

[<< Back](#)SITE SEARCH WEB SEARCH BY Google™ Go

Changes proposed for embattled Tutwiler Women's Prison

[Recommend](#)[Sign Up](#) to see what your friends recommend.

Posted: Oct 05, 2012 6:23 PM CDT

Updated: Oct 05, 2012 6:23 PM CDT

By Max Reiss - [email](#)

MONTGOMERY, AL (WSFA) - The same organization that released a report with allegations of sexual abuse by correctional officers at the Julia Tutwiler Women's Prison now has recommendations for the Alabama Department of Corrections on how to curb the problem.

The recommendations came at Friday's meeting of the Commission on Girls and Women in the Criminal Justice System.

"Department of Corrections officials have announced their intentions to invite and conduct an independent audit to assess the facility's operations" said Charlotte Morrison with the Equal Justice Initiative. "However to date, DOC has not made any changes in leadership at the prison."

Alabama's Commissioner of the Department Corrections, Kim Thomas, said he will strive to improve the way all of the state's facilities respond to sexual assault allegations, and not just Tutwiler.

"To me, it's the biggest violation of trust" Thomas said. "To me it's the biggest violation of the oath of office and just something that I'm not going to tolerate."

The Equal Justice Initiative made four primary recommendations. Morrison said the Department of Corrections should have Tutwiler staff report all incidents of alleged sexual abuse against female inmates to the Commission on Girls and Women in the Criminal Justice System.

The second recommendation was that there needs to be a set standard of what is considered to be abuse.

EJI also recommended that the leadership at Tutwiler be held accountable for the events that have transpired. To that end, Commissioner Thomas responded by saying, "That's decision that I'm going to make. I'm not going to move a very passionate warden, someone who's dedicated a lot of their life to the department and the state merely on the whim of one request."

Morrison earlier in the meeting argued that officers at Tutwiler had not taken any responsibility or adhered to any sort of meaningful penalty after being charged with crimes.

"Only two officers received a jail sentence" Morrison said. "One received five days confinement. The other officer who raped and impregnated an inmate received only 180 days in jail."

The final recommendation from the Equal Justice Initiative was that the Department of Corrections employ some form of long-term independent oversight of Tutwiler.

Commissioner Thomas said he will work to employ the recommendations from EJI, in addition to others from the federal government across Alabama's entire prison system.

Copyright 2012 [WSFA 12 News](#). All rights reserved.