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Lawsuit Alleges Abuse of Transgender Woman at Maryland Correctional Facilities

BALTIMORE – Brown, Goldstein & Levy, LLP filed a lawsuit on April 18, 2023, on behalf of Chelsea Gilliam, a transgender woman who was held pre-trial at two Maryland correctional facilities for six months.

Ms. Gilliam was arrested for an assault and was held at the Baltimore City Correctional Center and the Maryland Reception, Diagnostic and Classification Center while awaiting trial. Both facilities refused to accept Ms. Gilliam’s legally changed name and her gender identity. While at the Baltimore Jail, Ms. Gilliam was placed in a dormitory of all men for three months, from December 2021 to early February 2022. Despite her femininity and gender identity as a woman, Ms. Gilliam was forced to live and shower with male inmates. During this time, she was harassed by both officers and inmates and ultimately sexually assaulted by another inmate. The jail took no action when Ms. Gilliam reported the assault. She was also denied her hormone treatment.

In February 2022, Ms. Gilliam was moved to the MRDCC, where her she was placed in segregation for her entire time in custody, solely because she is transgender. Officers shackled Ms. Gilliam by the hands, waist and ankles each time she left her cell, even though she never violated the facility’s rules. Ms. Gilliam suffered a great deal of anxiety and distress from these experiences.

The lawsuit challenged Ms. Gilliam’s treatment as cruel and unusual under the 14th Amendment, as gross negligence, and as violating the Americans with Disabilities Act violation, based on precedent set by the October 2022 *Williams v. Kincaid* case that affirms gender dysphoria is a disability protected under the ADA.

Partner Eve Hill, one of the country’s leading disability rights attorneys, is the primary attorney on this case.

[Download the lawsuit filing here.](#)

About Eve Hill

Since joining the BGL team in 2017, Eve Hill has been a leading force in the firm's commitment to civil rights, high-impact disability rights cases and advocacy on behalf of individuals and their families. She co-leads Inclusivity, BGL's Strategic Consulting Group that works to help public and private sector organizations and industry groups navigate the rapidly changing landscape of disability and civil rights. Prior to joining BGL, Eve served as Deputy Assistant Attorney General of the U.S. Department of Justice for six years. Read more about Eve Hill's extensive experience in disability and civil rights by clicking here.

About Brown Goldstein & Levy, LLP

Founded in 1982, Brown, Goldstein & Levy is a 21-lawyer law firm based in Baltimore, Maryland, with an office in Washington, DC. The firm has maintained a thriving national practice handling cases of every stripe, from commercial litigation and civil rights to criminal defense and complex family law. Above all else, Brown, Goldstein & Levy is a client-centered law firm and has decades of experiences bringing passionate, effective advocacy to your fight for justice.

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