

Daily Reporter

Greenfield, Indiana

News Video Advertising E-Edition Photos Web Extras Contact Us For Subscribers

 **overstock.com**
Free Shipping
Orders \$50 +



**Sierra
Corduroy**
\$ 110.41
Shop Now >



**Vanderbilt
Foldable...**
\$ 124.99
Shop Now >



Justice Department report: Tutwiler Prison far from reformer's ideals

By PHILLIP RAWLS Associated Press

First Posted: January 26, 2014 - 3:02 pm

Last Updated: January 26, 2014 - 3:04 pm

AAA



Julia Tutwiler Prison is named for a legendary Alabamian who pushed for better conditions in prisons. An ongoing investigation by the U.S. Justice Department indicates Alabama's only prison for women is not living up to its namesake's ideals.

The Justice Department said women at the Wetumpka prison "live in a toxic environment with repeated and open sexual behavior." That includes "officers forcing women to engage in sexual acts with officers in exchange for basic sanitary supplies; males openly watching women shower or use the toilet; a staff facilitated 'strip show' a constant barrage of sexually offensive language; punishment of prisoners who report improper conduct; and encouraging improper sexual contact between prisoners."

"I think Julia Tutwiler would be horrified," said Bryan Stevenson, executive director of Equal Justice Initiative.

The Montgomery-based nonprofit group provides legal representation for indigent inmates and advocates for better prison conditions. The organization filed the complaint that prompted the Justice Department investigation.

State Corrections Commissioner Kim Thomas said his department has been proactive and is making improvements, including getting funding from the Legislature to add security cameras.



ST
it
daily de

SHO

We

Organizati

- U.S.
- Uniti

Subjects:

- Corr
- Hum
- Legi:
- Soci
- Soci
- Law

But his plea for more officers and better pay weren't included in the governor's recent budget recommendation to the Legislature. The governor recommended the prison system get by next year on about the same amount it is receiving this year.

House Speaker Mike Hubbard, R-Auburn, called the Justice Department's report "very distasteful." But he said the Legislature is dealing with several programs needing more money and can't overhaul the prison system in one year.

"That is an area that obviously needs more money, but you have to prioritize and it's not easy," he said.

The Justice Department's point man in Montgomery isn't taking excuses. "Action needs to be taken immediately," U.S. Attorney George Beck said.

"These problems have been festering for years and are well known to Alabama prison officials," Assistant Attorney General Jocelyn Samuels said. She said the Justice Department is expanding its investigation to include excessive use of force, inadequate medical care, and discriminatory treatment based on race and sexual orientation.

The Justice Department has a 40-year history of pushing for better conditions in Alabama prisons and addressing wrongs. Most recently, it investigated the 2010 beating death of a male inmate and got convictions or guilty pleas from four prison employees for either participating in the beating or helping cover it up.

Tutwiler is Alabama's only prison for women. It has struggled with overcrowding and understaffing for years. In 2007, a federal report based on a survey of inmates rated Tutwiler Prison the worst women's prison in the country for sexual assaults.

The prison's white concrete front displays black letters showing it is named for Julia Tutwiler, an outspoken advocate for educating women and improving conditions in jails and prisons. She also wrote the poem "Alabama" that became the lyrics for the official state song.

Tutwiler became known as the "Angel of the Stockade" for getting heat and better prison, securing state funding for night school programs in prisons, and getting the lockup for women inmates so that they would no longer be housed with men. She Prison was completed in 1942.

Alabama's prison commissioner said he is cooperating with the Justice Department never downplayed the serious nature of the allegations.

- Govt

Places:

- Mon
- Alab

Find us on



3,497 people



Facebook

"I do not, however, agree that Tutwiler is operating in a deliberately indifferent or Thomas said.

Tutwiler isn't the only Alabama prison that could face scrutiny. The Equal Justice about the physical and sexual abuse of inmates at three male prisons.

Speaker Hubbard and Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, said legis a national organization, the Council of State Governments, about doing a review of system, and they hope to have that underway soon.

"We want to make sure our prisons are run correctly. We want to make sure the is adequate," Marsh said.

Like **Share** One person likes this. Be the first of your friends.

1 comment



Join the discussion...

Best ▾

Greenfield Daily Reporter

Share ↗

Login ▾



@imjustmetobe on twitter · a day ago

Speaker Hubbard and Senate President Pro Tem Del Marsh, R-Anniston, are delaying an confusing with these reviews they are afraid their friends will be charged with cover up.

^ | ▾ · Reply · Share ›

ALSO ON GREENFIELD DAILY REPORTER

WHAT'S THIS?

Feds: Star Scientific officials discussed using Va state ...

1 comment • 5 days ago



bjd44 — Wow.....I work in this industry. This is NOT good if it's indeed true.

DA: Attorney general taking over investigation of sexual abuse ...

2 comments • 9 days ago



skiadvocat — This is some of the best news I have heard re the fight for our children in the ...

Boy, 3, found dead in North Miami home; mother ...

1 comment • 6 days ago



Melanie Hansman — That's great, focus your attention on protecting the siblings and then focus your ...

Judge temporarily waives bond; county officials were ...

2 comments • 5 days ago



lunchlady12345 — I would think that that new baby would go into the states' custody

✉ Subscribe

ⓓ Add Disqus to your site

All content copyright ©2014 Daily Reporter, a division of Home News Enterprises unless otherwise noted. All rights reserved. [Click here to read our privacy policy.](#)
Daily Reporter • 22 W. New Road • Greenfield, IN 46140 • (317) 462-5528