

PUBLIC STATEMENT
“WE ARE NOT PROPERTY”

8/23/22

Fellow California Residents and Community Members,

As reported in an [LA Times article](#) on 8/20/22, visiting Lassen County Judge Robert F. Moody's decision to reject the [amicus brief](#) of people currently incarcerated in California Correctional Center (CCC) calls into question the court's commitment to human rights and reflects a broken judicial system. There's a problem when you politicize humanity and silence those most impacted by the issue you are deciding. We are fighting for the right to live under humane conditions. We wanted to have a legal voice. These rights should be inalienable. No matter what we were convicted of, we are not property. As the amicus brief makes clear, if Susanville's lawsuit were to be successful, it might be the first time since the enactment of the 13th Amendment in 1865 that an American court has vindicated a demand for financial reliance on human bondage.

Officials in Susanville responded to our legal brief by demanding over \$1,300 in court fees for the filing. Within 48 hours, once the payment cleared, the court rejected the brief. It remains unclear to us why organizations like the Service Employee International Union (SEIU)'s amicus brief in support of keeping CCC open might have been accepted, but not ours. That would be irrational, unless of course it was admitted that financial interests have outweighed the safety of incarcerated people in this case.

We are very disappointed, but the spirit of today's advocates and visionaries on criminal justice reform gives us hope. They do not use our convictions to dehumanize us or justify our mistreatment, like so often occurs in the media. To breathe life into unjust systems and give it a heartbeat, we must challenge it. Our issues deserve to be reported on because of the veracity of our claims. The courts have an obligation to stop special interest groups in Susanville from infringing on our rights.

Susanville is far behind and must evolve. The city is intentionally avoiding change. Susanville wants to keep CCC open in order to continue to profit from it. Governor Newsom has an obligation to the people of California to confront cynical and far-fetched legal and political maneuvers designed to thwart righteous prison closure. Setting a new closure date for CCC in June of 2023 was an important step, but it fails to address the human cost of keeping CCC and other prisons open. The court's inaction continues to place us in harm's way, especially as we continue to face the danger posed to CCC and the surrounding area by some of the most dangerous fire seasons in California's history.

When will this lawsuit be brought to its inevitable conclusion? On August 26th, the judge is considering new arguments that could help bring this case to a close. We hope the court does the right thing and we can all move on. There will be considerable suffering until it's resolved.

Stalling CCC's inevitable closure endangers the most vulnerable: people who are trapped inside a prison with deplorable conditions, which we have tried time and time again to [call attention to](#). Our state needs a clear and concrete plan to close more prisons across California to avoid chaotic experiences like this in the future.

*- Duane Palm and Timothy Peoples,
Organizers Incarcerated at CCC and Amicus Brief Petitioners*