

# **EJI ISSUES NEW FINDINGS ON ALABAMA PRISONS**

November 2014

## **SUMMARY OF EJI FINDINGS**

Over the last six months, Equal Justice Initiative staff investigated hundreds of complaints about abuse, misconduct, and unconstitutional conditions at several Alabama prisons. EJI investigators interviewed more than 200 incarcerated people and correctional staff and met with current and former prison officials. We found that: (1) widespread corruption, misconduct, and abusive behavior by correctional officers is a serious problem at several Alabama prisons; (2) poor leadership is contributing to a lack of progress and reform in Alabama prisons; (3) officials have failed to implement several no-cost or low-cost reforms that could be instituted immediately; (4) inadequate investigation and enforcement of state policies and procedures necessitates the authorization of outside law enforcement agencies to investigate complaints against correctional officers and staff; (5) too little is being done to facilitate volunteer programs and services that could improve conditions and services at several state prisons; (6) incentives are needed to improve performance, security, and programming at state prisons; (7) the state would benefit from a small audit committee established by the Governor to investigate and evaluate reform proposals; and (8) policies and practices that burden families in their efforts to maintain ties with incarcerated family members are driving hard working families deeper into poverty and undermining public safety.

As a result of an increasingly dangerous security situation at St. Clair Correctional Facility, EJI lawyers filed suit seeking immediate action and remedies for people incarcerated at St. Clair. EJI turned over hundreds of reports, documents and files to the United States Department of Justice with the hope that the Justice Department will expand its pending investigation and take action to address serious problems that constitute illegal and unconstitutional conditions of confinement at several Alabama prisons.

## **I. CORRUPTION, MISCONDUCT, AND ABUSIVE BEHAVIOR BY CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS AND STAFF REMAIN A SERIOUS PROBLEM.**

Over the last six months EJI staff investigated hundreds of complaints at prisons across Alabama and found widespread abuse and corruption. Alabama's prisons are more dangerous today than a decade ago. Seventeen prisoners have been murdered in Alabama prisons since 2009. The homicide rate in Alabama prisons is more than three times the national average. The number of assaults on Alabama inmates has increased 598 percent since 2008.

EJI found that many homicides and stabbings are related to unpaid debts resulting from an underground economy in contraband goods facilitated by officers at several prisons. EJI has identified dozens of correctional officers working at Ventress, Elmore, Holman, Bibb, and St. Clair correctional facilities who have smuggled drugs and other contraband into the prison or indirectly profited from this underground enterprise in exchange for money and/or sexual favors.

EJI has identified more than twenty officers not directly involved in smuggling contraband into the prison but who profit from this illicit industry by confiscating contraband and exacting an exorbitant fee for its return or selling the property to another inmate. In particular, EJI investigated more than a dozen instances in which a correctional officer confiscated a cell phone without following protocol and then threatened disciplinary action against the inmate unless the prisoner or his family paid the officer several hundred dollars. In several instances officers sold confiscated contraband to other inmates. This widespread distribution of contraband by prison staff is policed by physical violence, leading to a dramatic rise in serious physical assaults, stabbings, and homicides in ADOC facilities during the past year.

In July 2013, EJI filed complaints documenting severe physical and sexual abuse and violence perpetrated by correctional officers and officials at Donaldson, Elmore, and Bibb correctional facilities. EJI uncovered evidence of nearly a dozen instances where prisoners at Elmore were handcuffed, stripped naked, and then beaten by officers. At Donaldson and Bibb correctional facilities, EJI documented instances where male correctional officers forced young male inmates to perform sex acts and threatened to file disciplinary charges against them if they refused or reported the abuse. Biological evidence supporting the sexual assault allegations was turned over to ADOC authorities.

*State officials have failed to adequately respond to problems*

EJI has made repeated formal requests for Department of Corrections leadership to address the dangerous conditions and extraordinarily high rate of violence at St. Clair Correctional Facility in Springville, Alabama. St. Clair has one of the highest rates of homicide violence in the nation, including six homicides in the past 36 months. These problems have been created by poor correctional staff management, non-compliance with departmental protocols and procedures, and corruption at the severely overcrowded facility. EJI met with ADOC Commissioner Kim Thomas and asked him to investigate the alarming rate of homicides and assaults at St. Clair under the leadership of Warden Carter Davenport. After yet another murder in June 2014, EJI renewed its formal request for the immediate removal of Warden Davenport and the appointment of correctional staff to address the dramatic increase in serious violence at St. Clair. No action was taken and another prisoner was murdered in September 2014.

