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                                                                    January 31, 2023

Sheriff Coppinger,

The ECCOA is compelled to express its concerns with the Department’s troubling handling of a felony assault perpetrated by former inmate Dominic Joyce against one of its members.

As you may or may not already know, Mr. Joyce committed a felony assault with bodily fluids on a Corrections Officer, Sergeant Alexander Todd, on December 13, 2022.  The victim, Sergeant Todd, was told Mr. Joyce was to be charged and arraigned for this offense.  However, the Department shockingly declined to arraign Mr. Joyce while he was in custody, and instead chose to file a summons on January 6, 2023, while still in our custody, requiring him to appear in court on February 16, 2023, a full 65 days after the offense and 24 days after his release from our custody on January 23, 2023.

To our members’ knowledge, it is unprecedented for an inmate, who had committed a serious crime like this while in custody, to be released before arraignment.  Mr. Joyce’s obvious contempt for the law, coupled with the well-known fact that he intended to move to Tennessee upon his release, basically guarantees that he will fail to appear in court on his court date.  In other words, he will never face justice for his crime.

The ECCOA and its membership are extremely disappointed with this series of events, which above all demonstrates the Department’s indifferent attitude towards its Officers.  Sergeant Todd was the victim of a disgusting and humiliating crime, not simply an assault, but an assault involving an inmate’s bodily waste.  While in the normal course of his duties, Sergeant Todd was essentially ambushed with a shower of the inmate’s urine at Mr. Joyce’s cell.  Naturally, Sergeant Todd repeatedly expressed his desire to see Mr. Joyce held accountable for what he had done, especially in light of the fact that this inmate had been constantly disruptive from the day he entered the facility.  And yet, despite the numerous assurances of Department officials, it is now apparent that the Department has put a higher priority on ridding itself of a problem inmate, rather than ensuring that justice would be done on its Officer’s behalf.

It is important to emphasize here that the ECCOA membership has followed this ordeal closely, and that the Officers of the Middleton facility have taken note of the Department’s unserious attitude toward holding Mr. Joyce accountable for his heinous assault on their fellow Officer.  The widespread impression among the Officers is that the Department cannot be counted upon to have their backs, and it is exactly for this reason that morale throughout the facility is so low.  Sergeant Todd was the victim of a disgustingly grotesque felony assault and now will not receive appropriate justice.

 Therefore, it is imperative that the Department recognize this unacceptable state of affairs, and work to ensure that progress is made to provide the Officers with the support that they need to effectively work in this challenging environment.  The ECCOA respectfully requests corrective action be taken on this matter.

Sincerely,

ECCOA Executive Board