

IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR BALTIMORE COUNTY, MARYLAND

LASHAWN TYLER

*Individually and as a Representative of the Estate of
Lamont Mealy*

2514 North Charles Street
Baltimore, Maryland 21218

Plaintiff,

vs.

**DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY &
CORRECTIONAL SERVICES**

SERVE: Carolyn Scruggs,
Secretary
Maryland Department of Public Safety &
Correctional Services
6776 Reisterstown Road
Baltimore, MD 21215

and

STATE OF MARYLAND

SERVE: Dereck E. Davis, *Treasurer*
80 Calvert Street
Goldstein Treasury Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

Defendants.

Civil Case No.:

Jury Trial Demanded

C-03-CV-25-004012

COMPLAINT FOR INJUNCTIVE RELIEF

COMES NOW Plaintiff, LaShawn Tyler, *Individually and as a Representative of the
Estate of Lamont Mealy*, by and through counsel, Cary J. Hansel, Kristen M. Mack, and the law
firm Hansel Law, P.C., and sues Defendants Department of Public Safety and Correctional
Services, and State of Maryland, seeking injunctive and other appropriate relief and seeking

disclosure and release of records improperly withheld from Plaintiff, and as cause therefore states the following:

INTRODUCTION

1. This is an action for declaratory, injunctive, and monetary relief arising from Defendants' violations of provisions of the Maryland Public Information Act ("MPIA"), Md. Code Ann., General Provisions §§ 4-101 through 4-601, which requires governmental custodians to permit any person to inspect any public record that is subject to disclosure.

2. This action is brought by Plaintiff as a result of the failure to protect Lamont Mealy (hereinafter "**Decedent**" or "**Mr. Mealy**") while incarcerated at Western Correctional Institution, resulting in his brutal and untimely death and the subsequent failure to provide Plaintiff with any responsive records.

JURISDICTION AND VENUE

3. This Court has subject matter jurisdiction pursuant to MD. CODE ANN., CTS. & JUD. PROC. § 6-102; and personal jurisdiction over the parties pursuant to the Courts and Judicial Proceedings Article of the Maryland Code §§ 6-102 – 103.

4. Venue is proper pursuant to MD. CODE, CTS. & JUD. PROC. § 6-201 and the MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV. § 4-362. Defendant DPSCS maintains its primary headquarters and principal offices in Baltimore County.

5. Plaintiff timely submitted notice of her request under the MPIA which was received by Defendants on June 5, 2025.

PARTIES

6. Plaintiff, LaShawn Tyler, *Individually and as a Representative of the Estate of Lamont Mealy*, (hereinafter “**Plaintiff**”) is and was at all times relevant to the occurrence complained of herein, an adult citizen of the United States.

7. Defendant Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (hereinafter “**Defendant DPSCS**”) is a state agency created and operating under the laws of the State of Maryland, with an office located at 6776 Reisterstown Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21215.

8. Defendant State of Maryland (hereinafter “**Defendant State**”) is a body political and corporate body that may sue and be sued, and has waived any applicable sovereign immunity in accordance with the Maryland State Tort Claims Act under the State Government Article of the Maryland Code, § 12-104. Defendant State is/was in charge of, and operates, Defendant Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services at all times relevant to this Complaint.

9. Defendant DPSCS and Defendant State are collectively referred to as “Defendants.”

FACTUAL BACKGROUND

10. On, or about, June 30, 2023, Mr. Mealy was incarcerated at Western Correctional Institution (hereinafter “**WCI**”), located at 13800 McMullen Hwy SW, Cumberland, Maryland, 21502.

11. Several correctional officers, including, but not limited to, Lieutenant Forme, Sergeant Lee, Officer Barnes, Officer Lavine, brought Mr. Mealy to Cell 4-B-2, which is/was an isolation cell. Mr. Mealy was wearing a suicide vest, cuffs, and chains.

12. After putting Mr. Mealy into the cell, two of the correctional officers—neither of which were wearing any name tags or rank insignia—went to the closet between cells 4-B-1 and the next cell over and turned the water off to cell 4-B-2.

13. On, or about, July 2, 2025, the same two correctional officers that turned the water off to Mr. Mealy's cell came back and stood in front of the cell and taunted Mr. Mealy by saying, "Are you thirsty, are you thirsty." Mr. Mealy responded by asking several times for, "Water, water?" The correctional officers laughed at him and then exited the tier without giving Mr. Mealy any water.

14. Mr. Mealy was also not served food on several occasions during this time period.

15. Then, on, or about, July 5, 2025, Lieutenant Forme stood in front of Mr. Mealy's still at approximately 10:00 am but took no action.

