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GEO Group Strip Search Settlement

Practice: Civil Rights

Phase: Settlement

Chimicles & Tikellis LLP filed a class action complaint in the United States District Court for the Eastern District of Pennsylvania against The GEO Group, Inc. ("GEO"). GEO is a private entity that contracts with counties and other government bodies across the country to manage and operate their jails and other detention facilities. According to the complaint, GEO, while serving as a government actor, employed a uniform practice or policy of strip-searching all pre-trial detainees who entered certain GEO-operated jails, regardless of the crime or violation for which they were detained, and without making the legally required determination of whether reasonable suspicion exists to justify a strip search. On September 18, 2008, GEO filed a motion for judgment on the pleadings that sought to have certain counts in the Amended Complaint dismissed. On March 18, 2009, Judge DuBois issued a memorandum opinion denying GEO's motion.

The parties have since agreed to settle this case. The proposed settlement provides relief to certain pre-trial detainees who were strip searched upon their admission to six different GEO jails. Specifically, class members may be eligible to participate in the settlement if they entered one of the six GEO jails during the timeframes below; were strip searched upon their entry to the jail; were admitted to the jail after being charged with minor crimes (not involving drugs or weapons, charges of violence, or felonies) or for probation or parole violations for such minor crimes; have no past criminal history of charges of violence drug charges, felonies, or weapons charges; and did not behave in a manner at intake that would give intake officers reasonable grounds to conduct a strip search. The GEO jails included in the settlement (and corresponding timeframe for each) are set forth below:

1. George W. Hill Correctional Facility in Thornton, Pennsylvania (for certain pre-trial detainees admitted between January 30, 2006 until January 30, 2008),
2. Guadalupe County Correctional Facility in Santa Rosa, New Mexico, (for certain pre-trial detainees admitted between January 30, 2005 until January 30, 2008),
3. Frio County Detention Center in Pearsall, Texas, (for certain pre-trial detainees admitted between January 30, 2006 until January 30, 2008),
4. Dickens County Detention Center in Dickens, Texas, (for certain pre-trial detainees admitted between January 30, 2006 until January 30, 2008),
5. Tri-County Detention Center in Ullin, Illinois, (for certain pre-trial detainees admitted between January 30, 2006 until January 30, 2008), and
6. Newton County Correctional Center in Newton, Texas (for certain pre-trial detainees admitted between January 30, 2006 until January 30, 2008).

The court has granted preliminary approval to the proposed settlement, and will hold a hearing to decide whether to grant final approval to the settlement on October 1, 2010. Additional information about the settlement may be obtained by viewing the documents below, by calling the settlement administrator toll-free at 1-877-234-4512, or by visiting the settlement website at: <http://www.multistatestripsearchsettlement.com/index.html>. **If you believe that you may be eligible to participate in the settlement, you must submit a signed and completed claim form that is postmarked by September 14, 2010.** Claim forms are to be returned to the following address, along with a copy of a government issued photo id: Gilardi & Co., LLC, P.O. Box 8060, San Rafael, CA 94912-8060.

For more information or to join the case, please contact the attorneys below.

Attachment	Size
GEORGE W. HILL CLAIM FORM.pdf	136.58 KB

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Attachment	Size
NOTICE OF SETTLEMENT.pdf	100.05 KB

Attorneys to Contact:

Joseph G. Sauder (JosephSauder@chimicles.com)

Benjamin F. Johns (BFJ@chimicles.com)

361 West Lancaster Avenue, Haverford, PA 19041 Phone: 610-642-8500

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