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Talking points

ACLU of Delaware: Inmate grievance case settled

The American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware announced it has settled a case with the state Department of Correction brought on behalf of death-row inmate David Stevenson.

Stevenson, a Muslim since 1995, had petitioned for pastoral visits from a Sunni Salafi Muslim imam in May 2010. His request was denied, and the prison chaplain suggested he use one of his regular weekly visits to obtain counseling, according to the ACLU.

The ACLU argued that inmates of other faiths do not have to use one of their regular weekly visits to receive counseling from clergy approved or employed by the department. Also, regular visitors are banned from bringing religious texts into the prison and visits take place in the general visiting area, without the privacy afforded a clergy visit.

The settlement grants Imam Ismaa'eel Hackett volunteer clergy status and gives Stevenson access to counseling from him on the same terms as other inmates, according to the ACLU.