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Press Release

"Couldn't Keep It To Myself" Authors To Pay \$4,000 To Settle Attorney General's Cost Of Incarceration Suit

April 19, 2004

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal today announced that the authors of "Couldn't Keep It To Myself: Testimonies From Our Imprisoned Sisters" have agreed to pay \$4,000 to settle the state's cost of incarceration lawsuit, which the state will then withdraw.

The eight women will each pay \$500 of their earnings from the book for a total of \$4,000. The writing program at York Correctional Institute will receive \$3,500 of the money, while the remaining \$500 will go to the Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, Southeastern Connecticut Mental Health Authority.

"This settlement serves all sides and strongly advances the public interest," Blumenthal said. "It saves everyone the cost, time and uncertainty of continuing legal action. It recognizes the interest in enforcing the law to collect costs of incarceration from prisoners who have the means to pay. At the same time, it encourages rights and opportunities for prisoners to rehabilitate in the best sense – enhancing skills and free expression that will lead to more law-abiding, productive lives after their release. Our experience reinforces the need to refine and clarify the law to apply more directly and narrowly to certain assets and incomes, such as windfalls, inheritances, lottery winnings or proceeds of criminal activity, and provide discretion in enforcement. We are committed to continuing to enforce the law – as we have done in collecting more than \$2 million in hundreds of cases – as well as improving it."

In exchange for the payments, Blumenthal agreed to formally withdraw his action seeking to recoup the cost of the women's imprisonment from the proceeds of the book. The agreement pledges the State to maintain and support the writing program at York Correctional Institute, while at the same time retaining the right to manage the activity in ways consistent with the public safety and inmate rehabilitation.

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