

April 29th, 2019

The Honorable Doug Ducey
1700 West Washington Street
9th Floor
Phoenix, Arizona 85007

Dear Governor Ducey:

We are writing to demand the immediate resignation of Charles Ryan as director of the Arizona Department of Corrections. Under Mr. Ryan's management, the Department of Corrections has become a dangerous place for state employees and contractors to work and equally unsafe for the inmates who are under the state's care in our prison system. The alarming news that Mr. Ryan knew of the broken locks in multiple units at the Lewis Prison Complex is just one in a long line of shocking mismanagement and unconscionable neglect of the \$1 billion state agency. Mr. Ryan has been a poor steward of Arizona taxpayer money, has lost the public's trust, and should not spend another day in your administration.

Furthermore, a sea change is needed at the Department of Corrections. Correctional employees report unsafe working conditions with low morale and even lower pay. Removing Mr. Ryan alone won't solve these systemic problems. Those who would continue his poor oversight, lack of effective management, and disdain for the public dollars entrusted to them must also be removed from their positions at Department of Corrections.

Over the last several years, Mr. Ryan has amassed a long list of reasons for his resignation. These include abysmally poor medical care for inmates. Egregious examples of inmates being given grossly inadequate health care have been outlined in the class action lawsuit against Department of Corrections. Even though that lawsuit has been settled, the Department of Corrections still has not lived up to its end of the deal, and the agency continues to require federal judicial oversight because it fails to provide even minimal health care to Arizona prison inmates.

In the last Auditor General report, which was published in September 2011, the auditors found many troubling security violations, including broken perimeter alarm systems that staff simply ignored and failure to keep an inventory of keys. https://www.azauditor.gov/sites/default/files/11-07Report_0.pdf In that same audit report, auditors found that in one private prison, the staff reported that the indicator lights on the control room panel were not functioning, which meant that staff could not determine if inmate doors were unsecured or ajar. The failure to secure doors – which is a fundamental function of a prison facility – is a problem that continues to plague our state-run facilities.

Over eight years ago, the Arizona Correctional Peace Officers Association submitted a letter of “no confidence” regarding Mr. Ryan. Their call for new leadership at the Department of Corrections went unheeded, and now it seems that the safety and security in our state-run and private prisons has reached unprecedented levels.

Mr. Ryan must be immediately removed from his position, and new leadership must be put in place before any other correctional officers or inmates are injured.

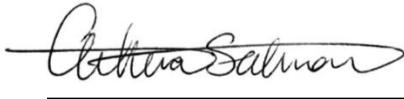
Sincerely,



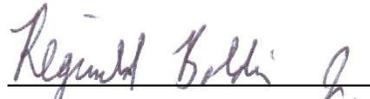
Rep. Charlene Fernandez
House Democratic Leader
District 4



Rep. Randall Friese
House Assistant Democratic Leader
District 9



Rep. Athena Salman
House Democratic Co-Whip
District 26



Rep. Reginald Bolding
House Democratic Co-Whip
District 27