South Carolina Department of Corrections

MARK SANFORD, Governor
JON OZMINT, Director

June 27, 2008

Mr. George L. Schroeder
Director
Legislative Audit Council
1331 Elmwood Avenue, Suite 315
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Mr. Schroeder,

I received your letter dated June 25, 2008. While I am surprised by your decision to abandon attempts to conduct a survey of our work force, I am pleased that our employees will not be receiving the original suggestive and biased instrument. Frankly, inviting employees to blame unidentified "supervisors," "senior leaders," "leaders," "managers," and "top management" for every conceivable gripe would serve no real purpose.

Just as I have a statutory duty to make our systems available to the LAC, I have a duty to safely manage and control our prison system. This includes communicating honestly and fairly with our employees and inmates, using the limited tools that our resources can provide. This also includes ensuring that our workforce understands the impacts of legislative decision-making and that those employees do not blame their leadership, at any level, for matters that are controlled by other branches of government.

Failure to do so in this setting can create unnecessary rifts and can have dire consequences, literally jeopardizing public safety.

I also note that any conclusions about the response rate are merely conjecture, especially since your assurances of anonymity were unaffected by my message.

However, I do agree that a recipient of both your survey and my message might be less likely to blame the executive branch for problems created by the legislative branch: this might create more precise responses or "more positive responses." Expressed opposition to "more positive responses" only reinforces our original concerns that this survey was intended to provoke negative responses.

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http://www.state.sc.us/scdc E-mail: corrections.info@doc.state.sc.us

I have contacted the Bureau of Justice Assistance about technical assistance in locating and tailoring a professionally prepared and proven correctional survey for use in South Carolina. As before, we would be happy to have LAC participation in drafting an objective survey.

I have copied the recipients to your correspondence and have included a copy of your proposed survey, our responses thereto, and our message to our employees.

Sincerely,

Jon Ozmint

JO:dbh

cc: Governor Mark Sanford
Senator Mike Fair
Senator Phil Leventis
Senator Kent Williams
Senator Lewis Vaughn
Senator Greg Ryberg
Senator Kay Patterson
Senator Jake Knotts
Mr. Scott English
Mr. Daniel Murphy
Dr. Robert Oldendick
Public and ex-offico members of the Legislative Audit Council