16. Every half hour, the tier officer—Officer Barnes—is supposed to make rounds and look into each cell. However, from the time Lieutenant Forme stood in front of Mr. Mealy's cell at approximately 10:00 am until approximately 3:00 pm, no checks were performed on Mr. Mealy's cell, and Mr. Mealy was not served lunch.

17. Finally, at approximately 3:00 pm, Lieutenant Forme ordered Sergeant Lee to "pull the man out of there," and a blanket was placed on the floor in front of Cell 4-B-2 and Sergeant Lee and another correctional officer dragged Mr. Mealy's body out of the cell and placed it on top of the blanket and dragged him off the tier.

18. Medical was never called to the cell before they dragged Mr. Mealy's body off the tier.

19. Lieutenant Forme then ordered the inmate tier worker to clean up the trash in front of Cell 4-B-2, as well as some of the cell itself, which the worker did immediately.

20. The next morning, on, or about, July 6, 2025, a forensic team consisting of one woman and one man stood in front of Cell 4-B-2, along with Lieutenant Forme, discussing the cell and the plexiglass cage placed in front of it. The only action taken by the forensic team was they both took a few photos and then they immediately left the tier.

21. After the forensic team left and after lunch time, three individuals arrived and immediately went to the closet between the cells and turned the water back on. One of these individuals was a former correctional officer with the last name Crow, and he yelled out, “I did not turn the water off, I did not turn the fucking water off” as he was leaving the tier.

22. Another incarcerated individual, Danny Hoskins (hereinafter “**Mr. Hoskins**”), witnessed all of this take place, and on July 7, 2023, he requested to speak with Sergeant Lee in private regarding what happened to the inmate in Cell 4-B-2. Mr. Hoskins did not know the name of the inmate—which has now been identified as Mr. Mealy. Mr. Hoskins was escorted to the property room where both Lieutenant Forme and Sergeant Lee, as well as a third unknown correctional officer, were.

23. Mr. Hoskins asked what happened and, in response, both Lieutenant Forme and Sergeant Lee told him to mind his business. Mr. Hoskins then told Lieutenant Forme and Sergeant Lee that former correctional officer Crow yelled out that he did not turn the water off and Lieutenant Forme told Mr. Hoskins not to worry about it.

24. Soon after this conversation, Mr. Hoskins wrote an Administrative Remedy Procedure Request (hereinafter “**ARP**”) to the Warden’s office about what happened to the inmate in Cell 4-B-2. Mr. Hoskin’s ARP was dismissed.

25. Then, in November of 2023, Mr. Hoskin's was transferred to Cell 4-A-2 and two correctional officers went to Mr. Hoskin's cell and physically assaulted him and destroyed his property while warning him to mind his own business.

26. Approximately 8-10 days after that, Mr. Hoskins was transferred to Jessup Correctional Institution (hereinafter "**JCI**").

27. Once at JCI, Mr. Hoskins discussed what happened to the inmate in Cell 4-B-2 with a Lieutenant Jenkins on several occasions, filed an ARP, wrote a letter to Intel at JCI about the inmate in Cell 4-B-2, wrote a letter to the Secretary of the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services about the inmate in Cell 4-B-2, and wrote a letter to Governor Wes Moore about the inmate in Cell 4-B-2. All of this occurred on, or before March 20, 2024.

28. On June 3, 2025, post-conviction counsel for Mr. Hoskins reached out to undersigned attorney Kristen M. Mack, and on June 4, 2025, sent Ms. Mack Mr. Hoskin's letter to Governor Wes Moore.

29. On June 5, 2025, the office of the undersigned sent an MPIA and Freedom of Information Act ("**FOIA**") request to DPSCS.

30. The requests asked for the following documentation to be provided: (a) All documents, photographs, recordings, videos and other materials related in any way to Mr. Mealy, any ARPs or other complaints he filed (including the investigation and resolution of said complaints), his housing and classification, his placement into segregation, his medical care, the availability of water in his cell, his decline, events leading to his death, his death, the discovery of his body, tier logs for the tier where he died for the entire time he was there, post assignments for the tier where he died for the entire time he was there, any justification for the his placement on the tier where he died, any indication that rounds were performed in the 6 days leading up to

his death and on the day of his death (including records of all such rounds) and all investigation(s) into his death and any events leading up to it, including the results thereof and any actions taken; (b) All files related to Mr. Mealy, including, but not limited to, his Inmate Base File, his Medical File, and his Disciplinary File; (c) All emails related to Mr. Mealy, his death or any related investigation; and (d) All officers who entered the tier where Mr. Mealy died at any point during the six days prior to his death. *See Exhibit 1 (MPIA Request).*

31. Plaintiff addressed the request to Defendant DPSCS to 6776 Reisterstown Road, Suite 212, Baltimore, Maryland 21215. *See Exhibit 1.* A copy of the same was also sent via email to Dpscs.pia@maryland.gov. *See Exhibit 2 (06/05/2025 Email).*

32. Defendant DPSCS provided some responsive material but left some responsive material out. In particular, Defendant DPSCS failed to provide the report for IID Case #23-35-01971 relating to Mr. Mealy's death.

