

**Eastern Regional Office
of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights**

Press Release
March 1, 2011
Contact: Ivy Davis, ERO
202-376-7756

**New Jersey State Advisory Committee to Convene Public Briefing
on the New Jersey Department of Corrections and its Compliance
with the Americans With Disabilities Act**

What: Briefing on NJ Department of Corrections' Compliance with ADA

When: Friday, March 4, 2011. 9am - 12pm Eastern Standard Time

Where: Committee Room 6, Legislative Annex, 125 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08625. Free parking is available.

Who: Three panels of state and national experts will inform the NJ Advisory Committee about accommodations provided to inmates with disabilities.

Speakers will include Carol Blessing from Cornell University who will present findings on a recent study implementing the "Inmate to Citizen" program in NY State. Other speakers:

Dr. Herbert Kaldany, Mental Health Services Unity, Department of Corrections
Hugh DeHaven, Office of Educational Services, Department of Corrections
Phil Lubitz, National Alliance on Mental Illness
Beverly Frantz, Temple University Institute on Disabilities Resources on Offenders
Stephen Smith, NJ Division of Developmental Disabilities.

Why: With the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), inmates with disabilities gained the right to obtain accommodations. While there have been a number of landmark cases affirming inmates' protections, none of these cases have dealt with non-apparent disabilities, such as mental health, learning and development disabilities, as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act. With a series of panels, the New Jersey State Advisory Committee will explore efforts of the New Jersey Department of Corrections to provide these accommodations. Topics

will include the obligation of the corrections systems to identify and provide accommodations for inmates, and whether, without accommodations, these disabilities may stand in the way of a transition from inmate to citizen. The NJ State Advisory Committee will rely on these briefings to prepare a series of findings and recommendations that it hopes will be helpful to the Department of Corrections.

Congress has directed the United States Commission on Civil rights to establish state advisory committees (SACs) in all 50 states and the District of Columbia to study issues and forward advisory reports to the Commission on matters within the agency's jurisdiction that reflect the views of the majority of SAC members producing the report.

The reports of the State Advisory Committees are wholly independent, and reviewed by Commission staff only for legal and procedural compliance with Commission policies and procedures. SAC reports are not subject to Commission approval, fact checking or policy changes. SAC reports may be found at www.usccr.gov.

=====
=

Eastern Regional Office
624 9th Street, NW
Suite 700
Washington DC 20425
Phone: (202) 376-7756
Fax: (202) 376-7672