

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

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NEW HAMPSHIRE ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ISSUE REPORT ON DISPARITIES IN TREATMENT OF INCARCERATED WOMEN

- What:** Press Conference
- Who:** New Hampshire Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights
- When:** Monday, October 17, 2011 10:30 a.m.
- Where:** Foyer of the Legislative Office Building, 33 North State Street
Concord, New Hampshire 03301

WASHINGTON, DC – The New Hampshire Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will release its report, “Unequal Treatment: Women Incarcerated in New Hampshire's State Prison System,” at a press conference in the Legislative Office Building. The report concludes that there are grave disparities between programs provided to incarcerated men and women that warrant action by the state’s policymakers and political leaders to end its unequal treatment of incarcerated women.

Background: The Advisory Committee conducted a two-year examination into allegations of sex-based disparities in the provision of basic programs and services within New Hampshire’s penal system. In the course of its examination, the Advisory Committee convened public briefings, toured several correctional facilities, and interviewed prisoners, correctional officials, community advocates, and other knowledgeable individuals to gather pertinent information. Based on this examination, the Advisory Committee now issues its findings and recommendations with respect to this serious allegation of civil rights violations.

As explained in the report, the Advisory Committee concludes that New Hampshire’s Department of Corrections faces a nearly insurmountable challenge in meeting many of the important needs of its female inmate population. The cramped, antiquated, and ill-equipped Goffstown facility prevents correctional officials from providing vocational training services, family visitation opportunities, access to outdoor programs, and treatment for serious mental health conditions at a level that even remotely approximates the comparable services and opportunities available to male offenders in New Hampshire’s correctional system.

Despite the social, economic, and human costs that attend these disparities, the state government has repeatedly refused to heed the advice of its own correctional officials and those with expertise in the field. The Advisory Committee believes this situation requires immediate and sustained corrective action. “It is past time for the state to take immediate steps to close the Goffstown prison and provide a facility that eliminates the inexcusable disparities that exist between the treatment of men and women in the state’s correctional system,” said Jordan Budd, chair of the Advisory Committee.

Copies of the report will be available at the press conference.

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