**WRFR FM COMMUNITY RADIO** 93.3 FM Rockland // 99.3 FM Camden Office: 207-594-0721 – Call-in line: 207-593-0013

March 24, 2011

Brandon M. Thongsavanh # 364054 MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution 1153 East Street, South Suffield , CT 06080

Dear Mr.Thonsavanh

The parents of an interstate compact, & I and a legislator met with new Maine DOC Commissioner Joseph Ponte on Wednesday March 23rd. Purpose was the bill LD 690 to require return of Mainer prisoners after one year

Several important things came out of it:

* Ponte is willing to develop a written interstate compact “return policy”. It is due to the lack of one in Maine’s DOC that the bill LD 690 was written. If he comes up with a good solid policy, we may accept that instead of the wording of the bill, since DOC will fight pretty hard against the bill as written. To make sure that they come up with a decent policy, we (M-PAC) are going to be involved in making sure the policy that gets developed makes sense. Ponte seems to think it would be straightforward, based on “good behavior” reports from the out of state prison. Therefore I ask for your ideas of what should be in such a policy? Can the state that interstate compacted prisoners are held in be trusted to give honest reports to Maine? What are the details that aren’t apparent to us from outside the walls that make a difference, so that it gets added as a safewguard into the Maine state prison policy on interstate compact returns.
* Ponte deflected our attempted delivery of your and another prisoner’s letters authorizing me and M-PAC to review your records. He said that because of the significance of this public access to Department of Corrections files, **he wants the letters sent him again,** **but this time with your signatures notarized**.  Ponte said every prison has more than one notary public available to prisoners as a free service, and that this would not be a burden. No cost. This notarizing supposedly removing any possible question as to the actual source of the letters. This apparently is based on something that happened in the past at one of the other prisons he ran. Even though it’s a hassle, could you please do that? I enclose a copy of your authorizing letter. Just rewrite it, get it stamped by the notary and ship it out again.
* Your parents did an excellent job communicating to the commissioner why this no-return-date policy has to end. Its not an abstraction; its about people suffering from a dumb policy, and yet slogging on, refusing to give up on their son. They, and you, are going to be featured in the upcoming weekend edition of the Bangor Daily News about this issue. I can’t promise the reporter is going to be 100% sympathetic but I think she’ll be fair, which is just as good.
* Ponte came across as very much opposed to any organized civil protests by prisoners . Seemed to see such as compacting-worth. Something we shall try to straighten him out about. In maine unlike most states, prisonsers can vote, can do many political things. This ain’t Kansas, toto.

I am terribly sorry about the surprise with your letter of authorization, and the need to get a new one sent with a notary stamp. Please do this if you can, and send it to me at the same address: WRFR Community Radio, 20 Gay Street, Rockland ME 04841. Also your thoughts on what to include and what NOT to include in an interstate compact return policy.

Sincerely

Ron Huber, producer WRFR Community Radio

Member of M-PAC