



February 23, 2017

**By U.S. Mail**

Hon. Jeff Sessions  
Attorney General  
U.S. Department of Justice  
950 Pennsylvania Avenue, NW  
Washington, DC 20530-0001

**By Email: [charles.oberly@usdoj.gov](mailto:charles.oberly@usdoj.gov)**

Hon. Charles M. Oberly, III  
United States Attorney for the  
District of Delaware  
1007 N. Orange St., Suite 700  
P.O. Box 2046  
Wilmington, DE 19801

Dear General Sessions and Mr. Oberly:

We write on behalf of the Delaware Coalition for Prison Reform and Justice, comprised of community representatives in Delaware including the NAACP and the Interdenominational Ministers Action Council, and the American Civil Liberties Union of Delaware, to request that you initiate a federal investigation of events occurring in the four major prisons in Delaware, and the response of the Delaware state authorities to those action, since February 2, 2017.

On February 1, 2017 prison inmates took control of Building C in the James T. Vaughn Correctional Center. They held the building and hostages for approximately 19 hours. Sgt. Steven Floyd, a Department of Correction employee, was killed during the seizure. Since that tragedy occurred, our members have received many descriptions of abusive conduct directed at inmates.

They have reported inmates being beaten in Building C in the immediate aftermath of the seizure; inmates beaten by correctional officers in their cells and left bleeding and bruised without receiving medical care; inmates maced and tazed without reason; and that at least one inmate was knocked unconscious. Inmates were unable to get medical care for injuries (or routine medical treatment) for days; they were given reduced food for extended periods and were deprived of clothing; the prisons were kept on lockdown for days. Contact with families outside the prisons has been significantly reduced. We are told that that these conditions persist.

We understand the anger that the correctional officers feel in the aftermath of the building takeover and death. But that cannot justify mistreatment of inmates in state custody amounting to violations of the Eighth Amendment of the United States Constitution. While the media reports that the Delaware Department of Correction made changes in light of assaults against corrections officers in the wake of the takeover, assaults against inmates cannot be overlooked.

The need for prompt action is great, not only because this treatment must not be allowed to continue, but also because of other stresses in Delaware's prison system, resulting from