EJI filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Justice in May 2012 after conducting an investigation that revealed rampant and severe sexual abuse at Tutwiler Prison for Women, including instances where incarcerated women became pregnant and gave birth to children after being raped by correctional officers. After conducting a federal investigation, DOJ found that women at Tutwiler “live in a sexualized environment with repeated and open sexual behavior” and concluded that the conditions at Tutwiler are unconstitutional.

In 2011, EJI filed a complaint with the Justice Department about the fatal beating of 24-year-old Rocrast Mack by correctional officers at Ventress Correctional Facility in Clayton, Alabama, and called for state and federal prosecution of those officers. Federal prosecutors eventually charged four former prison employees in Mr. Mack’s murder. All four officers were convicted.

## **II. POOR LEADERSHIP IS CONTRIBUTING TO SERIOUS PROBLEMS AT ALABAMA PRISONS.**

ADOC officials have done very little to hold institutional wardens and leaders accountable for problems within prisons. For several years horrific abuse and sexual violence was rampant at Tutwiler, yet the warden and deputy warden who directly contributed to some of these abuses were never held accountable publicly and instead were belatedly transferred or promoted to higher positions at different prisons, where reports of abuse have since escalated.

Tutwiler Warden Frank Albright remained in office even after reports of rape, sexual abuse, and assault of incarcerated women by correctional staff were confirmed through investigations conducted by EJI, the National Institute of Corrections, and the Department of Justice. Warden Albright was transferred to Kilby Prison in 2012 and was later allowed to retire with benefits. Incarcerated women at Tutwiler have consistently reported that the single most significant improvement at the facility has been the departure of Warden Albright, while reports of abuse at Kilby increased.

Similarly, the deputy warden directly responsible for security and conduct by staff during the most disturbing period at Tutwiler was promoted to Warden at Easterling where EJI is receiving a wave of complaints about arbitrary new policies and procedures which have increased violence and tension at that facility.

EJI has documented serious and prolonged patterns of violence at other facilities that signal a failure in leadership and require immediate attention. In May 2013, EJI filed a complaint with Commissioner Thomas regarding widespread physical abuse and misconduct at Elmore Correctional Facility. EJI reported that, in the six months preceding our complaint, there were nearly a dozen instances where prisoners were handcuffed, stripped naked, and then beaten by several guards. Several inmates were beaten so severely that they have required hospitalization and suffered permanent injuries. EJI's report implicates the warden and other high-ranking prison officials in some of the beatings and misconduct. In at least one instance, Warden Leeposey Daniels paraded a severely injured man in front of other inmates and announced that the beating was intended as a warning.

EJI filed similar complaints about Carter Davenport who was promoted to warden at St. Clair Correctional Facility despite a history of discipline for unprofessional conduct, including an incident in 2012 when Davenport punched a handcuffed prisoner in the face.

Under Warden Davenport's leadership, fatal and non-fatal stabbing incidents have escalated with at least six homicides in the past 36 months and multiple inmates suffering near-fatal injuries that have required extended offsite hospital treatment. EJI continues to receive calls from St. Clair inmates, including many who have been incarcerated for decades, reporting that conditions are more dangerous and volatile than they previously experienced. The prison administration has failed to provide any response or remedy.

We believe that a clear signal must be sent to those in leadership when evidence of serious officer and employee misconduct is revealed. That has not happened at Tutwiler, Elmore, or St. Clair and the absence of accountability has undermined reform efforts.

By contrast, state leaders in Florida and Mississippi responded to widespread abuse and the deaths of inmates in state prisons by firing correctional staff, holding contractors accountable, and increasing transparency regarding prisoner deaths. Florida Corrections Secretary Mike Crews recently fired 32 prison guards accused of criminal wrongdoing or misconduct and suspended a warden, emphasizing that his department is committed to rooting out “bad actors” and “bad seeds” and ensuring they do not keep their jobs in the prison system.<sup>1</sup> Mississippi House Corrections Committee Chairman Tommy Taylor demanded similar reforms after learning that corrupt prison officers were helping gangs control Mississippi’s prisons through violence and contraband trafficking. Representative Taylor, a former warden, said he views officers who enable inmates to commit crimes to be just as guilty as the inmates. “Any time that an officer does something wrong to carry on illegal activity, he’s an accessory,” he said.

