



## MY POSITION

Dear Fellow Alexandrians;

The closing of Guantanamo Bay prison and the relocation of its high profile prisoners have once again thrust the City of Alexandria and this Sheriff's Office before the eyes of our nation and the world. There has been much speculation as to whether Guantanamo Bay prisoners will stand trial in Federal court here in Alexandria, and whether the Federal government has requested that the prisoners be housed at the Alexandria Detention Center. While I have no knowledge as to where the prisoners will stand trial, I can say that I have received no official request to house the Guantanamo Bay prisoners in our Detention Center.

At the present time, a number of you have expressed your desire that the trials not be held in our locality, and that the prisoners not be housed here. I am committed to doing what is best for the citizens of Alexandria. I respect your wishes, and will do all I can to protect your interests.

If, however, the US Attorney's Office chooses the Eastern District Court as the forum for trial, the prisoners may be housed at the Alexandria Detention Center. The Federal Courthouse in Alexandria was built with an understanding that during the court process, those standing trial will be housed at the Alexandria Detention Center. I have a contract that requires me to hold these prisoners. I say this with all confidence that in executing my obligation, I can also protect the safety and ensure the best interests of our City. The Alexandria Sheriff's Office enjoys an excellent relationship with the local US Attorney's Office and the US Marshal Service. We have a history of working together to ensure that high profile defendants are safely brought to justice.

The Alexandria Sheriff's Office is capable of meeting this new challenge. After the 9-11 terrorist attacks, the Alexandria Sheriff's Office served our nation by housing Zacarias Moussaoui, the alleged "20<sup>th</sup> hijacker". For five years, the Alexandria Detention Center successfully housed Moussaoui while justice was dispensed at Alexandria's Federal Courthouse. In addition to Moussaoui, there were others: John Walker Lindh, and John Muhammad, the Beltway sniper, for example. I cannot speak to the issues involving the transport of prisoners and the plan for security around the Federal Courthouse. These are matters to be addressed by the US Marshal Service. However, should we be asked to house Guantanamo Bay prisoners, the Alexandria Detention Center will remain as it is today; a maximum security facility that is fully capable.

Finally, it is important that both I and our City's officials stay engaged in any discussions involving the trial of Guantanamo Bay prisoners here in Alexandria. Staying engaged ensures that we have a say on how this issue is handled. If the Federal government chooses Alexandria as a forum for justice, we want to be the ones advising the Federal government on the resources we need and to make sure that their decision to bring the prisoners does not bring with it any cost to you, the taxpayers.

I thank you for your continued support as we work through this issue together. I pledge to keep you informed and to do everything in my power to keep the interests of Alexandrians, first.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Dana Lawhorne". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "D" and "L".

Dana Lawhorne, Sheriff