



U.S. Department of Justice

Washington, DC 20530

OCT 06 2016

The Honorable Robert Bentley
Governor of Alabama
Alabama State Capitol
600 Dexter Avenue
Montgomery, Alabama 36130

Dear Governor Bentley:

We write to inform you that the United States Department of Justice is commencing an investigation into the conditions of correctional facilities housing male prisoners within the Alabama Department of Corrections, pursuant to the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1997. In conducting the investigation, we will determine whether there are systematic violations of the Constitution of the United States. Specifically, we will investigate whether Alabama: (1) adequately protects prisoners from physical harm and sexual abuse at the hands of other prisoners; (2) adequately protects prisoners from use of excessive force and staff sexual abuse by correctional officers; and (3) provides prisoners with sanitary, secure, and safe living conditions.

We have not reached any conclusions about the subject matter of the investigation. During our investigation, we will consider all relevant information, including the efforts the State has undertaken to ensure compliance with the Constitution. We will also offer to provide recommendations on ways to improve conditions in the Alabama Department of Corrections facilities that house male prisoners, when appropriate. If we conclude that there are not systemic constitutional violations, we will notify you that we are closing the investigation. If, on the other hand, we conclude that there are such violations, we will inform you of the findings and attempt to work with the State of Alabama to remedy any such violations. In addition, we will identify any financial, technical, or other assistance the United States may be able to provide to assist the State in correcting the identified deficiencies. In our many years of enforcing the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, the good faith efforts of State, County, and local jurisdictions working with us have routinely enabled us to resolve our claims without resort to contested litigation.

We invite the State to cooperate with our investigation, and we can assure you that we will seek to minimize any potential disruption our investigation may have on the operations of the Alabama Department of Corrections. Our Special Litigation Section and the United States

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Attorney's Offices for the Northern, Middle, and Southern Districts of Alabama will be handling the investigation and will contact your office to discuss the next steps. Special Litigation Section Chief Steven H. Rosenbaum can be reached at (202) 616-3244.

Sincerely yours,



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Principal Deputy Assistant Attorney General
Civil Rights Division



Joyce White Vance
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