As in Alabama, investigators from outside organizations have uncovered the worst of the problems in Florida. Corrections Secretary Mike Crews responded by acknowledging mistakes, taking action, and increasing transparency. Four Florida inmates have died since 2010 in incidents involving brutality or excessive force. Secretary Crews acknowledged that his department had failed to take action against abusive officers and directed his staff to review all cases in which corrections officers had been placed on leave following possible criminal wrongdoing. “I’ve made it clear that there is zero tolerance for corruption or abuse,” Crews said. “We continue to root out any and all bad actors who do not live up to our expectations.”<sup>2</sup> Among those fired in Florida was Jerry Cummings, the warden at Dade Correctional Institution, where a mentally ill inmate died after being left in a scalding shower. After dismissing Warden Cummings, Secretary Crews said he hoped the firing would send a message through the state prison system. “We need leaders . . . who will act with urgency to protect the safety of the

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<sup>1</sup>Julie Brown, Florida Prison Boss Fires 32 over Inmate Deaths, Miami Herald, Sept. 19, 2014, <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/crime/article2176191.html#storylink=cpy>; Michael Vasquez and Julie K. Brown, Miami Herald, Miami-Dade warden tied to shower death of inmate is suspended, July 10, 2014, <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/local/community/miami-dade/article1974934.html#storylink=cpy>.

<sup>2</sup> Brown, *supra* note 1.

inmates and staff and hold individuals accountable when needed,” Crews said.<sup>3</sup>

Under Secretary Crews’s direction, the Florida Department of Corrections recently launched a public online database of inmate deaths. The website allows people to view state investigative materials into inmate deaths and includes detailed, summary reports on non-natural death investigations conducted by the department’s Office of Inspector General. Such materials remain secret in Alabama.

### **III. OFFICIALS HAVE FAILED TO ACT ON NO-COST OR LOW-COST REFORMS THAT COULD BE INSTITUTED IMMEDIATELY TO IMPROVE SECURITY AND CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT.**

State officials required to comply with federally mandated protocols and procedures adopted by Congress in 2003 as part of the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) and promulgated by the Attorney General in 2012, have refused to make several low cost reforms to reduce the risk of sexual abuse and violence. PREA standards require that children under the age of 18 must be separated from adults when held in state or local confinement facilities. The segregation requirements imposed by PREA recognize the inherent vulnerability of children detained in adult facilities and are designed to protect them from the significantly heightened risk of abuse they face.

The Alabama Department of Corrections continues to house children prosecuted as adults in adult facilities where they face an increased risk of sexual assault and violence. Even though the number of offenders in state prison facilities under age 18 is small and these juveniles could be housed at appropriate detention facilities for juveniles, ADOC has refused to act. Housing minors with adults is a clear violation of PREA and Alabama will lose federal funding if immediate reforms are not implemented. EJI raised this issue with ADOC officials on multiple occasions over the past six months but no reforms have been implemented.

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<sup>3</sup> Julie Brown, Dade Correctional Institution Warden Fired After Inmate Death in Shower Reported, Miami Herald, July 14, 2012, <http://www.miamiherald.com/news/state/article1975951.html>

**IV. SERIOUS MISCONDUCT IS NOT PROPERLY OR ADEQUATELY INVESTIGATED BY INTERNAL INVESTIGATORS AND OUTSIDE LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES SHOULD BE EMPOWERED TO INVESTIGATE CRIMINAL MISCONDUCT BY CORRECTIONAL STAFF WITHIN PRISONS.**

There is a great deal of evidence that ADOC's Investigations and Intelligence ("I & I") unit does not conduct effective and reliable investigations of sexual misconduct by staff and other staff misconduct. The close relationship between I & I investigators and correctional staff make independent and reliable investigations very difficult. Additionally, DOC investigators have not consistently responded to or taken seriously complaints about sexual misconduct and abuse. EJI has interviewed male prisoners who report that investigators took months to respond to complaints about sexual misconduct. I & I investigators have reported to EJI that they do not have the autonomy or support needed to expose and prosecute staff misconduct. Some have expressed fear of reprisals and termination if they identify inappropriate behavior by officers or correctional staff. An external agency or independent group should be authorized to investigate issues in order to provide ADOC with reliable information about staff misconduct.

