



FULTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

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Decades in the Making: Fulton County Jail Challenges Demand Unified Response

Atlanta, GA – The Department of Justice's report underscores the deep challenges facing our correctional system, challenges that the report accurately describes as having been decades in the making. Since taking office in 2021, Sheriff Labat has been transparent and very vocal with the Fulton County Board of Commissioners, as well as the public, detailing these challenges we are facing. In 2022, Sheriff Labat proactively requested assistance from the DOJ's Bureau of Justice Assistance and National Institute of Corrections.

Although the scope of the DOJ's report did not include determining the need for a replacement facility, it is important to acknowledge that many of the issues highlighted are worsened by the deteriorating condition of the current facility. The failing building compounded by the lack of adequate staffing only fuels unrest and vandalism, which, in turn, exacerbates the challenges we face in recruiting new talent and retaining experienced staff to work in the jail.

In 2021, the Board of Commissioners demonstrated foresight and a commitment to addressing these issues by commissioning a two-year, \$2 million jail feasibility study. This comprehensive study concluded that the current facility is beyond its lifecycle and must be replaced. Initially, the Board voted to act on this recommendation and move forward with constructing a new facility. However, the decision was later reconsidered. While the reasoning for this change may be debated, it is clear that conditions at the current facility continue to deteriorate. A modernized facility is not just about adding space—it's about creating a culture designed to improve mental health care, provide enhanced medical services, introduce practical programming, and ensure humane conditions.

The Fulton County Sheriff's Office deeply appreciates the DOJ's report and the critical insights it provides. Since the investigation began in July 2023, we have worked diligently to address and resolve many of the issues highlighted that fall within our authority. We take all the recommendations in the report very seriously and remain committed to working alongside federal, state, and local partners to implement meaningful long-term reforms, reduce resident populations responsibly, and address systemic issues highlighted in the report.

The safety, dignity, and well-being of every individual in our care are our highest priorities. We are dedicated to collaborating closely with the Board of Commissioners and other partners to rectify the challenges outlined in the report. Together, we will continue working toward solutions that uphold our shared values and foster trust within our community.

ABOUT THE FULTON COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE: The mission of the Fulton County Sheriff's Office is Service; through laser-focused efforts to protect the citizens of Fulton County with coordinated law enforcement operations, special strategic teams, and community outreach methods. The Sheriff's Office is constitutionally responsible for the security of all courtrooms, executing arrest warrants, and serving civil papers. In addition, the Sheriff's Office is responsible for the administration and operation of the Fulton County Jail.

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