

Federal Panel to Convene Briefing on Gender Disparities in New Hampshire Prisons

What: New Hampshire State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights Public Briefing

When: Friday, March 12, 2010, 11:00 a.m.

**Where: Legislative Office Building, Rooms 207-209
Concord, New Hampshire**

CONCORD, NH, -- The New Hampshire State Advisory Committee to the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights will convene a briefing to hear from government officials, advocates, and the community to gather information on gender disparities in treatment and services in the New Hampshire prison system.

The State of New Hampshire has long struggled to address the needs of female prisoners. In the late 1980s, in response to a federal court order, New Hampshire opened the Women's Prison in Goffstown as a temporary facility to house female offenders; prior to that, women were sent to out-of-state correctional facilities. Twenty years later, the temporary Goffstown facility is still in use and there are concerns that it may not meet the basic needs of New Hampshire's growing population of female offenders, including whether vocational training opportunities available to male offenders are similarly available to females. "The Constitution, as well as sound public policy, requires that men and women in New Hampshire's correctional system receive comparable treatment with respect to basic services and programs," states Jordan Budd, Chairman of the New Hampshire State Advisory Committee. "If the state is not meeting this obligation, it will have grave consequences for incarcerated women. Our Committee believes it is important to focus serious attention on this question."

Presenters include Commissioner William Wrenn of the New Hampshire Department of Corrections, Warden Joanne Fortier of the New Hampshire Prison for Women, Warden Richard Gerry of the New Hampshire Prison for Men, as well as other Correction Department personnel, government officials, and public advocates.

The briefing is open to the public. For more information contact Barbara de La Viez, Eastern Regional Office, 202-376-7533, or Jordan Budd, Chairman, New Hampshire Advisory Committee, 603-228-1541.