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VIA U.S. MAIL

Armstrong Parolee
A Prison
City, California

Re: *Armstrong v. Newsom*
Our File No. 0581-09

Dear Parolee:

We received a list from the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) of class members in our *Armstrong v. Newsom* lawsuit who are getting close to their parole date. As a prisoner with a disability (mobility, vision, hearing, kidney or learning) you are an *Armstrong* class member and on that list. You may also be a member in the *Coleman v. Newsom* class action, if you received mental health services in the CDCR. We are writing you to tell you what you should expect as far as assistance with parole planning before you get out.

Help with Transitioning to Parole:

The CDCR provides limited services to help all prisoners transition to parole. We believe that these services are especially critical to individuals with disabilities, and we want to make sure you are aware of what is available. This letter provides an overview that describes the transition-to-parole services generally provided and the timeframe for completion of each pre-parole task.

Also, we have learned that some of the parole program providers who contract with the CDCR and the Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO) do not accept individuals with certain disabilities. We are working with CDCR and DAPO to make sure no one is denied access to a program because of their disability. **If at any point in the parole transition process, you believe you have been denied access to a parole program because of a disability, please call us immediately at (415) 433-6830 and ask to speak with me.**

We are especially concerned about instances when class members with severe disabilities are paroling homeless or struggling to obtain transportation to their parole office. **If you do not have a housing and transportation plan in place three weeks before your parole, please call us at (415) 433-6830 and ask to speak with me.**

The following is a general time-line of the pre-parole meetings and tasks that should take place before your release:

- **Approximately 210 days (7 Months) Before Release** – California prisoners generally must parole to their County of Last Legal Residence (CLLR), but there are some exceptions discussed below. The Parole Planning and Placement (PPP) staff at your prison should begin working with the Division of Adult Parole Operations (DAPO) staff in your designated parole area to develop your Release Program Study (parole plan). The parole plan is used to help identify needs you have that should be met in the community, a summary of your skills; and needs for housing and disability accommodations, including mental health services. The California Static Risk Assessment (CSRA) is also used to determine your programming needs on parole. Sometimes staff will meet with you in this process but not always.
- **Approximately 7-to-4 Months Before Release** – If you will need housing and transportation when released on parole, you should request to meet with your Corrections Counselor to let them know you need housing assistance. You can also request to meet with PPP staff, such as a Parole Services Associate (PSA), to have them help you identify appropriate programs or transitional housing in your parole area. You can also get help to arrange classes you may be required to take in the community, such as Anger Management, or attending a Parole Outpatient Clinic for mental health services.

The PSA may sign you up for transitional housing through a network of providers who receive CDCR funding called Specialized Treatment for Optimized Programming (STOP). The STOP facilities offer numerous sober living and substance abuse prevention environments, but some also provide transitional housing only. These housing placements are in demand and you may not be placed into one of these programs until about 30 days until your release. If no appropriate programs are available in the county to which you are to parole, you can request to be sent to another county that does have an available program.

- **120 Days (4 Months) Before Release** – A Transitional Case Management Program (or “TCMP”) Benefits Worker should meet with you to start your applications for Social Security, Medi-Cal, and any veterans benefits to which you may be entitled. If found eligible for social security benefits, an application

should be electronically filed on your behalf, but you will need to appear at a Social Security Office with a form of ID before you can start receiving your checks. Also, if you qualify, you should be able to secure food assistance through the CalFresh Program, federally known as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) before you parole.

They should also help you apply for a California ID card to have available for your release. The CDCR is not able to provide a CAL-ID to people who have been incarcerated for more than 10 years, although they are working on a solution to this issue, it will not be ready until the Summer of 2021 at the earliest.

If you are unable to get a CAL ID in prison, you would have to visit your local Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to apply for a CAL-ID; the first copy should be free due to your parole status.

Transitional Housing Programs For Parolees Include:

- **Temporary Housing Resources:** Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the importance of social distancing and quarantining of exposed individuals, temporary housing through the Division of Rehabilitative Programs (DRP) is available for parolees released from prison on or after July 1, 2020. The DRP has contracted with STOP to provide temporary housing for 30 days with the option to extend their stay up to 120 days. In addition to resources such as food (3 meals a day), linens, and onsite house manager, and assistance with obtaining local resources and services. If temporary housing is not available in the desired county, STOP will attempt to find an alternative housing placement in the surrounding counties, with DAPO approval.

Additionally, parolees can participate in Project Hope or Operation Roomkey, which are initiatives to provide hotel accommodations to people released from state prison, and who have a need to safely quarantine or isolate due to COVID-19 exposure or positive status, may be referred to STOP for temporary housing, following release from quarantine. To ensure a seamless transition from quarantine, referral for services to STOP should be completed prior to release from quarantine.

