

From: [Arellano, Joey](#)
To: [FLHouseDems](#)
Subject: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Jacksonville Leadership Requests the Department of Justice an Immediate Investigation into the Tripling of Deaths in Duval County Jails
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Attachments: [Nixon USDOJ Jail Deaths Letter & Release on LetterheadPDF.pdf](#)

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August 22, 2023

CONTACT

Janice M. Mitchell
Office of Representative Angie Nixon
Janice.Mitchell@myfloridahouse.gov
(904) 293-5383

**Jacksonville Leadership Requests the Department of Justice
an Immediate Investigation into the Tripling of Deaths in
Duval County Jails**

JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Today, **Representative Angie Nixon (D-Jacksonville)** and **Senator Tracie Davis (D-Jacksonville)** sent a letter to the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) to request an immediate investigation into the skyrocketing death rate in Duval county jails.

Of the letter, **Representative Nixon** offered the following:

“No matter who we are, or what we look like, everyone is entitled to due process of the law. Incarcerated or not, every person must be treated humanely, with decency and respect, and that includes access to medical care and having your basic needs met. Sadly, private companies see human beings as generators of profit to help their bottom line and nothing more. This is wrong and it must end. JSO has a duty to protect our community—including their officers and the people in their charge who are their responsibility. Anything less is unacceptable.”

Senator Davis offered the following statement: “The pattern of failure to care for human lives is abhorrent and irresponsible. The actions by Armor warrant investigation and correction. Regardless of how a person ended up in the penal system, they have basic rights - that should never be forgotten or ignored by the people overseeing them.”

The letter is attached and reads as follows:

Dear Attorney General Garland,

We are writing today urging you to investigate the skyrocketing deaths and the reports of people not receiving necessary medication while in custody in Duval county jails.

Since the Jacksonville Sheriff's Office ended its in-house medical care in October 2017 and hired a for-profit private company to provide health care services in jails, deaths have tripled. The company, Armor, even failed to report that it had been found criminally guilty for a Milwaukee County Jail death, though Florida law prohibits public agencies from signing contracts with convicted companies. Though JSO recently terminated the contract with the company, it was only after a high profile death and much media scrutiny.

According to investigative reporting by [The Tributary](#) and other outlets, individuals in custody have been victims of neglect, resulting in permanent injury or death. From people with diabetes not receiving their insulin medication, to [Mr. Dexter Barry](#), a heart transplant recipient dying at 54 years old after being denied access to his life-saving medication in custody over simple assault charges from a WiFi dispute, this cannot continue without serious intervention.

Local authorities are undergoing their separate investigations into potential violations of state laws. The State of Florida, however, does not maintain data regarding other contracts public agencies may have with Armor and [as of the publication of this story](#), the company has yet to provide copies of current contracts. The U.S. Department of Justice (USDOJ) has a unique capability to investigate cases where, as here, the negligence spans across states where Armor has had, or continues to maintain, contracts with correctional facilities. It is my opinion that the Federal government must intervene to protect the lives and safety of individuals that Duval County takes into custody, and all individuals in custody all over the state that may receive services from this company.

Accordingly, we urge the USDOJ to open federal criminal and civil investigations into any and all incidents involving serious injury or death due to medical negligence. It is unconscionable that human beings in custody of the state or county receive anything less than dignified and basic care. No one deserves serious harm or death in any case, regardless of the alleged charges. Instead, everyone has a right to a trial and appropriate retribution within the limits of the law.

Again, we urge USDOJ to investigate potential violations of federal law by those involved. We stand ready to provide additional information or assistance and look forward to working with USDOJ on this issue.

Sincerely,
State Senator Tracie Davis
State Representative Angie Nixon

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