

Equal Justice Initiative

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://eji.org/news/tutwiler-womens-prison-alabama-to-stop-segregating-victims-of-sexual-abuse/>

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11.26.12

Alabama Department of Corrections Commissioner Kim Thomas announced last week that inmates at Tutwiler Prison for Women in Wetumpka, Alabama, will no longer be placed in segregation when they make a complaint about sexual abuse.

[EJI filed a complaint in May with the U.S. Justice Department](#) calling for a swift and thorough federal investigation into widespread sexual abuse of women prisoners by male guards at Tutwiler. In interviews with more than 50 women incarcerated at Tutwiler, EJI had uncovered evidence of frequent and severe officer-on-inmate sexual violence. The Department of Justice has now launched a formal investigation into conditions at Tutwiler.

EJI's investigation revealed that women who reported sexual abuse at Tutwiler were routinely placed in segregation, where they were treated no differently from women held there for punitive reasons: they were deprived of telephone, mail, and visit privileges and had no access to recreation, programs, or work assignments.

These punitive responses to allegations of sexual abuse created an atmosphere of intimidation, EJI reported, and discouraged inmate complaints of sexual misconduct.

Last Thursday, Fox news reported that Commissioner Thomas now says that policy has changed. Thomas says inmates are no longer placed in segregation when they make a complaint and he made that change to reassure the inmate population.

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122 Commerce Street Montgomery, AL 36104 [\(334\) 269-1803](tel:(334)269-1803) [\[emailprotected\]](#)

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