



This time, however, unlike the rape accusation brought against senior officials in the prison hiring binge of unqualified individuals at the Schools Development Authority, the administration confronts the unified cry of outrage over the disclosure that inmates at the facility were routinely subjected to unspeakable acts of violence by correctional officers.

Some 30 officers at the facility have been placed on administrative leave as a result of the accusations, but the controversy has grown.

In an extraordinary move, 25 Democratic state senators called on the governor to demand the resignation of Department of Corrections Commissioner Marcus Hicks, the operation of the facility turned over to federal authorities in the immediate transfer of the 35 inmates housed there.

In a letter to the governor, the senators charge that Hicks was clearly not up to the task of administering the Department of Corrections in that "violations of the law and of basic human rights have been allowed to continue under Hicks' leadership and must end now."

The accusatory language in the unequivocal demand for Hicks' resignation is a rare public expression of outrage compounded by the implicit threat of political consequences.

It cannot be dismissed as an attempt to secure partisan vengeance; it is not rhetoric that can easily be written back.

Gubernatorial and bureaucratic expressions of outrage in horror over what appears to be systemic brutality at the facility are no longer sufficient, the Democratic senators say, in swift action by the administration — including dismissal of cabinet officer — is necessary.

The governor has uttered all the proper phrases, pledging immediate investigation, promising that anyone who engages in improper behavior will be held accountable and appointed former State Comptroller Matthew Boxer to lead a probe into the allegations.

For whatever reason — loyalty, fear of political backlash, aversion to admitting mistakes, concern over a rush to judgment, fear of public embarrassment, or struggling to escape blame — the administration has been silent.

The horror stories coming from the E n M h n f cility will not is ppe r with the p ss ge of time. In ee , there m y be ition l n more re ful t les w iting to be tol .

The m ge one lre y is signific nt n must be e lt with — re lity recognize by the letter from the sen tors to the governor.

The missive is, in effect, ple for the ministr tion to voi repe ting its errors in pprevious simil r situ tions n move ecisively tow r r m tic ch nge in ep rtment lle ership.

The governor m y be reluct nt to o so — somewh t un erst n ble re ction when it involves somn

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