- **Specialized Treatment for Optimized Programming (STOP):** CDCR-funded STOP programs offer parolees ADA-compatible transitional housing, and treatment programs with housing, such as Sober Living and Licensed Residential Drug Treatment programs. STOP also includes some housing only programs. Parolees who are within their first year of release and have scored a medium-to-high risk of re-offending on the California Static Risk Assessment (“CRSA”) are

given priority to attend these programs. Although just a few, there are some STOP facilities that accept Penal Code 290 registrants.

Getting into a STOP program requires a referral from your Parole Agent on a CDCR Form 1502, Activity Report. You can also self-refer to a STOP facility but your Parole Agent will be contacted to verify referral.

- **Other Residential Programs:** Besides STOP, there are other CDCR- and/or DAPO-funded programs that offer ADA-compatible housing to newly released parolees, and you can make your needs known to your Counselor and try to work with Parole Planning and Placement services at your prison to secure a spot, including:
 - *Long-term Transitional Housing Program (THP):* Is geared towards long-term or life-term offenders and provides meals, support services, resources, and programming with housing and supervision in a drug-free environment. Up to 180 days with the possibility of additional 185 days. Located in Alameda, Los Angeles, San Diego and San Francisco.
 - *Parolee Service Centers (PSC):* Voluntary programs providing supportive service with housing to help you successfully integrate into the community by focusing on life skills training and job preparation. Located in San Francisco, Alameda and San Diego.
 - *Day Reporting Centers (DRCs):* Day Reporting Centers are one stop centers where parolees can get counseling, substance abuse education, education, budgeting and money management skills, and some job search assistance. These programs also have some transitional housing available located in Fresno, Kern County, and Los Angeles.
 - *Female Offender Treatment and Employment Program (FOTEP):* Allows children to live with their mothers as they go through treatment and recovery for up to 15 months. Programs are in Sacramento, San Francisco, San Bernardino, Los Angeles, Merced and Orange counties.

Transportation When You Leave Prison:

Your disability may make it harder for you to get to your parole location. If you have been admitted to a CDCR-funded program, they should come and pick you up when you get out, but you must ensure that the CDCR requests a “direct” pickup on your behalf. You also need to ensure a “direct” pick up if friends or family are coming to get you.

If you are not going into a program or getting a ride, most of the time the CDCR will drop you off at the nearest bus or train station. Most Greyhound buses are accessible, but there are a limited number of wheelchair-accessible spots on each bus, and you must contact them up to a week ahead of time to ensure space for a wheelchair.

Medical Care On Parole

If your TCMP meeting resulted in being approved to receive SSI benefits, then you are automatically eligible to receive Medi-Cal, a program that provides health care coverage to many low-income people.

Medi-Cal is managed by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS), and provides medical health care services through providers with Medi-Cal Managed Care Health Plans (MCP). You can speak to your parole agent to help you locate the various medical offices in your parole location that accept Medi-Cal.

- *Assistive Devices:* If you need a cane, wheelchair (or wheelchair repair), orthotic or prosthetic device, your Medi-Cal provider should pay for the durable medical equipment (DME) if prescribed by a licensed practitioner.

Mental Health Care On Parole

If you had been receiving mental health care before you left prison (CCCMS, EOP), you were part of the *Coleman* class action. DAPO has teamed up with the Mental Health Services Continuum Program (MHSCP) to provide mental health services to you while on parole, including:

- *Parole Outpatient Clinic (POC):* These clinics are staffed with psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers to provide cost-effective mental health services. Attending a POC may be a condition of your parole.
- *Integrated Services for Mentally Ill Parolees (ISMIP):* This program provides mental health and support services, including housing subsidies, to parolees who suffer from severe mental illness and are at risk for homelessness.

If you feel you will need mental health support while on parole, you can speak with your Counselor or PSA to identify appropriate services and ensure that these mental health programs and specific providers are listed on your Release Program Study.

Vouchers For Housing, Transportation On Parole

When released, you will be provided any money remaining in your trust account, in addition to \$200 in Gate Money, possibly minus any clothing or transportation they

may have arranged for you prior to your release. Parole Agents can sometimes provide a bus pass or vouchers and/or cash advances for short-term housing, food, clothing, and participant fees for vocational and educational programs, rehabilitative and counseling programs. The process is covered by DAPO Policy 11-05, and funds are supposed to be paid back to your parole agent once you have a source of income, including SSI. Also, we suggest that you ask your parole agent to help you sign up for your local Paratransit to help you get around.

Requesting Help with Transition to Parole

If you are within three months of parole and have not met with a TCMP Benefits Worker or have been provided no information about your parole from your Counselor or a PSA, you should file a CDCR Form 22 to request an interview so that you can be provided with an update. You can also submit a CDCR 1824 Request for Reasonable Accommodation form asking for parole services meeting that include accommodations for a disability, such as a Sign Language Interpreter or getting written materials in large print.

NOTE: If you have a disability and are WITHIN THREE WEEKS until you parole with concerns you will be homeless—you can call us for free at (415) 433-6830 and we will advocate the CDCR on your behalf you to provide you with assistance. We have also included a self-addressed stamped envelope so that you can write to us as well.

Thank you and we wish you the best moving forward.