



July 17, 2019

Secretary Mark Inch  
Florida Department of Corrections  
501 South Calhoun Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399-2500

Dear Secretary Inch:

We are writing in response to the leaked video of what appears to be the beating of a prisoner incarcerated at the Lake Correctional Institution, committed by employees of the Florida Department of Corrections (FDC). A new report yesterday in the Florida Times-Union suggests there is evidence corroborating the video in the form of a private group chat involving FDC employees who were involved in or witnessed the alleged beating.

As the leaders of organizations that work directly with families of individuals incarcerated in Florida's prisons, we wanted to share our horror at what we saw on the video and our disgust at the comments allegedly made by the employees involved. Every family we talk to lives in fear that their loved one will be physically or mentally harmed while incarcerated. As you know, this fear is not groundless. In February, wardens from various prisons around the state testified before the legislature that a lack of adequate funding was responsible for increasing violence in the prisons, endangering the safety of prisoners and corrections staff alike. We recognize that these shortages must be addressed by the legislature. However, incidents like the one caught on video at Lake Correctional cannot be blamed on lack of funding.

We appreciate your statement that the FDC has "zero tolerance for officer abuse or misconduct for any reason." Your commitment to holding employees accountable when they violate the rules or break the law will deter similar incidents in the future and help promote a healthy relationship between corrections officers and the people in their custody. We know that the Inspector General is investigating this matter. All FDC employees deserve due process, and we look forward to the findings and conclusions of the investigation.

We are writing to let you know that thousands of families across Florida are watching this situation with skepticism. They fear an internal investigation will delay matters until public attention has moved on, and that misconduct will be ignored. We are confident you will not let that happen. If you find that FDC employees violated the law, we urge you to terminate their employment immediately. Such swift and decisive action will send a clear message to other FDC employees, current prisoners, and to the families whose loved ones are in your care.



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**Families for Justice Reform**

Additionally, we would encourage you to use this unfortunate incident to pursue restorative justice to repair harms, promote healing, and help foster a culture of mutual respect among corrections staff and prisoners. We are happy to help facilitate this approach however we can.

Sincerely,

Kevin A. Ring  
President  
FAMM

Denise Rock  
Executive Director  
Florida Cares