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# PREFACE

Having worked in a close-custody prison with over 5,000 prisoners, I have an appreciation and understanding of what correctional officials and officers face on a regular basis. Daily, correctional staff must make decisions which affect the lives of prisoners. Frequently such decisions can have consequences that disturb the equilibrium of the facility, resulting in riots, disturbances, escapes, hostage taking, and/or violence directed at staff. The recent spotlight on the abuse of some detainees at a military prison in Iraq as a result of improper decision making by a few soldiers should remind the astute correctional practitioner that the proper use of authority and decision making are instrumental in operating the correctional facility.

Working in the contemporary correctional facility requires that officers and administrators possess a fundamental knowledge of the constitutional rights of prisoners and how the courts apply the Constitution to the confined. This book has been written with this primary objective in mind. Since the emergence of prisoner litigation, numerous United States Supreme Court decisions have been issued. Frequently the Court establishes for the first time, or refines a standard of review, regarding a constitutional issue. Such legal standards are then applied by a lower court to a myriad of correctional topics. The resulting case decisions frequently create policy implications for the correctional agency which require a change in correctional procedures and practices. A lower court's decisions force correctional practitioners to change how they make decisions which involve prisoner rights. Failing to follow these court-mandated standards of review heightens the risk of their liability.

Correctional liability is a dynamic area of constitutional law, and although the number of prisoner lawsuits have significantly decreased with the passage of the Prison Litigation Reform Act (1996) by Congress, prisoners still file about 25,000 Section 1983 lawsuits annually and file over 25,000 habeas corpus petitions. Keeping abreast of these standards of review and how lower courts apply them, can be a full-time endeavor for the correctional practitioner.

This book addresses the predominant liability issues which correctional officials routinely encounter. While the book focuses on Section 1983 liability decisions, cases reflecting state tort standards of review are also presented. A unique aspect of the text is that combines a multifaceted approach to the subject. The book not only presents an analysis of case law, but it combines current scholarly legal research specific to corrections with research on current trends in correctional liability. It also presents recommendations for reducing liability by examining components of risk management and by building defenses to counter prisoner litigation. Further, the book uses examples of cases in which I have participated as an expert witness, underscoring how lower courts apply Supreme Court standards to varying correctional issues.

Liability issues stemming from jail and prison circumstances comprise the bulk of the text. First, it presents an overview of the trends in correctional litigation. The next chapter addresses the court system, law making, and how to brief a case. Then a chapter outlines the evolution of prisoner litigation, followed by a chapter on the mechanics of Section 1983 prisoner litigation. Subsequent chapters follow, which apply specific constitutional amendments to specific correctional liability issues.

The book has been particularly structured to identify United States Supreme Court decisions on the more prominent issues in corrections, the appropriate constitutional amendment which addresses the issue, the applicable standard of review, and a review of how lower courts apply the standard. Reviewing cases in this manner allows students to study the laws regarding prisoner litigation more effectively and can assist the correctional official and line officer in applying the courts' decisions to the various facets of operating the jail or prison. One chapter addresses specific administrative liability concerns and provides proactive recommendations for reducing the number of lawsuits as well as suggestions for preparing to defend a prisoner or employee lawsuit.

It is hoped that the text will not only be useful in the college or university classroom but will also benefit detention and prison personnel and jail and prison administrators. It applies to correctional academies for new recruits or to in-service training for veteran correctional personnel. The main goals of the book are for the student to comprehend more fully how the courts apply constitutional amendments to the incarcerated in order that he or she can be better prepared to enter the field of corrections, and for veteran correctional employees to enhance their performance regarding these issues.

Darrell L. Ross, Ph.D.

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