

## **Joanna Carns, OCO Director: Presentation**

### **Family & Community: Discussion & Questions**

**Community member:** She is assessing policy on correspondence education. Forms excluded on website. One of the forms is a controlling form for tracking the process and to add info to I/I record. She hasn't received a response yet. **RECOMMENDED EMAIL CAITIE & JOANNA**

**Community member:** Can we receive more information from the recent OCO meeting with Governor? Scheduled for 20 minutes, ended up being 45min-1 hour. Governor aware of OCO investigation reports and incidents inside DOC that OCO has reported on. Governor wants to see DOC and OCO work together more to create further change.

**Joanna:** has followed up with Gov staff. She also followed through on promise to communicate that family members want to hear more from him about what is happening to prisoners inside DOC right now.

**Community member:** Do we know anything about a new stamp that DOC is using on medical kites? Person read aloud what the stamp says.

**Joanna:** stated OCO is aware of how DOC is delaying on-going appointments, and OCO is asking that DOC begin taking on medical appointments, not just emergent appointments. That was the community member's concern, delayed appointments. Joanna encouraged people to grievance, kite, and for families to contact DOC, and to follow up with OCO if I/I are not getting appropriate medical care.

**Community member:** When OCO makes a recommendation to DOC and DOC's response includes saying OCO's information is false? How can family trust that OCO is going to bring about change when DOC is saying we are lying? And when we go to Governor's office and he says he hopes our offices can work together for change?

**Joanna:** OCO has been working to address this with DOC and Governor. DOC clarified that at the time they received the OCO report, the issue was no longer an issue, not that OCO is lying. There has been on-going discussions about DOC being clearer in their responses. OCO's report included the issues as they were, regardless of if the issue had been resolved by the time DOC responded or not.

**Community member:** DOC did a press conference discrediting OCO. Someone mentioned that DOC do a press conference retracting negative statements about OCO or edit response.

**Joanna:** has been having on-going conversations to prevent these types of DOC responses in the future. Working to get DOC's response to be clearer and less dismissive about OCO's work.

**Community member:** OCO was created and our office's accomplishments sound a lot like what the previous one Ombudsman who was inside DOC?

**Joanna:** Difference with OCO is external office, not within DOC. Clearest example would be comparing the Annual reports from DOC Ombud and our more recent OCO office. Very different viewpoints and work. Previously, DOC Ombud didn't have the authority to make the same kind of changes our office has. Joanna named that previous Ombud reported to someone below DOC Secretary, versus now OCO is within Governor's Office, there is more authority, OCO Director and DOC Secretary are both under

Governor and evens playing field. OCO has more authority and influence than the previous internal Ombuds.

**Community member:** Previous Ombud was created previous as a roadblock to stop the legislation from moving forward with an independent office. Previous Ombud was so engrained in DOC. OCO has regular communications to Governor's Office, Governor's Office can communicate with DOC asking why they aren't following our recommendations.

**Community member:** Prisons and police: similar issues regarding accountability. Anyone in charge of accountability has to have teeth. Other areas are scrapping accountability that doesn't have teeth, for example internal police accountability processes. DOC is going to whatever they want to prisoners unless we have the power to make them. It feels like DOC will just ignore OCO recommendations until OCO has more enforcement power. **Community member** mentioned that they will advocate for more enforcement power of OCO.

**Joanna:** Reforms that are happening in policing needs to happen in prisons too. She doesn't control the enforcement, anyone is welcome to ask legislation to offer more power to OCO. **Community member:** more people need to make that connection and pressure legislatures. More in the Director's portion of upcoming OCO Annual Report

**Community member:** What is the Governor's role when DOC doesn't follow OCO recommendations? Was the recent meeting also about the Governor stepping in more and getting DOC to follow OCO recommendations.

**Joanna:** yes that is something that was discussed in the meeting with the Governor. Different perspective in OCO than DOC.

**Community member:** the things that OCO recommended in report and DOC said weren't true, were those things escalated to the Governor for him to step in and make DOC follow the recommendations? The purpose of OCO not being internal is that OCO and DOC report to the same boss. Is Inslee stepping in? Escalating? Involvement/input?

**Joanna:** No, she did not get into the specifics of recommendations. Joanna does report those issues to the Deputy Chief of Staff regularly and to the Policy Director. So those issues are uplifted to the appropriate people. The convo with Governor wasn't about specific recommendation, more about perspective, and we all expect positive change from OCO reports, not the kind of response DOC offered where they dismissed the report.

**Community member:** Does the Deputy Chief of Staff and Policy Directors have power to enforce?

**Joanna:** Yes. That is part of why we continue to lift up these concerns in our reports and bring them up to these people until we see the change that is being requested. Continuously requesting a response and updates on how or if DOC is addressing these issues as we bring them up. Otherwise there is a record of them not adequately responding so we can keep bring it up until addressed.

**Community member:** Some of the issues OCO has brought up are a matter of life or death for prisoners and concerns about DOC dragging their heels.

**Joanna:** DOC isn't quick to be transparent about OCO's influence or DOC's changes due to OCO involvement. More happening behind the scenes. Examples: more showers related to isolation and COVID restrictions. Some changes are happening based on our recommendations. We will be looking out for DOC's next response related to OCO COVID reports/recommendations.\

**Community member:** regarding the Ombud who was inside DOC. How does the group feel about the work he did? She saw him as a reporter, but not a change maker. It appears the new OCO is great at in-

depth reporting and change making. Question: what did the other guy do? Does anyone have a reference?

**Community member:** he didn't do anything. Expressed appreciation for the help and work of OCO. Impossible job to do as one person. Someone mentioned the person had no power and the position was set up to fail—in order to try to block legislation for an Ombuds office and legislation saw past it and funded the new Ombuds office under the Governor.

**Community member:** appreciation for OCO. Family member just want to know when action is going to take place? 3 big reports that came out that have yet to be addressed – 1. CRCC COVID Outbreak and restricted movement 2. Death of AHCC individual 3. CRCC death. When will those reports be published?

**Joanna:** Submitted draft reports and two of the key people refused interviews, now that we sent draft, those two people have agreed to interviews, which provided OCO with more information for the report. Another draft is moving forward. The goal of meeting with DOC is to try to create change instead of just sending a report over, having a conversation about next steps and improvements. Reports are still in draft, it will probably be until October until those reports come out.

**Community member:** Any updates on UA policy? No.

**Joanna:** encouraged people to continue raising the issues and pressure.

**Community member:** appears DOC is trying to avoid accountability by playing different games. Tactic of throwing OCO under the bus and discrediting. Is new tactic dragging their feet?

**Joanna:** after meeting with Governor, the message has been made clear that DOC responses to our reports be meaningful. Newest responses from DOC have improved. Message seems to have been received. More transparency about recognizing the issues OCO has named.