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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 24, 2012

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Announcement of Personnel Actions at the Augusta YDC

(AUGUSTA) -Today the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice announced more personnel actions in the ongoing DJJ investigations at the YDC facility in Augusta. Included in these personnel actions was the termination of one DJJ Augusta facility staff member, the resignation of a suspended YDC Juvenile Corrections Officer, and a job performance administrative action for a YDC Lieutenant.

Each of the actions was the result of separate incidents of policy violations discovered during joint investigations conducted by the Georgia Bureau of Investigation with DJJ Investigations. DJJ Commissioner L. Gale Buckner announced the termination of Captain Victor Martin at the Augusta YDC, and the resignation of Juvenile Corrections Officer Tracy Banks, who had been placed on suspension with pay. Commissioner Buckner also announced a Level 2 administrative action for Augusta YDC Lieutenant Chiquita Owsley, related to accountability and performance on the job.

Commissioner Buckner said, "During the course of our state investigations, violations of DJJ safety and security policies and procedures were uncovered which compromised the ability of these staff members to objectively and effectively supervise youth."

- Captain Victor Martin was terminated from Augusta TDC for a misconduct policy violation based on making calls from his state issued cell phone to a cell phone confiscated from a resident under the care and custody of the Department.
- In a separate investigation, Augusta YDC Juvenile Corrections Officer Tracy Banks was suspended with pay for a sexual misconduct policy violation involving a resident under the care and custody of the Department. JCO Banks has since resigned from DJJ service.
- Lieutenant Chiquita Owsley was disciplined for negligence that created a breach of security at the Augusta YDC after she lost a set of highly restricted facility keys, resulting in a lockdown. The keys were not recovered. The Lieutenant could face dismissal for future policy violations.

All these individuals remain under investigation. Those investigations are active and ongoing. Further details of the incidents are being withheld pending the conclusion of these investigations by the DJJ Office of Investigations and the GBI.

Commissioner Buckner said the latest termination, resignation and administrative action are all in addition to any previously announced personnel actions taken by the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice at the Augusta facility in 2011 and January 2012. Buckner said no connections have been established between any of these staff members and the November 2011 death- investigation at the Augusta YDC.

Following a surprise inspection at the Augusta YDC last Friday, Commissioner Buckner told reporters she will not tolerate violations of policy and procedures, especially those which affect the safety and security of DJJ facilities. Commissioner Buckner indicated today's terminations and personnel actions continue to fulfill the agency's pledge to take its mission seriously. Since Buckner was named DJJ Commissioner in November 2011, State Juvenile Justice Safety and Security Teams have now conducted unannounced inspections at all twenty-six DJJ secure facilities statewide during the last seven weeks.

(END RELEASE)
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