

Kendra Drysdale
650 Pedro Avenue
Ben Lomond, CA 95005
831-252-6716
Kendradrysdale@icloud.com

Senator Cory A. Booker
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington DC 20510

Dear Senator Cory A. Booker and Judiciary Oversight Committee,

My name is Kendra Drysdale, and I was released from FCI Dublin on April 19th, 2024, during the week of its closure.

While incarcerated at Dublin in September 2023, I reported an officer for assaulting me, a PREA violation. I believed that by reporting it outside of the BOP and directly to the OIG via the designated email, I would be kept safe. My worst fear was that the officer (my counselor) and unit team responsible for overseeing me would discover my report and retaliate against me. Unfortunately, that fear became reality.

I have since met with the U.S. Attorneys,, the FBI, and the OIG both during my incarceration and since my release. They informed me that during the FBI raid on administrative staff, a memo was confiscated from Morgan Agostoni, the Camp Administrator and Executive Assistant to the Warden. It stated, and I quote loosely since I don't have the document, "Inmate Kendra Drysdale has reported a PREA to one of our officers. Please handle it."

It is currently being investigated how Agostoni became aware of my email, as I did NOT report it to anyone within the facility.

They indeed "handled" it. I was served with an incident report for allegedly filing a false PREA report on an officer, and they claimed it was determined I was lying after reviewing camera footage. I was astonished and devastated, as I knew there were two cameras in the hallway where the incident occurred, and there was no way they could make such a determination based on that footage.

I was subsequently seen by the Disciplinary Hearing Officers in my Counselors office. They proceeded to take away my ability to use the phone, email, video visits, and in person visits.

Officer Groover then asked her partner Smith, "What else can we take from her?" Smith responded, "Her job and her commissary."

I was immediately fired from my job at the commissary warehouse and reassigned to work under the person who had assaulted me. My commissary privileges were revoked for seven months until the BOP finally overturned their decision.

I testified in Judge Gonzalez Rogers's courtroom about the retaliation I was facing for reporting the assault. She ordered that my privileges be restored and approved an immediate court order for my family to visit me.

In addition to losing all outside contact with my family, which was traumatic, I also lost my release date. My points were raised, and my FSA credits were taken away, despite the hard work I had put in during my incarceration to lower my points and earn my credits. This meant I could not go home. I was scheduled for a halfway house release in October 2023, but they did not release me until April 2024.

I was made an example of what happens when an inmate reports an officer, which discouraged other incarcerated women from sharing their stories. Many still remain too afraid to come forward.

I met with an internal affairs officer from DC and an FBI officer who reviewed the camera footage and determined I should never have received the incident report. One of the camera angles had not been provided or used in the investigation. After reviewing the footage, it was determined and suggested to the new Warden that my incident report be expunged. It took seven months of over-incarceration for that to happen, but my commissary rights were never reinstated. It is difficult to describe the hardships of having one's commissary rights revoked since that's how we purchase all daily necessities, including clothes and food.

The expungement stated, "After watching the same footage that was used to determine you were lying, we can no longer reach that same conclusion."

When it became clear the BOP was not going to admit their wrongdoing against me, and I was designated for transfer to another prison, the Special Master Wendy Still and Judge Gonzalez Rogers intervened. They ordered the BOP to correct my credit calculations and release me. The BOP finally acknowledged I had been over-incarcerated and I was released directly to my family's home. I lost my right to the Second Chance Act and halfway house time, which would have assisted with my transition and re-entry.

The trauma experienced during the closure of the prison was horrific. As an advocate with the Coalition for Women's Prisons, I can tell you the retaliation faced by the women transferred from FCI Dublin has been terrible and continues to this day. They fear further retaliation, loss of privileges, or being placed in SHU, preventing them from reporting. Many remain stuck in detention centers, far from their families, violating policy, which states they should be within 500 miles of their homes.

The issue wasn't the facility itself but how it was managed. These women deserve to be near their families and receive proper medical care, mental health treatment, and rehabilitation. They need a system that allows them to grow, recover, and gain skills, not one that punishes them further.

I am extremely disappointed in how Collette Peters handled this entire situation. Her testimony during the House Judiciary Committee hearing that she is "focused mainly on her correctional officers" neglects the primary focus on the safety and rehabilitation of the inmates. Her comments on "no cases of retaliation" at FCI Dublin were false, and her approach to accountability has been insufficient.

In my nearly five years of incarceration, I received no job skills, rehabilitation, therapy, or medical care. Instead, I left with untreated medical issues that now require major surgery. This could have been prevented.

Here are some of my suggestions for addressing these systemic issues:

For Victims, Survivors of Dublin, and All Bureau of Prisons Inmates:

- Immediate release of sexual assault victims at Dublin so they can access medical, mental health, and trauma support.
- Clemency and/or home detention for all non-violent Dublin survivors, especially those in minimum security.
- Transfer those who cannot be released to facilities closer to their homes.
- Offer rehabilitation programs upon arrival.
- Regular oversight to ensure accurate and available medical and mental health treatment.
- Provide peer support for recovery, mental health, and sexual assault survivors.
- Establish an anonymous, incentive-based whistleblower program.

For Officers and Staff:

- Hold Colette Peters and her executive staff accountable for failing to protect and violating our Constitutional Rights.
- Implement psychological evaluations before hiring and regularly thereafter.
- Conduct intense background checks and regular drug/alcohol testing.
- Provide mandatory therapy and peer support.
- Create accountability policies for failing to report or investigate misconduct.
- Establish an anonymous, incentive-based whistleblower program.
- Ensure officers undergo a thorough non-biased investigation and if they are "walked off" do not receive paid leave.

Society should expect that we come out of prison better than when we entered. We need a system that lifts us up and rehabilitates us. The current system is failing us.

As a formerly incarcerated individual and recovering addict, I want to thank you for all that you are doing to bring changes and reform to our federal prison system. These changes will have a lasting impact on inmates, their families, and society as a whole.

Thank you for your time, and please feel free to reach out if you have any questions or if I can be of assistance.

Sincerely,
Kendra Drysdale