



## The Georgia Green Party

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Ecological Wisdom • Grassroots Democracy • Social Justice • Peace & Non-Violence  
Decentralization • Community-Based Economics • Feminism • Respect for Diversity  
Personal & Global Responsibility • Future Focus on Sustainability

February 14th, 2011

Governor Nathan Deal  
State Capitol  
Atlanta Georgia 30334

Governor Nathan Deal:

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, 2011, we wrote you about our concerns related to the beating of Georgia inmate Terrence Dean (GDC ID: 0001194267) by Department of Corrections staff. In the days that followed, additional stories surfaced of DoC staff beating two other inmates in the state's care. As elaborated below, we fear that an ongoing pattern of such abuse continues in Georgia prisons.

While we appreciate that Commissioner Owens has invited the GBI to assist in the DoC's internal investigation of those beatings, our letter raised a number of questions for which, to this day we still await a response. We sincerely hope that this letter might convey the urgency with which we hope you will address the issues raised then and below. We reiterate our appeal that DoC officials choose negotiations with, rather than retribution for, striking inmates, and take steps to meet their very reasonable demands that the human rights of Georgia inmates be respected.

We have been made aware that yet another inmate, Shawn Whatley, (G.D.C 556484) was severely beaten by staff at Telfair State Prison on January 12, 2010, even after national and international media attention began to focus on the previously reported abuses. Mr. Whatley has since been transferred to Ware prison and this past week to Jackson Diagnostic Center. His family is being denied visitation raising concerns that he may have been subject to additional abuses since the January 12<sup>th</sup> incident described in the affidavit made available to us.

Our sources tell us that on January 12<sup>th</sup>, Mr. Shawn Whatley, was attacked by three CERT team members (immediately after interactions with Deputy Warden Barbara Fowler and CERT team members Sgt. Hart, and officers Smith, Williams and Kilpatrick) at Telfair State Prison in Helena Georgia. He was immediately transferred to the Ware State Prison in Waycross Georgia.

Mr. Whatley suffered serious injuries to his ribs and back and had blood in his urine. He was refused proper medical care at the Waycross facility and it seems apparent that his sudden transfer was a part of an attempt to cover up the crimes committed against him in Helena.

We write to ask:

- (1) that Mr. Whatley's medical condition and the circumstances which led to his injuries be made public;

- (2) that his family, attorney and an independent medical practitioner be given immediate access to a contact visitation to ascertain his condition;
- (3) that the Department employees named above be suspended pending the outcome of an investigation into what role, if any, they may have played in the criminal assault of an inmate in their care;
- (4) that you launch an investigation into whether the DoC's apparent efforts to conceal his beating and medical condition rises to the level of a criminal conspiracy;
- (5) to repeat our inquiry as to the names and welfare of the Georgia-37, the thirty-seven inmates identified by DoC investigators as 'instigators' of December's stop-work action, who have been subjected to administrative segregation and transported to the facilities at Jackson, Reidsville and Washington;
- (6) to urge continued cooperation with our Coalition's fact finding efforts to untangle what is happening in the prisons which led to the strike;
- (7) to underscore our previous plea that the DoC respond with negotiations not retribution to the non-violent sit down strike by Georgia inmates; and
- (8) to remind your administration that the state's responsibility for the 'custody, care and control' of those committed to state institutions by the judiciary includes a responsibility to protect the human rights of those inmates.

Most inmates under the care of the Department of Corrections will one day return to our communities. Whether they do so through a revolving door of recidivism depends partly on whether the authority and resources of our state are used to model respect for human rights.

We look forward to your response to our questions above.

Sincerely,

Adam Shapiro, CoChair  
Hugh Esco, Secretary  
Al Herman, Treasurer