

Palakovic Statement on Decision of the Third Circuit Court of Appeals

On Friday, April 14, 2017, we received the news from Bret that the Third Circuit court's decision regarding our case had been handed down. Although we felt confident of the decision after the oral arguments that took place several months ago, we were hesitant to open the file and read the words.

To have this panel of judges put words to paper in support of our feelings of anger, outrage, hurt, desperation, and pain since Brandon's death elicited emotions in us that are hard to explain. It was impossible to read the entire document straight through. The response to the words was far too strong for that. There was not one thing in our complaint that the judges didn't support. Not one thing.

For four and half years we have been forced to listen to government agencies, their representatives, and judges tell us that we had no right to feel the way we felt, no right to ask questions of anyone involved, no right to look at documents and records related to Brandon's life and eventual death while in the state's care and simply didn't understand how things worked. At times we actually began to question our motivations and our feelings about everything that had happened. Should we just accept it and move on? Were we just unable to deal with his death and unjustly blaming the state prison system? Maybe this was just the way that things were.

But, on Friday, April 14, 2017, we finally felt redeemed, justified, understood, supported, and defended and we are ready to keep up the fight. We have been renewed and so has our faith in the judicial system. There are still people who care, make the hard choices, and fight for what is right.

Knowing that we can move ahead with our case is an incredible feeling and we are extremely thankful to everyone who has worked so hard on Brandon's behalf. This fight is about him and for him at its core; but, this victory has also set a precedent. Yes, a precedent. The satisfaction we feel knowing that the young man who they felt no compassion for and treated like trash is going to stop them from doing it again or haunt them in a court of law if they dare to do it to another is beyond words. This victory is the sweetest we've ever felt.