

Freedom of Speech Taken Away

by Donna Hockman

Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women opened its doors in 1997. As a prisoner of the State of Virginia most, if not all freedoms are taken away. The one freedom that should never be taken away is freedom of speech, verbally or written. Decades have passed and hundreds of prisoners from this prison have had their essays, poetry, song lyrics, and manuscripts published free or for payment without interference or harassment from prison officials.

Recently I have been getting harassed by the mailroom staff over incoming email and mail pertaining to businesses wanting to publish my work. Emails are being rejected for

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content, mail is being returned citing violating D.O.C. policy 803.1 participating in a business and the mailroom staff is in my face saying I can't send emails talking about the conditions of my confinement, the story of what led me here or my life story in general for a possible TV pilot program to a screen writer without prior approval.

This prison wants to silence my mind from telling the world a story to be told. How can this be legal?

I am one woman fighting the injustice that got me here and now, I must fight to speak my truth.

I need help from those that believe in free speech. Now is the time!