

Foreword

A Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual is an important and impressive work. Although it is well-established that prisoners have a constitutional right to affirmative governmental assistance in the preparation and filing of legal papers, *see Bounds v. Smith*, 430 U.S. 817 (1976), state and federal prisoners often still lack the necessary information and resources to obtain effective and adequate judicial review. This manual will help alleviate that problem. Written in a clear, readable fashion, the manual provides an easy, step-by-step guide to assist prisoners in understanding and maneuvering their way through an increasingly complex legal system. By making difficult and sensitive legal issues accessible to the lay person, the manual helps to empower prisoners to exercise a right we, as a society, hold dear—the right to speak for oneself. I commend Columbia's law students for publishing so comprehensive and insightful a manual. *A Jailhouse Lawyer's Manual* should be read by everyone involved in, or concerned about, prisoners' rights.

Justice Thurgood Marshall
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