



American Friends Service Committee

Arizona Area Program

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Wednesday, July 24, 2013

The Honorable Janice K. Brewer
Arizona Governor
Executive Tower
1700 West Washington Street
Phoenix, AZ 85007

Dear Governor Brewer,

As you are surely aware, On Tuesday, July 23, 2013, Rep. Chad Campbell called on Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) Director Charles Ryan to resign, citing "a pattern of mismanagement and a lack of leadership resulting in an unsafe corrections system in our state."

The Arizona office of American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) has raised critical issues regarding the management of and conditions within Arizona's prisons for nearly 20 years. Our office has documented lapses in safety, transparency, and medical and mental health care of ADC prisoners. The numerous issues raised in Rep. Campbell's letter are extremely serious, costing taxpayers millions of dollars and undermining public safety as well as the safety and health of prisoners and corrections staff.

The AFSC affirms each of the points raised in Rep. Campbell's letter. Every day, our office receives letters from men and women held in Arizona prisons decrying the lack of adequate medical and mental health care, regardless of whether it was administered by the ADC, Wexford, or the current contracted company, Corizon. Lack of treatment for Hepatitis C, long delays in care or outright denial of medically necessary interventions, inconsistent delivery of medication, and wholly insufficient psychiatric care for the mentally ill are all regularly reported to the AFSC Arizona. The ACLU has initiated a class action lawsuit, *Parsons v. Ryan*, to address these problems, yet the letters keep coming.

Arizona's reliance on for-profit prison companies has been nothing short of disastrous, as demonstrated by the escape from the MTC-run Kingman facility in 2010 and the subsequent murder of a couple in New Mexico. The newly-signed contract for up to 2,000 new prison beds with Corrections Corporation of America at a time when the Arizona prison population has dropped over the previous three years is a grave mistake that will commit taxpayers to 20 years of debt to a company with a long and well-documented history of problems. The long-standing personal relationship between Charles Ryan and Terry Stewart, who has consulted for both MTC and Corizon, is a clear conflict of interest that must be investigated for the public to have any confidence in the state's procurement process.

Quaker values in action

The continued use of solitary confinement in ADC's maximum-security units and the planned expansion of 500 new maximum beds is sure to be counted among Arizona's worst legacies. The suicide rates and incidents of violence are dramatically higher in these facilities. Prisoners with mental illnesses are concentrated in supermax facilities, and the conditions of isolation and confinement have been demonstrated to be harmful to people's mental and physical health. AFSC Arizona has led the charge against the torturous conditions¹ and the long-term impacts of these conditions.²

For these and many other reasons, **the American Friends Service Committee calls on you to immediately launch an independent, objective investigation into the issues raised and determine whether or not Charles Ryan is fit to remain as Director of the Department of Corrections.**

While there are serious questions regarding Director Ryan's individual actions, it is important to acknowledge that these issues are also evidence of a lack of public oversight over the Arizona Department of Corrections. While the Director is appointed by the Governor, in truth he or she is acting in service to *all* the people of this state. For this reason, **AFSC Arizona calls on you to establish an independent oversight body that can monitor and hold accountable the Department of Corrections** through collecting public testimony, accessing ADC records, and imposing concrete and meaningful sanctions for mismanagement or other serious problems. This body must include individuals outside of the framework of political influence in order to be truly independent.

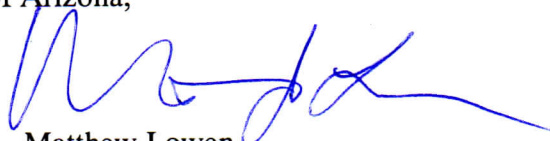
Failure to take action in this case contributes to an unsafe environment in ADC prisons and garners an overwhelming lack of confidence in our state's institutions. This is unacceptable and must be rectified immediately.

We sincerely hope that you will act in the public's best interest and seriously consider our recommendations.

Thank you for your work on behalf of the people of Arizona,



Caroline Isaacs
AFSC Program Director



Matthew Lowen
AFSC Program Coordinator

¹ *Buried Alive: Solitary Confinement in Arizona's Prisons and Jails* (2007), American Friends Service Committee, Arizona.

² *Lifetime Lockdown: How Long-term Isolation Impacts Prisoner Reentry* (2012), American Friends Service Committee, Arizona.