

California Coalition for Women Prisoners

OAKLAND OFFICE

4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608

Phone: 415-255-7036 ext. 4
Fax: 415-552-3150



LOS ANGELES MAIL

P.O. Box 291585
Los Angeles, CA 90029

www.womenprisoners.org
info@womenprisoners.org

Problems with PREA implementation in CA state women's prisons

The California Coalition for Women Prisoners has received numerous, repeated reports of problems with the implementation of PREA in the state women's prisons. Many of our formerly incarcerated members have direct experience with these problems in the past and we hear about the continuation of these issues in the present. Below is a short list of major issues that we were able to put together in the short amount of time since we heard about this hearing. We hope that we will have more opportunities to report on these problems and work on solutions in the future. Collecting information about problems with PREA implementation is especially relevant given the DOJ investigation, announced at the beginning of September, into widespread sexual misconduct on the part of correctional employees at the two California women's prisons, Central California Women's Facility (CCWF) and California Institution for Women (CIW).

- There are no safe reporting standards for incarcerated people that do not cause harm or add more trauma. Currently, when someone reports a PREA incident either via staff, outside person, or use of posted PREA reporting phone number, the person is singled out by ISU (Investigative Services Unit), handcuffed, and walked across the institution for their "protection." The profiling of the person in this way exposes them to retaliation from staff and peers.
- People are often put into administrative segregation/solitary confinement after they report a PREA incident, ostensibly for their own safety. However, this isolation after a PREA report totally discourages people from reporting PREA incidents.
- There is little to no protection from staff retaliation if a PREA allegation is discovered by staff, and unfortunately retaliation is not uncommon.
- PREA is weaponized within the population amongst peers. For example, if someone does not want a person as a roommate, they can file a PREA allegation to have them removed. This PREA allegation is not thoroughly investigated but is very damaging to

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that person's reputation, programming status, and future chances for Board of Parole Hearings (BPH) suitability.

- Correctional staff encourages the population to weaponize PREA allegations for various reasons. PREA allegations can be used by staff to intervene in interpersonal conflicts or allegations of bullying within a room. When someone in the population is asking for help from housing staff to have someone moved out of their room/cell, instead of addressing the issue at hand staff have been known to say "just call PREA on them."
- PREA has been used to target the transgender population following the implementation of Senate Bill 132. Many trans women have had unfounded PREA allegations filed against them, resulting in serious consequences without an investigation. CDCR staff have used PREA to incite transphobic chaos and conflict around this new policy which allows some trans women to transfer to women's prisons.
- There have been ongoing reports that the listed phone numbers on PREA posters (including new ones) are not answered and there isn't even a recorded message.
- Regarding the DOJ investigation, people are very concerned about possible retaliation for speaking honestly with DOJ investigators. They also recommend that the DOJ go through each prison and talk with people unit by unit rather than calling on specific pre-picked individuals.