The need for independent investigation is highlighted by evidence that ADOC has under-reported or misreported the number of violent incidents and abuse in its facilities. From January 2009 to December 2013 there were at least eleven reported homicides in DOC facilities. DOC statistical reports show only seven homicides in this period.

In 2012, EJI revealed similar evidence suggesting that Alabama officials were misreporting the number of incidents of sexual assault. ADOC did not report any incidents of sexual misconduct or harassment in 2009, but at least two incidents occurred in female facilities that year according to court records in the cases of two officers indicted for custodial sexual misconduct. A subsequent investigation by the Department of Justice found that "Tutwiler vastly understates the number of officers involved in sexual abuse" and uncovered discrepancies in the collection and management of data related to sexual abuse reports at Tutwiler that "make it difficult for prison officials to assess the prevalence and severity of sexual abuse and harassment at Tutwiler."

ADOC no longer reports on the incidents of staff-on-inmate sexual misconduct or the use of excessive force in its annual reports to the legislature.

**V. THERE IS A CULTURE OF RESISTANCE AND HOSTILITY TO VOLUNTEER PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT COULD DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT IN ALABAMA PRISONS.**

The failure to provide adequate positive, rehabilitative, or recreational programming, the lack of treatment and services for drug addiction and mental illness, and restrictions on religious and volunteer programming contribute to a culture where violence, abuse, and corruption thrive. ADOC provides inadequate counseling services for mental illness and drug addiction, despite evidence that shows that the vast majority of prisoners suffer from one or both of these afflictions. As a result, correctional staff are ill-equipped to respond to the behavioral symptoms of these diseases, creating a dangerous environment for staff and prisoners.

In the absence of mental health treatment, the only option for officers responding to prisoners struggling with mental disease is to place inmates in isolation, where their symptoms are often exacerbated. These prisoners return to general population more impaired and more traumatized. EJI has documented numerous assaults and homicides that occurred after officers used isolation in response to mentally ill prisoners' untreated behavioral symptoms.

EJI has interviewed numerous program volunteers and service providers who report that wardens at several institutions severely restricted volunteer and religious programs aimed at reducing violence, giving prisoners a forum to voice concerns and resolve issues, incentivizing good behavior, providing prisoners an opportunity to educate themselves, and ministering to prisoners. The absence of positive and constructive programming contributes to conflicts and tensions among prisoners and to the high rate of violence.

**VI. INCENTIVES FOR IMPROVED PERFORMANCE, SECURITY AND SERVICES AT STATE PRISONS ARE URGENTLY NEEDED.**

EJI has urged the state to create financial incentives for wardens that are tied to performance using a metric that takes into account the incidence of violence, corruption, and recidivism. Just as ADOC fails to hold wardens accountable for corruption and abuse of power, it fails to reward wardens who achieve low rates of misconduct and help inmates prepare to reintegrate into the community and their families. Creating the right incentives for wardens and officers would significantly curb violence and help to

effectively manage staff and reduce recidivism. In other states, structural incentives have motivated wardens and officers to invest in the maintenance of safe prisons and in rehabilitation, job training, and job placement programs for prisoners.

Performance incentives provided by the Governor's office that reward successful facilities could better position the governor to assist ADOC efforts to curb violence and reduce prison crowding. Linking funding to reductions in violence, successful inmate participation in programming, increases in honor dorm beds, and other measures of successful culture change, would encourage leadership to improve supervision practices, enhance safety, and improve the culture at their facilities.

## **VII. THE STATE WOULD BENEFIT FROM A SMALL AUDIT COMMITTEE ESTABLISHED BY THE GOVERNOR TO INVESTIGATE AND EVALUATE REFORM PROPOSALS.**

Any comprehensive, long-term effort to eradicate both the occurrence and tolerance of sexual abuse, excessive violence, and corruption must include a system for independent review. An independent committee tasked with regular monitoring and reporting on conditions is recommended. The active and integrated participation of independent advocacy organizations is important in both the design and enforcement of better sexual abuse and safety protocols and policies. An auditing team used to oversee adherence to new anti-abuse procedures would include non-governmental employees such as medical professionals and community members from advocacy organizations that work on behalf of incarcerated people. Neither the Department of Corrections nor the legislature has created an independent team authorized to conduct reviews and investigate allegations of abuse, corruption, and unsafe conditions in Alabama correctional facilities. By contrast, Florida utilizes a monitoring and auditing process to investigate grievances and hold accountable those whose actions fall below applicable standards.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Casey Toner, Cause for concern: Read Florida prison official's scathing letter to inmate health care provider Corizon, Al.com, Sept. 30, 2014, [http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2014/09/cause\\_for\\_concern\\_read\\_florida.html#incart\\_river](http://www.al.com/news/index.ssf/2014/09/cause_for_concern_read_florida.html#incart_river).

