

Lawsuit filed over "inhumane conditions" at Fayette County Prison

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Three former inmates at the Fayette County Prison have filed a lawsuit in federal court against the prison, its former warden and two current deputy wardens over the "inhumane living conditions" of the prison.

The complaint, filed by attorney Charity Grimm-Krupa on Feb. 9, was on behalf of Fayette County residents Zoe White, 25, and Lisa Mitchell, 21, as well as Cindy Lee Wilson, 31, who's currently housed at the State Correctional Institution at Cambridge.

The suit named the Fayette County Prison, its former warden, Brian Miller, and its deputy wardens, Michael Zavada and Barry Croftcheck, as defendants.

White was lodged in the prison from Sept. 6 to Dec. 5 while pregnant, Wilson was lodged in the prison from Sept. 18 to Nov. 2 and then from Dec. 7 to Dec. 12 and Mitchell was lodged in the prison from Sept. 14 to Sept. 21.

Krupa claims the three women were forced to live in deplorable conditions, including severe overcrowding, as inmates were forced to sleep on a cold floor, a dirty mattress or a mattress in a plastic container; she adds that the overcrowding would raise levels of tension and violence in the environment.

Other alleged conditions included inadequate clothing, linens and/or blankets; inhumane living conditions that included infestation of cockroaches, insects,

mice, rats in areas, including where meals are prepared; inadequate access to drinking water; contaminated food; lack of adequate ventilation, which left inmates to extreme fluctuations in temperatures; mold infestation; inadequate hygiene with limited access to toilet paper, feminine hygiene products and clean underwear and lack of proper bathroom facilities and running water as toilets overflowed and inmates would often have to urinate in garbage bags.

The suit claims there was inadequate medical care, citing an alleged incident where Mitchell was refused medication during a lock-down period when she had a seizure.

White, according to the complaint, was forced to go without a shower for seven days because of the mold infestation in the showers and suffered a urinary tract and yeast infection due to her not being able to change her undergarments.

“In short, the conditions at the Fayette County Prison were and remain inhumane and deprived the Plaintiffs of their basic human needs,” Krupa writes, claiming the defendants in the suit knew of the conditions and failed to make reasonable efforts to remedy those conditions.

Krupa adds that the conditions are a violation of the Eighth Amendment that protects individuals from cruel and unusual punishment and requests the situation be remedied, award compensatory and punitive damages to the three women as well as legal fees.