



The Florida House of Representatives

Representative David Richardson

113th District

By Email
November 28, 2016

Julie L. Jones
Secretary
Florida Department of Corrections
501 South Calhoun Street
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500

Dear Madam Secretary,

I am writing to express my concerns about certain facilities at the Colombia Correctional Institution (Colombia). As you may know, I made an unscheduled and unannounced visit to this facility on Wednesday, November 23, 2016. The Warden and his staff were available upon my arrival and, as requested, escorted me on a tour of the facility.

Since August of last year, I have made more than 60 visits of FDC facilities and interviewed more than 225 inmates individually, usually with a member of your staff or my own. In one of our early meetings we both agreed that I should always be candid with you about my observations – even when the news will not be pleasant. Today, I must report to you some unpleasant news.

During my visit to Colombia last week I observed several facilities that require immediate maintenance attention. I randomly selected areas of the Colombia Main complex to visit. My review of these facilities disclosed that certain facilities are, in my opinion, unfit for human habitation. Specifically, Buildings F & G on the Main Colombia Complex are so much in need of repairs and maintenance that I do not believe the State of Florida should be housing anyone in these facilities. These are just some of the issues I observed:

*Finance & Tax Committee, Health Care Appropriations Subcommittee, Health Innovation Subcommittee,
Select Committee on Gaming, Transportation & Economic Development Appropriations Committee and Rulemaking Oversight & Repeal Subcommittee*

REPLY TO:

- 1701 Meridian Avenue, Suite 402A, Miami Beach, FL 33139 (305) 535-5426
- 200 House Office Building, 402 South Monroe Street, Tallahassee, FL 32399-1300, (850) 717-5113

Legislature's Website: <http://www.myfloridahouse.gov>

Richard Corcoran
Speaker

Jeanette Nunez
Speaker Pro Tempore

Janet Cruz
Democratic Leader

Portia Palmer
Clerk

Russell Hosford
Sergeant at Arms

Julie L. Jones
November 28, 2016
Page 2 of 3

1. Inadequate shower facilities. In all eight cell-blocks visited there were showers that are not working. In some cases, three of the five showers are not operational. I was advised that there are times when there is not adequate hot water for the showers that are functional.
2. In many cases, inmates reported to me that the heating is not operating properly.
3. Many windows are not operational. That is, inmates cannot open or close their cell windows.
4. Most of the cell-blocks are without hot water for inmates to make coffee or soup purchased from the canteen. This situation has been ongoing for several months. This may appear to be inconsequential, but we both know that "small" issues like this can result in cell-block rebellions.
5. Certain toilets are not fully functional. Two inmates living in one cell told me their toilet has not been fully functional for more than two weeks. I personally observed 4 toilets that were not fully functional.
6. In one cell-block an exhaust fan has been in disrepair for approximately three months and is making a loud noise. I do not know how it is possible for anyone to live and sleep in this environment.

I know that your department has not been adequately funded by the legislature for maintenance and repairs of your facilities. The legislature must do more to support FDC efforts to bring the facilities up to acceptable standards. In the meantime, the department should identify the facilities in greatest need of repair and give those facilities a priority.

I am requesting that you immediately condemn Colombia Main Complex Buildings F & G and re-locate all housed inmates to acceptable facilities until repairs can be completed. I know this is a daunting request, but in my opinion it is absolutely necessary. In all of my visits over the past several months, this is the worst of the worst of facilities. I cannot accept that the State of Florida is housing any human being in these facilities.

Julie L. Jones
November 28, 2016
Page 3 of 3

Please do not hesitate to contact me should you wish to further discuss this matter. I will be returning to this site in the very near future to personally inspect all of the Colombia Main, Annex, and Work Camp facilities. I would like a member of your staff to join me for my next visit.

Best regards,



David Richardson

cc: Speaker Richard Corcoran
Representative Janet Cruz, Minority Leader
Representative Chris Sprowls, Judiciary Committee Chair
Representative Carlos Trujillo, Appropriations Committee Chair