

September 27, 2023

To: James Dzurenda, Director
Nevada Department of Corrections

Fr: Jeanine Lake, Labor Representative
AFSCME Local 4041

Re: Concerns with Deputy Director Shea

Hello Director. I am writing to you today on behalf of employees within NDOC who have reached out to me with numerous complaints/concerns regarding treatment and actions by Deputy Director Shea towards the employees. I have talked personally with most of the employees who have reached out to our office. Since Kevin Ranft remains on sick leave, our office here in Las Vegas is handling the northern Nevada area in his absence.

Based on the nature of some of the issues reported to me, I have encouraged several employees to reach out to the Nevada Equal Rights Commission and/or the EEOC. I am also aware that some of the employees had already filed charges with the EEOC prior to my discussions with them.

We have also discussed the possibility of individual or group grievances with employees in the north and south who are supervised by DD Shea. After speaking at length with many of the affected employees, it was agreed that we would attempt to notify you of the concerns before filing any grievances, with the hopes of resolving the problems.

The following is some of what has been reported to me:

- DD Shea has been removing duties and responsibilities from employees with little to no explanation, **after** the employees' brought concerns to her.
- DD Shea retaliates by removing duties and reassigning employees to other areas including different budgets or other positions if they question her about anything or stand up to the "bullying" behavior she exhibits towards employees.
- DD Shea has verbally told employees that persons she has hired as "contract employees" will be performing the job duties some of the employees held and that in some cases those "contract employees" will be mentors to current state employees.
- DD Shea has threatened to hire additional "contract employees" within the Department and employees are rightfully terrified that their jobs are either being phased out completely or that they will end up with demotions as a result.
- DD Shea has removed signature authority from some of the employees who had that responsibility as part of their job descriptions.
- Some employees were denied or have been severely limited with their ability to access the NDOC network; employees were intentionally not made aware of changes or

updated procedures necessary for their jobs and not invited to meetings concerning their work.

- DD Shea has bragged to employees that she has “connections” and even gave an example of what happened to a former employee who went above her to report concerns or problems. She has made clear to employees that they must go through her for everything and not to go above her.
- DD Shea has exhibited inappropriate behaviors and attitudes towards women, including women of color by making offhanded comments to them about her ethnicity/race. She has verbally told some employees “they’re making me out to be a racist”, when she was upset with a situation or particular employees.
- DD Shea has created a hostile work environment that has resulted in many employees being terrified to say or question anything the Deputy Director says, for fear of retribution.
- DD Shea has publicly scolded staff or given backhanded comments in front of other employees.
- DD Shea is consistently late to meetings or is a ‘no show’ which is a complete lack of respect to her staff.
- Employees have left the agency or demoted to other positions due to not wanting to work for DD Shea, because of her behavior and attitude towards employees.
- The “contract employees” are being paid more money than state workers for being assigned the duties and tasks that the state employees previously performed.
- Employees do not feel that they can report concerns to HR since DD Shea directly supervises the acting HR Director, who is the primary contracted employee as I understand it.
- DD Shea held a meeting with employees in the accounting section on 9-26-23 and said she wanted to hear how they felt accounting was doing. However, employees reported that they did not feel that she was listening to what they were saying. In addition, she reminded them again, not to go to the Director with anything.

The above are just some of the concerns reported and I am still receiving messages from employees. I believe it would be best if we could have a meeting at some point with you, the employees and my office so that you can hear firsthand what employees are going through. We would like to avoid the grievance process if at all possible and have it as a last resort.

I am very concerned for the employees who work for DD Shea. You have many dedicated, conscientious and hard-working employees who are so upset that they have been looking at what other options they may have. It is my understanding that prior to DD Shea coming back to NDOC earlier this year, employees in the Accounting, Budgeting, and IT tried their best to keep NDOC running smoothly and were willing to take on additional tasks to help each other. Now instead of acknowledging their efforts, DD Shea has offended many of the employees, removed duties, moved employees with little to no notice as indicated above. It is troubling that employees worry about going to work every day not knowing what they are going to face. And

it is very disturbing that DD Shea will make inappropriate and often snide comments about other staff to the employees.

I hope you will consider meeting with us. Should you require additional information or have any questions, please let me know. I await your response.

Thank you.