

From: Elizabeth Quintero <equintero1108@gmail.com>
To: <BOPC@doc.nv.gov>
Date: 10/24/2021 2:11 PM
Subject: Public comment

Hi, my name is Elizabeth Quintero and I'm an activist with Return Strong. In watching/attending BoPC meetings and reading over previous agendas and meeting minutes, it's clear there's no real resolutions that come from this board. Information is requested by the NDOC Director with no follow up when he doesn't deliver, therefore there's no action to the issues. Myself and other members as well as general public bring comments/concerns to these meetings and the board members show little to no interest and no answers or resolutions given. With the recent release of The Silenced Voices of the Incarcerated, a report that gives specific data on the conditions within NDOC specifically during this pandemic, it's clear that the Governor's office urgently needs to initiate an independent investigation into the handling of the Nevada prisons. We were told to work with Legislators to see change. AB 241 is on the agenda AGAIN, along with AR 258, both of which have issues with implementation post legislation. If legislation is passed but yet not followed, who then holds accountability? Clearly not the Director of NDOC or the Governor or this board. So who holds government accountable? We were told NDOC would recognize Inmate Family Council and meet quarterly to ask questions and address issues. Not only have these meeting time frames come and gone with no response from NDOC but there has been zero change in conditions or transparency. The way NDOC is run is severely lacking compared to so many other states, we can do better. This board can and should be the start of that. Thank you for your time.

- > Elizabeth Quintero
- > Return Strong Activist
- > Member of the Nevada Inmate Family Council

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State of Nevada Board of Prison Commissioners
Old Assembly Chambers
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24 October 2022

Calling for an independent investigation into the Nevada Department of Corrections' handling of the COVID-19 pandemic

Dear Governor Sisolak, Attorney General Ford and Secretary Cegavske,

My name is Heidi McCafferty and I am an activist with Return Strong: Families United for Justice for the Incarcerated, Nevada. As a postgraduate student based in the School of Law at Birkbeck, University of London, my research skills and experience support my voluntary role within the collective. I have been involved with Return Strong since May 2021.

As part of my dissertation, I am currently conducting a qualitative analysis of over 1000 letters (using what is known as the Correspondence Method) gathered from Return Strong members since December 2020. In order to provide qualitative data requested by the Crime and Justice Institute, I expedited my analysis so I could provide a set of preliminary findings into the impact the pandemic has had on the physical and mental wellbeing of men and women incarcerated by NDOC. I was horrified to read the reports of those who have been detained throughout this pandemic. I truly believe many of the methods used by NDOC verge on inhumane.

The subsequent research study report (launched last week) is a harrowing read, populated by quotes from our members who have explained what they have endured. Governor Sisolak, Attorney General Ford and Secretary Cegavske, **Nevada has the highest prison death rate (per 10,000 inmates) in the United States** ([Marshall Project, 2021](#)) and these preliminary findings go some way to understand the reasons behind these figures.

This research shows that the top 10 most pressing issues for those incarcerated by NDOC are:

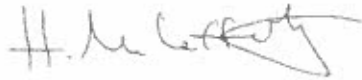
1. The impact of extensive periods of lockdown (often justified as being 'quarantine' extending up to 17 months)
2. Masks and Personal Protective Equipment not being worn by the majority of staff (despite NDOC's mandates for its employees)
3. Reports of staff behaviour which increases the risk of harm to our members, chronic staff shortages, ignored grievances and poor communication

4. Restrictions on phones to speak with loved ones, showers and kiosks (required to receive emails from family and to order food), education, programs and access to religious areas
5. Paused/reduced visits with loved ones
6. Frequent bed moves and the ongoing mixing of inmates, despite Director Daniels' public assurance this was not occurring
7. A chronic and sustained lack of medical help
8. Many of our members' mental health has declined with references to some inmates taking their own lives
9. Limited cleaning, a lack of access to the items needed for inmates to keep themselves safe (hand sanitizer, masks) and ventilation issues
10. A significant reduction in food has meant many of our members are hungry.
Restricted access to the store means those with the means to buy extra can't

While I appreciate that the unprecedented nature of the pandemic and the speed at which it spread caused immense challenges, I remain alarmed at NDOC's ostensible resistance to learn from its mistakes, to embrace transparency and admit significant errors were made that must be avoided again in future.

Therefore, I urge you to commission an urgent independent investigation so we can understand what has gone wrong and how we can ensure NDOC are better equipped to handle the pandemic as it develops.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Heidi McCafferty", with a stylized flourish at the end.

Heidi McCafferty

bopc - Nevada Prison Board of Commissioners Meeting Public Records Comments

From: Beth Rohde <beth.rohde83@gmail.com>
To: <BOPC@doc.nv.gov>
Date: 10/24/2021 4:15 PM
Subject: Nevada Prison Board of Commissioners Meeting Public Records Comments

To whom it may concern at the Nevada Prison Board of Commissioners:

I am writing to you today to urge you to review the report titled "The Silenced Voices of the Incarcerated" that was recently released. In this report, it outlines the manner in which Nevada Department Of Corrections (NDOC) ineffectively handled the pandemic. It is appalling to hear of the inhumane living conditions, lack of medical/dental care, quality of food, malnutrition, frequent bed moves, and extended lockdowns, causing mental, physical, emotional, and spiritual anguish on the incarcerated. People's lives, and long-term mental state are at stake, and it is evident that NDOC is not taking this seriously.

To add insult to the living conditions the incarcerated are being exposed to, AB241 is incorrectly being implemented. The incarcerated are not receiving back the days that were taken from them during these extended lockdowns, and instead are receiving meritorious credits. This is not an equal replacement of what was taken from these individuals.

"The Silenced Voices of the Incarcerated" requests an independent investigation of NDOC's handling of the pandemic. I am seconding this request and urge Governor Sisolak's office to initiate an independent investigation into NDOC, as a whole, immediately.

Additionally, I feel that it would be in the best interest of NDOC to hold regular communications with the Nevada Inmate Family Council and its stakeholders. Nevada Inmate Family Council is an effective way to communicate with the loved ones of the incarcerated to resolve any questions and concerns in a timely manner, which in turn, can assist with rehabilitation and minimize recidivism.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Beth Rohde, Return Strong Activist

bopc - BOPC Public Comment 10/25/21

From: Nicole Williams <mrsnmwilliams775@gmail.com>
To: <BOPC@doc.nv.gov>
Date: 10/24/2021 4:39 PM
Subject: BOPC Public Comment 10/25/21
Cc: Nicole Williams <mrsnmwilliams775@gmail.com>

Hello,

I am writing this email requesting that Governor Sisolak start an independent investigation into the handling of the pandemic in all of the Nevada prisons. The state of Nevada **MUST** do better. The NDOC needs guidance, oversight and to be held accountable for their lack of transparency during their first Covid pandemic. What they say happened and what actually occurred within the prisons are completely opposite. Almost a year ago, my husband was one of the 525 positive covid cases at Warm Springs Correctional Center. Just last week a whole unit at WSCC was put on covid lockdown and many people have not heard from their loved ones in about a week. I remember being so scared for my husband when he told me he felt terrible and lost his taste and smell. Then came all the horrific things he witnessed and endured along with the lack of medical care, cleaning supplies and PPE within the facility. There has been a spike in numbers and it appears what happened last year is going to repeat itself this year. I strongly urge you to review the report Return Strong FUJI released last week. I hope it opens your eyes and helps in your decision to start an independent investigation ASAP.

Thank you,
Nicole Williams