## **VIII. POLICIES AND PRACTICES THAT BURDEN FAMILIES IN THEIR EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN TIES WITH INCARCERATED FAMILY MEMBERS ARE DRIVING HARD-WORKING AND LOW INCOME FAMILIES DEEPER INTO POVERTY AND UNDERMINING PUBLIC SAFETY.**

Over the past decade, facilities across Alabama have implemented practices that make it increasingly difficult for poor, hard-working families to communicate and maintain ties with incarcerated family members. An anti-family culture has taken hold even as legislators, child welfare advocates and policy makers have universally recognized that preservation of family ties is the single biggest factor in successful re-entry, and the destruction of those ties is the single biggest risk factor for the child of an incarcerated parent. As the Alabama Public Service Commission has recognized, “contact between inmate parents and their children not only lowers the recidivism rate among inmates but decreases the delinquency rate of their children.”<sup>5</sup> Indeed, it is well-documented that maintaining family bonds is critical to successful re-entry.<sup>6</sup> Not only does lower recidivism save Alabamians money, it makes our communities safer.

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<sup>5</sup>Alabama Public Service Commission, Docket 15957, “Errata Substitute Order Proposing Revised Inmate Phone Service Rules and Establishing a Comment Period,” at 14.

<sup>6</sup>*See, e.g.*, Shanhe Jiang and L. Thomas Winfree, “Social Support, Gender, and Inmate Adjustment to Prison Life: Insights from a National Sample,” *The Prison Journal* 86, no. 1 (2006): 34, 50-51; Sandra Villalobos Aguelo, *The Impact of Family Visitation on Incarcerated Youth’s Behavior and School Performance* at Vera Institute (2013) available at <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/family-visitation-and-youth-behavior-brief.pdf>; Ryand Shanahan and Sandra Villalobos Agudelo, *Families as Partners: Supporting Incarcerated Youth in Ohio* at Vera Institute (2012) available at <http://www.vera.org/sites/default/files/resources/downloads/families-as-partners.pdf>; Elizabeth Gaynes *Reentry: Helping Former Prisoners Return to Communities* at the Technical Assistance Resource Center of the Annie E. Casey Foundation (2005) available at <http://www.aecf.org/upload/publicationfiles/ir2980d32>; *see also* “Why does it cost so much for prisoners to keep in touch with their families?” *The Economist* (May 2013) available at <http://www.economist.com/news/united-states/21578411-why-does-it-cost-so-much-prisoners-keep-touch-their-families-cell-phones>.

Alabama has one of the highest incarceration rates in the country and hundreds of thousands of families are affected by incarceration. A growing number of families have had communication with incarcerated loved ones disrupted unnecessarily. In fact many families are treated unfairly.

DOC policies and practices that govern contact between prisoners and their families often impede, rather than support, the maintenance of family ties. The primary intent of some of these practices is not security but profit. Phone rates and the cost of basic hygiene supplies are greatly inflated to subsidize prison budgets and generate profits. The lack of work opportunities for incarcerated men and women mean that these profits and subsidies fall primarily on the backs of hard-working or low income families trying to maintain ties with a loved one in prison.

Families who try to maintain contact with incarcerated loved ones face enormous costs in maintaining contact during imprisonment and the costs of maintaining the prisoner's basic needs while she or he is in prison. Allowing children to converse with their incarcerated parents by phone is a very expensive endeavor. Depending on the prison, a thirty minute phone call once a week could put a \$125 or higher dent in the family's monthly budget. Prison visits are also not a cost free endeavor; monies must be budgeted to cover transportation, usually to geographically remote locations, meals and vending machine snacks during visits, and, sometimes, overnight lodging.

