

February 24, 2026

To Melvin Herring and Sartiza Legault, Literature Review Committee:

I am writing on behalf of PEN America, the 103-year-old U.S. branch of the world's leading international literary and human rights organization, to call upon the Florida Department of Corrections to reverse its decision to impound issues No. 4, No. 5, and No. 6 of the Militant.

As we understand it, the Department of Corrections came to its decision after finding an article with the headline "Amnesty for immigrants, to unify the working class!" in Issue No. 4 is "dangerously inflammatory in that it advocates or encourages riot, insurrection, rebellion, organized prison protest, disruption of the institution" and that it "presents a threat to the security, order" of your institution. The two following issues with headlines "Join fight for amnesty for all immigrants in the US!" and "Fight for amnesty for all immigrants in the US!" were also impounded.

As the Literature Review Committee takes up these issues, it is clear that none of this subject matter invokes violence or threats, but rather seeks to present important national and international events that are pertinent to the lives of their readership.

Prisoners have a right to read the Militant's reports. Though we understand the responsibility of the Department of Corrections to maintain a safe environment in Florida prisons, actions taken to uphold this responsibility must not come at the expense of prisoners' First Amendment rights.

The impounding of these specific issues of the Militant serve as an unwarranted restriction of freedom of the press and prisoners' rights. We urge the Florida Department of Corrections to reverse its decision.

Sincerely,

Tim Richardson
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