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April 26, 2017

Director Freddie Pough
South Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice
PO Box 21069
Columbia, South Carolina 29221-1069

Dear Mr. Pough:

The purpose of this letter is to bring to your attention concerns recently received by the House Legislative Oversight Committee about the safety and welfare of juveniles and employees at the Coastal Regional Evaluation Center. While unsubstantiated, nevertheless, these are serious allegations.

With regards to the safety of juveniles, it is alleged fights, in which multiple juveniles attack one juvenile, are a weekly occurrence at the facility. It is alleged that juveniles know which rooms do not have cameras, and the few pods with locks can be easily broken into by juveniles. It is further alleged there was an incident at the facility within the last month that resulted in a juvenile suffering a broken jaw.

With regards to safety of employees, it is alleged employees are hesitant to come forward due to concerns about their jobs. It is alleged security officers often downplay the number of juveniles involved in fights. It is further alleged the reason for the downplay of incidents is one security shift is pitted against another security shift to see which shift has the fewest number of incidents, which incentives security officers to classify situations as horseplay, instead of assaults or fights, so that the statistics for one shift appear better than for another shift.

Thank you for your consideration and review of these allegations.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,
Signature Redacted
Wm. Weston J. Newton

Wm. Weston J. Newton

cc: House Legislative Oversight Committee