Despite the significance of maintaining family ties to achieving lower recidivism rates and addressing child delinquency and other larger social policy objectives, the Department of Corrections places primary responsibility for the creation of policies and practices regarding the treatment of family members on local wardens. Family members report that the visitation practices at the facilities vary significantly and appear to be arbitrary.

EJI has interviewed dozens of family members who report that visitation days are intimidating and frustrating events routinely characterized by being subject to seemingly arbitrary and humiliating experiences, intrusive body searches and rude treatment by staff, hours of waiting in the heat or cold, and too often being denied entry after hours of travel due to arbitrary reasons. Families travel for hours for these visits, and some are detained by searches for an hour or longer, losing valuable time with loved ones and enduring humiliating searches.

One elderly mother was refused a visit with her daughter after having traveled two hours with her four grandchildren when the visitation officer told her that her breath smelled, so she was refused entry into the prison. The mother was diabetic and dehydrated from the long drive and wait in line at the facility, but she was not given the opportunity to explain that the odor was caused by her diabetes.

Another mother, who was recovering from chemotherapy and visiting her son for the first time since her diagnosis with cancer, was confronted during her visit by three officers and ordered to enter a closet area where she was ordered to remove all of her clothing in front of the officers. When she asked what was happening the officers refused to respond to her questions. Nothing was found and she was allowed to return to her visit with no explanation.

Numerous family members have reported that prison officials contacted them after a loved one died but they were given little if any information about the circumstances of the death. The siblings of an elderly female prisoner who had a stroke and was on a ventilator was not allowed to visit their sister while she was in the infirmary. Counsel was also denied visitation. Within one week, the inmate passed away.

One mother we interviewed had driven over 1000 miles after learning from her son that he was in the infirmary and very ill. When she got to the prison, the warden refused a visit because of a technicality with her son's visiting list. She received a call on her drive back that her son had died and was asked to drive back to the prison to identify her son's body.

The parents of Rocrast Mack, a young man serving time for his first non-violent offense who was murdered by officers, were phoned by the prison chaplain after their son, who was badly beaten and unconscious, was transported by ambulance to Jackson Hospital in Montgomery. At the hospital, his father, Larry Mack, was forbidden from seeing his dying son, on orders of the warden. When the warden relented several hours later, Mack found his son's room full of prison guards. "They wouldn't let me touch him," he recalled. "It was up to the warden." His son died later the next day.

Another mother reported that the prison warden called her to report that her son was found lying on the floor unresponsive and taken to UAB Hospital, but she was given no further information. After pleading with a nurse at UAB Hospital to tell her how her son was doing, the nurse told her that the hospital was instructed not to give out information. The mother told the nurse that the family lived a thousand miles away and

begged her to answer one question: did she need to get on a plane, and if so, did she have days or hours. The nurse confirmed that she needed to get on a plane and that she only had hours. The family flew to Birmingham that day but their son died before they arrived. The family later learned that their son had been stabbed to death.

The father of a prisoner who was killed while sleeping in his cell was told by the warden at St. Clair, “Your son and another guy got into it, your son lost.” No further information was provided to the family. The father told EJI investigators that it was as if his son was “no more than a dog lying in the street.”

One mother of a young man incarcerated on ten year sentence for 3rd degree robbery at Donaldson prison was contacted by the families of other prisoners and told that they had received reports that her son had been stabbed. When she called the warden to inquire about her son’s health, she was informed that her son had been taken to the hospital and that he had been stabbed in the lung. The warden refused to allow the mother to see her son or tell her where he was.

Another mother reported that she was contacted about her son’s death and was told that they could attend his funeral which would be a pauper’s service at the prison because the family is impoverished. The family made arrangements to attend but when they called to inquire about the arrangements they were informed they were too late.

Other state have recognized that the social benefits that come from family oriented prison environments, policies and practices, are enormous and require a fundamental shift in the DOC response to families. EJI believes that uniform policies, transparency and process and oversight over of correctional policies and practices with regard to families are critical. The correctional environment and what goes on in prison are not internal matters to be left to the discretion of prison administrators. They are instead public concerns with relevance to broad social welfare goals and of importance to different community constituencies. A staff liaison tasked with developing system-wide family-oriented policy directives and agency protocols is a necessary component to any serious effort toward successful reintegration of prisoners into their communities, reduction of recidivism, and creation of a culture of humane treatment of prisoners and their families.