

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://eji.org/news/another-man-murdered-in-alabamas-prisons/>

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05.11.21

Jody Potts became the [57th person](#) murdered in an Alabama prison since the Department of Justice [launched](#) a statewide investigation focusing on whether prisoners are adequately protected from physical harm and sexual abuse at the hands of other prisoners and practices in Alabama prisons.

Jody Potts was beaten to death at Limestone Correctional Facility in Harvest, Alabama, on Friday, May 7. He was sentenced to life imprisonment without parole for a crime he adamantly denied committing at the age of 15.

His sentence was vacated after [Miller v. Alabama](#), a Supreme Court decision striking down mandatory life-without-parole sentences for children. Mr. Potts was awaiting resentencing. He was in prison for over 40 years and, if resentenced to life with parole, he would have been immediately eligible for parole release.

The lethal violence in Alabamas prisons is well documented. After a two-year investigation, the Justice Department issued its [findings](#) informing Governor Kay Ivey that [p]risoner-on-prisoner homicide and sexual abuse is common . . . [c]ontraband is rampant. The totality of these conditions pose a substantial risk of serious harm both to prisoners and correctional officers.

The Justice Department informed the governor that the state routinely violates the constitutional rights of prisoners by failing to protect them from rampant violence and sexual abuse.

Mr. Potts' death is the third homicide reported in less than a week. Ian Rettig was stabbed to death on May 4 at Fountain Correctional Facility in Atmore, Alabama. This week EJI also received reports that a man who died on February 9 at Donaldson Prison was the victim of a homicide that was not previously reported by the Department of Corrections.

EJI received reports that a fourth man, Jerry Purnell, was the victim of suicide in a segregation cell at St. Clair Correctional Facility in Springville last Friday, May 7.

Tags:

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