

#351

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Page 2: About Agencies Scheduled for Study

Q1 Please share any comments, suggestions or concerns you may have about these agencies, including any observations about the way the agency shares information online. Please note your responses will be posted online and may be included in a Committee report.

Corrections, Department of

I write to the committee as a volunteer in two of the institutions that attempts to provide religious studies and prerelease and reentry assistance to those that are 90 days out. I would have liked to testify to the committee against the Department, unfortunately DOC has the power and authority to pull my volunteer status, if they so choose. My students would then not benefit from the prerelease and reentry assistance I provide to them. I have heard and seen the numbers presented to the LOC regarding how many volunteers are at each institution. I have heard Ms. Staley state that these numbers are accurate. I highly dispute the numbers for one of the institutions that I volunteer at. There are not 216 volunteers currently active at that institution. They may have 216 applications in their system, but many are either no longer serving or were one-time guest to assist in a special function. As a volunteer I have been locked in a wing with no guard present to release me after my class ended. To leave a guard had to be called from across the yard to unlock the door. I am not in fear for myself, my students have my back, but the fact that had an issue arose, help was not in the immediate area. I have been allowed to enter the institution, along with my bag, without being scanned, searched nor frisked prior to walking thru the security gates. All these things are not reported to the warden or A/W for fear of losing my volunteer position and the ability of other volunteers to provide classes. Volunteers have enough frustration maintaining our existence in most institutions where we are not fully embraced. Sorry to have vented all this, I am just frustrated at the Departments dysfunction, lack of leadership, lack of chain of command and inept ability to treat people with human dignity. The lack of proper identification upon release has left many individuals in a precarious situation back into the community. On a recent follow-up at two bus depots,

several advocates encountered 2 Ridgeland released individuals, 3 Kirkland and 3 Kershaw individuals with nothing more than their Inmate ID with a sticker on the backside with their release date (photos were taken with their permission). One gentlemen reached out to me, thru my nonprofit, about a week after his release to ask for my assistance. He went to the DMV to obtain his Drivers License, unfortunately he was not able to obtain his license because he did not have a Birth Certificate as proof of identification or a utility bill, since he returned to live with his parents. He then proceeds to the DHEC office in Columbia only to be told that his Inmate ID was not sufficient identification to obtain his birth certificate. He then contacted me to inquire if I knew how he could obtain sufficient identification to complete these tasks. My students have informed me that there is no hot water in each cell, so when they are on lock down they do not have access to hot water to perform personal hygiene cleansing nor appropriately wash items to control the growth of bacteria or the spread germs. I have also seen the homemade filters that individuals that have placed over the water spicket. After just two to three days of filtering the cloth is dark brown and disgusting (I have a sample and photo). The guards will bring down large containers of ice, once melted the inmates can have access to clean water.

Page 3: There are three questions seeking general information.

Q2 What is your age?

45-54 years
old

Q3 Which best describes your current role?

Product or service provider or other partner of an
agency being studied by the House Legislative
Oversight Committee

Q4 In which county do you live?

Jasper