33. On July 21, 2025, undersigned counsel's office again asked Defendant DPSCS for the report for IID Case #23-35-01971. *See Exhibit 3 (07/21/2025 Email).*

34. On August 1, 2025, Principal Counsel for Defendant DPSCS, Stuart Nathan, indicated that they would be producing the report for IID Case #23-35-01971, stating "I just received the other report and it is quite voluminous with the exhibits. I need to review to determine if there is a need for any redactions." *See Exhibit 4 (08/01/2025 Email).*

35. On August 6, 2025 and August 13, 2025, undersigned counsel's office followed up with Mr. Nathan regarding the report, but has not received any response from Mr. Nathan or the report for IID Case #23-35-01971 as of the date of this filing. *See Exhibit 5 (08/06/2025 and 08/13/2025 Emails).*

COUNT 1

(Maryland Public Information Act Claim)
MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV. §§ 4-101, *et seq.*

36. Plaintiff incorporates all other paragraphs herein by reference.

37. Under the MPIA, “[a]ll persons are entitled to have access to information about the affairs of government and the official acts of public officials and employees.” MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV., §§ 4-103(a).

38. Under the MPIA, Plaintiff is a person in interest.

39. A custodian of records “shall allow a person . . . to inspect any public record at any reasonable time,” and may only deny a person’s record request “to the extent provided” in the MPIA. MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV., §§ 4-201(a).

40. If a person “wishes to inspect a public record,” that person “shall submit a written application to the custodian.” MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV., § 4-202(a).

41. Pursuant to the MPIA, the custodian shall grant or deny the application promptly, **but not more than 30 days after receiving the application**, or deny the application and within ten working days, give the applicant a written statement that includes the reasons and legal authority for the denial or MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV., § 4-203 (emphasis added).

42. Defendant DPSCS received Plaintiff’s request on June 5, 2025. *See* Exhibit 2 and Exhibit 3.

43. Defendant DPSCS’s response to Plaintiff’s request was due no later than July 5, 2025.

44. As of the date of this filing, it has been approximately *seventy* days since the request was received.

45. Defendant DPSCS has failed to provide a complete response to Plaintiff’s request.

46. Plaintiff has not consented to any extension of any applicable time limit. The applicable time limits cannot be extended without “the consent of the applicant.” MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV. § 4-203(d).

47. Defendant DPSCS has not asserted a valid governmental purpose, nor any clearly established need for the non-disclosure of the requested records.

48. Defendant DPSCS has further violated the MPIA, pursuant to §4-203, by failing to provide a brief description of the undisclosed record, provide notice of the remedies under the subtitle, or allow inspection of any part of the record not subject to denial.

49. Defendant DPSCS has failed to demonstrate, pursuant to §4-351(b)(2) of the General

50. Provisions, that disclosure would “deprive another person of a right to a fair trial or an impartial adjudication.”

51. Plaintiff has a right to prompt access to the requested records.

52. Plaintiff’s request is time sensitive as the statute of limitation expires for her civil claims on July 5, 2026.

REQUESTED RELIEF

WHEREFORE, Plaintiff respectfully requests that this Honorable Court:

53. Enter a declaratory judgment in favor of Plaintiff that Defendants have violated the Maryland Public Information Act;

54. Order Defendants to **IMMEDIATELY** produce a copy of the report for IID Case #23-35-01971;

55. Order Defendants to conduct a complete and thorough search for any other information responsive to Plaintiff’s MPIA requests;

56. Order Defendants to produce all records responsive to Plaintiff's MPIA requests that have not yet been produced;

57. Provide for expeditious proceedings in this action, pursuant to MD. CODE ANN., GEN. PROV. § 4-362(c)(1);

58. Award statutory damages, under MD Code, General Provisions §4-362(d)(3) of \$1,000;

59. Award Plaintiff costs and reasonable attorneys' fees incurred in this action;

150. Grant any such other relief as the Court may deem just and proper.

REQUEST FOR HEARING AND JURY TRIAL DEMAND

To the extent the Court is not inclined to grant Plaintiff's requested relief on the papers alone, Plaintiff respectfully requests a hearing before a Jury.

Respectfully submitted,

HANSEL LAW, P.C.

/s/ Kristen Mack

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Defendants.

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LINE REGARDING SUMMONSES

Dear Sir/Madam Clerk:

Kindly accept the attached Complaint for Filing, issue summonses thereon, and return to undersigned counsel for service by private process.

Respectfully submitted,

HANSEL LAW, P.C.

/s/ Kristen Mack

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