



New Jersey Senate

January 27, 2021

Dear Governor Murphy:

This week horrific allegations surfaced of brutal physical abuse of inmates by Corrections Department personnel at the Edna Mahan Women’s Correctional Facility that led to the suspension on administrative leave of 30 staffers. These allegations come less than one year after the facility was served with notice by the U.S. Department of Justice that conditions at the Edna Mahan facility were in violation of the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act and the Eighth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution due to a repeated pattern of sexual abuse of inmates by facility staff.

The Senate Law and Public Safety Committee held a hearing in May, 2020 based on the scathing report of the conditions at Edna Mahan issued by the U.S. Department of Justice. Corrections Commissioner Marcus Hicks was asked to speak at the hearing by Senate Law and Public Safety Chair Senator Linda Greenstein, but through an intermediary, he both refused to attend or provide any information to the Committee.

Accordingly, we are calling for the immediate resignation of Commissioner Marcus Hicks. He has demonstrated time and again that he is not up to the task of running the Department of Corrections, a department that holds the responsibility for the custody and care of approximately 20,000 state-sentenced offenders housed across 12 state correctional facilities, county jails and community halfway houses.

Additionally, we are asking that the Federal Government immediately take control of operations at the Edna Mahan facility and supervision over all programs for women inmates. We will not stand idly by while women who are voiceless and defenseless are repeatedly victimized by the very people who are charged with their protection and care. The violations of law and of basic human rights that have been allowed to continue under the leadership of Commissioner Hicks must end now.

Finally, every effort should be made to remove all 395 inmates from the Edna Mahan facility and place them in a safer facility and one more conducive to meeting their rehabilitative needs.

Sincerely,

Stephen M Sweeney
Senate President

Loretta Weinberg
Senate Majority Leader

M. Teresa Ruiz
Senate Pro Tempore

Sandra B. Cunningham
Deputy Majority Leader

Paul A. Sarlo
Assistant Majority Leader

Linda R. Greenstein
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Vin Gopal
Majority Conference Leader

Nicholas P. Scutari
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Joseph Cryan
Senator

Nia H. Gill
Senator

Joseph A. Lagana
Senator

Nellie Pou
Senator

Nicholas J. Sacco
Senator

Richard J. Cody
Senator

Troy Singleton
Senator

Shirley K. Turner
Senator

James Beach
Assistant Majority Leader

Patrick J. Dieghan, Jr.
Senator

Joseph F. Vitale
Senator

Fred H. Madden, Jr.
Senator

Brian P. Stack
Senator

Ronald L. Rice
Senator

Nilsa Cruz-Perez
Senator

Dawn Marie Addiego
Senator

Bob Smith
Senator

Cc: Rachael A. Honig, Acting U.S. Attorney