

Vaughn prisoners sue over Delaware abuse

written by Lev Koufax, Prisoners Solidarity Committee
February 10, 2019



Activists from Baltimore and Philadelphia held a protest outside the prison to support the Vaughn uprising in 2017. Photo: Prisoners Solidarity Committee

Inmates at the Vaughn Correctional Facility, the largest prison in Delaware, have filed a lawsuit against state corrections officials for “physically, mentally and emotionally” abusing prisoners. The lawsuit was filed in January.

“The higher ranking officers and administration knew about the abuses and torment permeating throughout the environment,” the handwritten complaint states. “They chose to either support or encourage these behaviors or turn a blind eye to them.”
[\(Delaware News Journal, Feb. 4\)](#)

Many people know that Vaughn was the site of a prisoner uprising in February 2017. What many do not know is the level of physical, emotional and psychological abuse that prisoners at Vaughn have faced in the years before and since. The corrupt Delaware corrections system and state government do everything in their power to sweep these conditions under the rug.

Several plaintiffs in the lawsuit helped organize the courageous uprising at Vaughn in 2017. Among them are [prisoners currently on trial for murder](#) in the death of a correctional officer during the uprising.

The 2017 prison rebellion was not a random act. It was a political response to years of systemic abuse. The correctional officer who died in the uprising, Steven Floyd, was considered one of the most brutal and abusive staffers in the entire prison.

The prisoners’ lawsuit details the severe beatings prisoners have experienced at the hands of correctional officers, and the consistent denial of medical care, which in many cases has proved fatal.

These accounts corroborate what organizers from the national Prisoners Solidarity Committee (PSC) have heard firsthand from Vaughn prisoners. These individuals describe seeing inmates as young as 18 die after becoming sick and being denied treatment.

High ranking officials at Vaughn knew of these conditions and did nothing. If anything, these officials encouraged these policies of torture and neglect.

It's crucial that we stand in solidarity with the plaintiffs of this lawsuit, as we must with the Vaughn prisoners that PSC organizers know personally: Anthony White and Fenel Baine. These two men have asked that we share their names. They are committed to the struggle against the violent prison-industrial system. In particular, they hope to expose the corruption of the Delaware Department of Corrections.

The 2017 uprising was nothing less than a struggle for prisoners' humanity inside an utterly inhumane system. We stand unequivocally behind the prisoners' efforts towards accountability and justice, including this lawsuit.

For updates and to get involved with the Prisoners Solidarity Committee, [visit and "like" our page on Facebook.](#)

