

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Corrections Secretary Reports Topeka Correctional Facility Investigation Progress**

In response to a request from Governor Sam Brownback for a full review of practices and procedures at the Topeka Correctional Facility, Corrections Secretary Ray Roberts has initiated actions designed to reduce the potential for sexual abuse cases. "After touring the facility and discussing sexual misconduct issues with key staff members it is my assessment that TCF has made great strides in reducing opportunities for inappropriate activities," Roberts said.

One key area of concern highlighted in both a National Institute of Corrections review and an audit by the Legislative Division of Post Audit issued in January 2010 was the need for additional cameras and the retention of footage at the facility. TCF now has 357 cameras in place, an addition of 110 since the reviews. Currently footage is stored for 30 days but equipment with the capacity to retain footage for 120 days will be installed by July. Vehicles used to transport inmates have also been equipped with Audio/GPS/Video monitoring and recording systems.

Another area of improvement noted by Secretary Roberts involves additional training for staff members, including policy revisions designed to address investigator training standards and develop a training curriculum. An automated case log system has been developed and implemented at all KDOC facilities to monitor patterns of conduct, the status of cases, and investigation timelines. "It is my intent that all investigations are thorough and that they be handled expeditiously. TCF will continue to make professionalism and zero tolerance for sexual misconduct a top priority," Roberts added.

During the 2010 legislative session, K. S. A. 21-3520 was amended to increase the penalty for unlawful sexual relations between staff and offenders from a Severity Level 10 to a Severity Level 5 person felony, punishable by incarceration for 31 to 34 months. It now also requires any individual convicted under this statute to register as a sex offender.

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In addition, Secretary Roberts pointed to the installation of a Sexual Assault Hotline, gender responsive training, and physical plant modifications to ensure optimal viewing of activities, as ongoing improvements at TCF.

While progress has been made, Secretary Roberts has identified several issues that will continue to be addressed including the tracking of all investigations related to sexual misconduct and undue familiarity, and that the investigations continue to be a high priority. TCF supervisors will be reminded to diligently monitor staff and inmates for signs of potentially inappropriate behavior and to address the behavior immediately. Roberts has also ordered a quarterly progress report to monitor all issues.

Secretary Roberts says as the state's budget situation improves and as additional resources become available in the future he is hopeful that funding will be available to enhance the supervision of inmate activities at all KDOC facilities.

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