



U.S. Department of Justice

Civil Rights Division

*Assistant Attorney General
950 Pennsylvania Ave, NW - RFK
Washington, DC 20530*

December 8, 2025

The Honorable Jared Polis
Governor of Colorado
State Capitol Bldg.
200 E. Colfax Ave., Rm. 136
Denver, CO 80203

Re: Investigation of Colorado Department of Corrections and Department of Youth Services

Dear Governor Polis:

I write to inform you that the United States Department of Justice is commencing an investigation of the 21 Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) facilities¹ and the 12 residential youth centers operated by Colorado's Department of Human Services' Department of Youth Services (DYS). The Department will conduct this investigation under the Civil Rights of Institutionalized Persons Act, 42 U.S.C. § 1997, the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, 34 U.S.C. § 12601, and the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (RLUIPA), 42 U.S.C. § 2000cc. This is official notice as required by statute.

During these investigations, the Department will determine whether Colorado engages in a pattern or practice of violating the constitutional rights of prisoners held at DOC facilities by failing to provide adequate medical care and safe and sanitary physical conditions of confinement, and whether Colorado violates the rights of detainees by failing to protect youth in DYS facilities from use of excessive force and failing to provide adequate nutrition to detainees. The Department will also consider whether Colorado violates prisoners' and detainees' right to free exercise of religion by housing biological males in units designated for females.

We have not reached any conclusions about the subject matter of the investigation. During the investigation, we will consider all relevant information, including the efforts Colorado has taken to ensure compliance with the Constitution. We encourage the State to cooperate with our investigation and assure you that we will seek to minimize any potential disruption our investigation may have on DOC and DYS operations.

If we ultimately determine that there are no constitutional violations present at these facilities, we will notify you that we are closing the investigation. If we determine that there are systemic violations, we will inform you of our findings and attempt to work with the State to remedy those violations. In our many years of civil rights enforcement, the good faith efforts of

¹ This includes 19 state run facilities and two private facilities.

jurisdictions to work with us have routinely enabled us to resolve our claims without resorting to contested litigation.

Attorneys from the Civil Rights Division will be handling this investigation. They will contact your office to discuss the next steps. Jonas Geissler, Deputy Assistant Attorney General, Civil Rights Division, may be reached at (202) 532-5527.

Sincerely,

Harmeet K. Dhillon
Assistant Attorney General

cc: Philip J. Weiser
Attorney General
Colorado

Andre Stancil
Executive Director
Colorado Department of Corrections

Alex Stojsavljevic
Director
Division of Youth Services

Dave Bergman
Warden
Arkansas Valley Correctional Facility

Bryan Coleman
Warden
Buena Vista Correctional Complex, Delta Correctional Center, and Rifle Correctional Center

Richard Persons
Warden
Arrowhead Correctional Center and Four Mile Correctional Center

Ryan Flores
Warden
Centennial Correctional Facility

Stephanie Sandoval
Warden
Colorado State Penitentiary

Jennifer Hansen
Warden
Colorado Territorial Correctional Facility

Shane Stucker
Warden
Fremont Correctional Facility

Ryan Long
Warden
Denver Reception and Diagnostic Center and Denver Women's Correctional Facility

Gilbert Caley
Warden
Limon Correctional Facility

Steven Brown
Warden
Bent County Correctional Facility

Virgil Ensey
Warden
Crowley County Correctional Facility

Tom Werlich
Warden
La Vista Correctional Facility and Youthful Offender System

Patrick Fhuere
Warden
San Carlos Correctional Facility and Trinidad Correctional Facility

Jeff Long
Warden
Sterling Correctional Facility

Samantha Wilson
Director
Rocky Mountain Youth Services Center

Elizabeth Wilson
Director
Betty K. Marler Youth Services Center

Ralph Krutsche
Director
Phoenix Youth Services Center

Joe Kurtz
Director
Spring Creek Youth Service Center

Eugene Moore
Director
Zebulon Pike Youth Service Center and Marvin W. Foote Youth Service Center

Valerie Krier
Director
Platte Valley Youth Service Center

Clinton Corley
Director
Pueblo Youth Service Center

Jeff Blackmon
Director
Prairie Vista Youth Service Center

Vera Dominguez
Director
Gilliam Youth Service Center

Matt Medina
Director
Grand Mesa Youth Service Center

Justin Tomsick
Director
Lookout Mountain Youth Services Center