

Bird Marella Team Works On Louisiana Pro Bono Prison Matter

A team of Bird Marella attorneys including principal Mitchell A. Kamin and associates Jessica C. Kornberg and Nilay U. Vora are assisting on an Eight Amendment matter.

The Promise of Justice Initiative (PJI) and Bird, Marella, Boxer, Wolpert, Nessim, Drooks & Lincenberg (Bird Marella) filed a complaint against the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections alleging violations of the cruel and unusual punishment clause of the Eight Amendment. In challenging the intense heat on Louisiana's death row, the complaint alleges a heat indexes as high as 195 degrees Fahrenheit during the humid Louisiana summer.

Death row inmates at the Louisiana State Penitentiary at Angola are housed in cinderblock cells 23 hours per day with little, if any, ventilation. Temperature logs from the prison, when cross-referenced with relative humidity measures from the National Weather Service, indicate that in the summer of 2012 the heat index inside death row reached as high as 172 degrees, and as high as 195 degrees in 2011. Over multiple several-day stretches, the heat index remained in the so-called Extreme Danger Zone. Prisoners sleep on the floor in their underwear, braving fire ant bites, in order to be a few degrees cooler than they would be on their cots, and still sweat profusely through the night. Extreme heat exposure causes symptoms of heat stress, exacerbates high-risk conditions such as high blood pressure and diabetes, and puts the plaintiffs at serious risk of heat stroke which can cause death and permanent neurological damage. Plaintiffs argue that these conditions violate the Eight Amendment, which requires that prisoners be given reasonably safe accommodation.

Click here for the full press release- [Angola Heat - Press Release](#).

[Angola Warden "We Messed Up"](#)

[Angola Prison Trial Wraps - Judge to Rule](#)