EUGENE COLUMBUS
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JAMES KELLY
Secretary

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Treasurer

Board of Prison Commissioners,

Anytime there is violence in a prison setting, it is a tragedy. In most cases, the negative effects run deeper than what appears on the surface; just like the recent events at High Desert State Prison.

It's easy for some to ask the question, "who did this," instead of, "why did this happen" and assign blame too easily to the wrong person(s). The NCA has seen too many times where the officers involved in what could be described as questionable conduct unfairly receive all of the disciplinary action, without investigators looking for the true cause.

The NCA takes a broader view of incidents like this so we may determine how better to prepare ourselves when it happens again.

In this vane, the NCA has on several occasions attempted to open a thorough and honest dialogue with this Administration so that all of our concerns about fairness might be addressed. We have not succeeded as of yet.

We have written extensively about our concerns in matters such as:

Lack of proper training,

Minimum Institutional staffing levels,

Harsh and prosecutorial investigation techniques by the Inspector General's Office,

And, Officer Retention

All we are asking for is a seat at the table so that we may voice the concerns of many of our fellow officers before a new policy is finalized, and to discuss ways we can make this a more cohesive Department. When rules and regulations are enacted with only the voices of those who do not have to abide by them are heard, unrealistic expectations arise. Combine this with the fear of prosecution for failing to abide by these expectations, and mistakes are made.

The NCA represents many officers in the Department, some of whom are members and some who are not, who work day in and day out in the units, on the yard and in the towers. These are

the officers who will have to make a life or death decision at some point in their career. We need to have a constant dialogue with Administrators, Managers and Supervisors who will listen and learn about what our concerns are so that these officers can make this decision without hesitation or fear. Right now there is an, "us vs. them" mentality that has grown exponentially worse over the past several years. I have written about this and have spoken before this Board on several occasions, and yet, here we are again.

The NCA would like to have regular meetings with the board members and/or the Administration so we can give you an accurate perspective of what we face from the officers point of view.

If not, we'll just wait for the next tragedy to happen, and we'll come back and rehash these same concerns over and over again. Please know that among the members of the NCA are several seasoned officers with many years of experience in many aspects of Corrections who are concerned for the Department and the safety of all who are under our charge.

James Kelly, Secretary, Nevada Corrections Association