

NARSOL chair urges, “Support Moose Lake protesters and civil commitment protests.”

written by Paul Shannon | July 22, 2021



By Paul Shannon . . . How can NARSOL support the courageous men on hunger strike at the draconian Moose Lake civil commitment facility in Minnesota? How can we show solidarity with their 70 supporters, some of whom made a car caravan around the facility several weeks ago, and who on July 18 held an amazing public rally at the state capitol?

They spoke to the indignities and hardships of the 737 men who have served their sentences but were thrown into civil commitment on the basis that they might commit a new crime in the future. Some of them have been re-imprisoned for many decades.

We heard of the grandfather who will likely die at Moose Lake before he will ever get to see his grandchild, who is not allowed to visit him because he is a minor. We heard of the men who are too old to walk or who have to use wheelchairs. We

learned of the absurd restrictions on contact with lawyers and on making telephone calls. We learned that there is basically no treatment available because it is assumed almost all the men will die there. According to one participant, a common reaction among the guards when a man dies in these facilities is, "Another one completed treatment."

And this is the most painful part of this nightmare experience: There is virtually no way out, no matter what you do. There is almost no hope of ever being released. For most, the only way out of this "preventive detention" is death.

During the rally Mr. Daniel Larsen was spliced in to the rally by phone from inside Moose Lake. He told the story of being originally incarcerated when he was 15 and being civilly committed ever since – even though he was never convicted of any crime but was judged "likely to offend."

It was announced at the July 18 rally that the 40 men on hunger strike were urged to end it before they suffered irreparable harm. But two continued fasting anyways, causing great concern among supporters.

NARSOL joins with these incarcerated men and their courageous grassroots supporters in their demand to end civil commitment in Minnesota. We will follow the situation as it develops. For now, we urge all NARSOL members, no matter what state you live in, to consider contacting the governor of Minnesota and implore that he issue an executive order to shut-down preventive detention in Minnesota.

You can contact Governor Tim Walz using this email form:

<https://mn.gov/governor/contact/>

Or you can call the governor's office at 651-201-3400

Better yet you can write to Governor Walz and Lt. Governor Peggy Flanagan at this address:

130 State Capitol

75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.

St. Paul, MN 55155

You can read about the hunger strike at <https://www.redlakenationnews.com/story/2021/07/13/news/hunger-strike-takes-toll-on-detainees-at-minnesota-treatment-center-for-sex-offenders/99262.html>

And you can view the video of the July 18 rally at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_EGjcg9piHg