

L. Gale Buckner, Commissioner

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Office of Communications



DEPARTMENT OF JUVENILE JUSTICE

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STATEMENT FROM DJJ COMMISSIONER L. GALE BUCKNER
– Termination of three employees and demotion/transfer of two others at the Augusta Youth Development Campus –

Today, DJJ terminated three employees at the Augusta Youth Development Campus for violations of policies and procedures that compromised the safety and security of the youth committed to DJJ. During the course of an ongoing criminal investigation into an alleged homicide at the facility, these employees – two Juvenile Correction Officers and a counselor – admitted to violating DJJ policy and procedures and/or their violation of these policies became apparent. These violations compromised the safety and security of the institution and, in effect, compromised the staff's ability to objectively and safely supervise youth. DJJ will not tolerate violations of policy and procedures by staff or youth that jeopardize safety.

Two other employees, both of which are assistant directors of the facility, have been relieved of their duties and offered a demotion and transfer to another facility.

We at DJJ take our mission and responsibility seriously to both protect the public and to operate facilities and programs that are constitutionally safe for both youth and staff while ensuring that youth take responsibility for their actions and chart a course toward a more productive life.

Should there be any evidence of staff or youth misconduct, gross negligence, or criminal activity, DJJ will take all appropriate measures, including referrals for criminal prosecution.

The investigation is ongoing and other personnel actions may occur.

DJJ's mission is to protect and serve the citizens of Georgia by holding young offenders accountable for their actions through the delivery of services and sanctions in appropriate settings and by supporting youth in their communities to become productive and law-abiding citizens. Each day, at 26 facilities and 92 court services offices throughout the state, more than 4,000 DJJ employees work diligently to effect justice as well as redirect and shape the young lives in the agency's care so they can become contributing members of society. At the same time, DJJ seeks to protect the victims of crimes so that they can rebuild their lives.

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