

Brown v. plata essay example

[Law](#), [Criminal Justice](#)



Introduction

The Brown v. Plata case was a lawsuit brought before the US Supreme Court with allegations of serious violations of the rights of prisoners due to inadequate mental and medical health care. The US Supreme Court approved the decision in 2011 that made it mandatory for prisons to hold the court-mandated limit of prisoners (Cornell University Law School). The decision was passed to avert the violation of the constitutional right of prisoners under the Eighth Amendment. The case was a consolidation of two-class action cases leveled against the then California Governor. The petitioners argued that the California prison system violated the Eighth Amendment rights of the prisoners. The first-class action was the Coleman v. Brown case filed in 1990. It entailed a group of prisoners who had serious mental disorders. The Brown v. Plata case was the second-class action suit filed in 2001 by a group of prisoners with serious medical conditions (Ford and Rotter 156).

The case was significant since it touched on the rights of individuals under one of the amendments. The California prison systems had violated the Eighth Amendment and the Americans With Disabilities Act. In this case, the greater question at hand was for California to release some of the inmates to reduce overcrowding in the prisons. Under normal circumstances, releasing inmates would pose a greater security risk to the residents of California. However, a prison that violates the primary needs of prisoners defies the concept of human dignity.

Key Arguments

The key arguments provided that a prison that deprived prisoners of the primary human wants diminishes the human dignity. The overcrowding consumed the limited resources available such as the prison staff.

Additionally, it created huge demands for the medical facilities making inmates receive poor quality health care. The prison was supposed to hold at least 80, 000 inmates. Nevertheless, by the time the lawsuit arrived at the Supreme Court, the population had doubled. The statistics were an indication of an overstretched facility. Hence, the extreme overcrowding called for the reduction of the number of prisoners. In this regard, the state of California had the task of reducing the prison population in order to allow prisoners attain their basic needs.

On the other hand, the argument was that releasing inmates on such a large scale was a recipe for chaos in California. Since prisoners were serving jail terms for their prior crimes, there was no way they were being deprived of their rights. The courts had no authority to overstep their constitutional mandate and release the prisoners. Moreover, the release of the suggested number of inmates would not correct the constitutional right of the group of plaintiffs who claimed denial of medical care.

The court in its judgment concluded that overcrowding in the prisons California was the main reason for the continued infringement of prisoners' constitutional right to adequate health care. The resolution passed by the courts did nothing about the systematic overcrowding in other prisons in other states of America. PLRA (Prison Litigation Reform Act) makes it difficult for federal courts to command states to reduce the population in prisons. A

federal court had lawfully ordered California to lower the population in a bid to stop the incessant violation of prisoners' rights. The district court had found that many California Department of Corrections, and Rehabilitation clinics could not provide medical care sufficiently (Singer). In as, much one commits a crime; it is vital to provide the basic needs to help facilitate the rehabilitation process.

Conclusion

The ruling in the case had a basis on facts presented by the concerned parties. The order by the Supreme Court to release the more than 30, 000 inmates was a signal for improvement of correctional facilities (Liptak). The prisons had gone beyond the ideological stands, and quick remedy was necessary. Questions abound if it was right for inmates to face such inhuman conditions. While it seems the Supreme Court recognized the rights of the prisoners, it failed to provide constitutional protections to those already serving their sentences.

Works Cited

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