



State Reps. Kevin Hensley, Ruth Briggs King & Danny Short were among the bipartisan group joining the governor to discuss actions aimed at helping improve the welfare of correctional officers and upgrade prison security.

NEWS:

Steps to Improve Prison Conditions Announced

JUNE 9, 2017 – State legislators joined Governor John Carney in his Legislative Hall office Tuesday as he unveiled plans to take long overdue actions to improve conditions inside Delaware's prison system.

The response came on the heels of last week's initial independent review of the Department of Correction (DOC) and the circumstances connected to a prison riot at the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center near Smyrna in early February that resulted in hostages being taken and the murder of a correctional officer.

Among other things, the report found that many of the recommendations that had been made following a different hostage incident at the same prison in 2004 had not been implemented.

The proposals announced by the governor, and supported by a bipartisan coalition of state legislators, include:

- Appoint a temporary Special Assistant at DOC to spearhead reform of management practices and training and implement the independent review's recommendations.
- Allocate \$2 million to purchase new cameras at James T. Vaughn Correctional Center.
- Continue Collective Bargaining with the Correctional Officers Association of Delaware (COAD), which began in April, with the goal of increasing base pay for Delaware's correctional officers and decreasing the use of mandatory overtime.
- Direct the to-be-created Department of Human Resources to prepare and implement a staffing plan which eliminates the current shortage of Correctional Officers. The agency will report on progress every three months until the shortage is eliminated.
- Recruit a new Bureau Chief of Community Correction with expertise in managing re-entry programs, and reducing recidivism. The new chief will be expected to deliver by November recommendations for a statewide framework to improve re-entry programs and reduce recidivism.