



House of Representatives

State of South Carolina

Anne Thayer

District No. 9 - Anderson County
225 Ansonborough Plantation
Belton, SC 29627

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Columbia, SC 29211

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Tel. (803) 212-6889

Mr. Bryan Stirling, Director
SC Department of Corrections
P. O. Box 21787
Columbia, SC 29221-1787

Dear Mr. Stirling:

Congratulations on your recent appointment as director of the South Carolina Department of Corrections. Your leadership is crucial in establishing and maintaining the integrity of our state prison system.

As a member of the SC House of Representatives, I have received some troubling constituent complaints. Over the last several years, I have received calls from numerous family members regarding individuals incarcerated within our state prison system. When I received the first call, I assumed it was an over-reactive grandparent with a skewed view of our prison system because their grandchild ended up on the wrong side of the law. However, due to the recent increase in complaints, I now have concerns about some of our facilities; especially the Lee Correctional Institution. I understand that contraband being brought into the prisons seems to be an ongoing issue. Tobacco, drugs, cell phones and computers being used extensively within the system appear to be commonplace. It is difficult to imagine how this contraband is entering our prisons when visitors are searched at their time of visitation.

I have also received numerous complaints about the prisoners making weapons out of any material available to them. Two separate families have reported their inmates at the Lee facility say they can hear weapons being hammered out and sharpened throughout the night. According to the inmates, the guards never come in and address the situation. The weapons and the contraband are then hidden in the cells of new inmates. Thus, new inmates are the ones caught with illegal items when cell checks occur.

The final issue is the unavailability of classes offered to further the inmates' education. Of those incarcerated, I would assume the classes are offered closer to the release date of the inmates. If you could advise me as to how the education program works, I will certainly make sure the information gets to my constituents.

Please understand this is not a letter of criticism, but of concern. I am more than happy to assist you in any way I can. I greatly appreciate your attention in this matter and look forward to your response.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Anne Thayer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Anne" and last name "Thayer" clearly distinguishable.

Anne J. Thayer
SC House of Representatives
District # 9

AJT/lg

cc: ✓ Governor Nikki Haley
Dexter Lee