank you, Governor, for considering legislation to determine whether the hostages who survived the Attica rebellion and their families should be compensated for their losses. There shouldn't have to be legislation on their behalf, because whoever was in that yard on September 13, 1971 suffered. It is only right that we have closure for everyone. We all went through the same problems and hardships in that yard, and we all suffered the same pain and hardship. I can say this to being there, I know it for a fact. As Judge Teleseca said, "Just because it is history does not mean it is all in the past.... Attica is the ghost that has never stopped haunting its survivors - including both the inmates and the families of the deceased guards and prison personnel."

The plaintiffs were able to settle their 30-year-old class-action lawsuit. It is only fair to compensate the hostages and the families who lost them. The hardship and pain they suffered can't be separated from the plaintiffs'. I feel deep in my heart that it's only right, from a humane, as well as legal, point of view, and I know God will protect your decision to settle for the hostages. Just like you decided to settle for the plaintiffs. Monetary issues aren't everything, but at least there can be closure for the families of the hostages killed or maimed by employees of the State of New York during the rioting.

I believe the Attica rebellion was the culmination of dissatisfaction with the intolerable conditions in New York State prisons. It was a burst of anger and frustration in a prison where there was no bridge between the warden and the captives. During the rioting, over 2,000 bullets were fired at unarmed men in the yard. At the end, 48 inmates and State personnel were killed, some died of heart.

Letter to Governor Pataki from Frank B. Smith, in the Matter of Al-Jundi, et al., vs. Mancusi, et al., United States District Court, Western District of New York. Mr Smith thanks the Governor for his consideration of legislation to determine compensation for the hostages, and their families, who survived the Attica rebellion.

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