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# New Jersey Sues Delaney Hall Operator After It Refuses Full Access to Health Inspectors

Posted on 06/02/2026

*AG Davenport, Department of Health File Complaint Against GEO Group After Inspectors Are Blocked From Conducting a Full Inspection in Violation of State Law*

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**TRENTON** – Attorney General Jennifer Davenport today filed a lawsuit against The GEO Group, Inc., which operates the Delaney Hall immigration detention center in Newark. The lawsuit requests that the court grant the New Jersey Department of Health (DOH) full access to the facility, which is the focus of well-documented concerns about inhumane and unsanitary conditions for detainees.

Over Memorial Day weekend, Governor Mikie Sherrill and elected officials went to Delaney Hall after some detainees began a hunger strike to protest their deplorable living conditions. As GEO Group refused to respond to demands by the Governor, elected officials, and protesters for full transparency into conditions at Delaney Hall, DOH began trying to gain access to the taxpayer-funded facility to conduct a full inspection.

“If the GEO Group – with a \$1 billion government contract – has nothing to hide and the conditions inside Delaney Hall are as safe and as sanitary as this private corporation and the Trump Administration claim, then there is no legitimate reason why my health inspectors are being kept from full access throughout the building,” **said Governor Sherrill**. “The people of New Jersey deserve transparency and accountability, and I will continue using all the power of this office to advocate for the detainees and their families.”

“GEO Group must allow our state’s health inspectors to conduct a full inspection of Delaney Hall. The reports of unsanitary and unsafe conditions inside Delaney Hall are extremely concerning, and GEO Group—like any other business and facility in New Jersey—must follow the law,” **said Attorney General Davenport**. “I will continue working with Governor Sherrill and Commissioner Washington ensure that people detained inside Delaney Hall are treated with dignity and humanity.”

“Any facility housing people in New Jersey must meet basic standards under the law to prevent the spread of disease, keep food and water safe, and minimize health risks. That includes Delaney Hall,” **said Health Commissioner Raynard E. Washington**. “The New Jersey Department of Health takes seriously its mission to safeguard the health and well-being of everyone in this state. Health inspections are not political – they are essential public health tools that help ensure no one in New Jersey is housed in dangerous or unsanitary conditions.”

On Thursday, May 28, 2026, DOH inspectors were allowed inside Delaney Hall for a limited inspection, but they were barred from inspecting crucial areas of the facility, including the medical unit, sleeping areas, and bathing and toileting areas. Following that visit, DOH inspectors have not since been granted access to conduct a full inspection despite DOH’s repeated requests for access.

The lawsuit filed today alleges that GEO Group has violated state law by refusing to allow DOH to conduct a full inspection of Delaney Hall. As part of the lawsuit, the State is also seeking an expedited injunction directing GEO Group to allow DOH inspectors access to inspect the entire facility. Today’s Complaint and Order to Show Cause, filed in Superior Court in Essex County, asks the court to order GEO to allow DOH full access to Delaney Hall for the purposes of a complete inspection in accordance with State law.

An inspection would allow DOH to verify whether the protocols or practices inside Delaney Hall pose a serious risk of harm to detainees within the facility or to the public outside of it. Any unchecked spread of illness inside Delaney Hall poses a severe risk to detainees. It also poses a risk to employees and contractors working at the facility and to visitors, who can spread illness to the public at large.

On May 22, some detainees began a hunger strike to protest conditions at the facility, reportedly including spoiled or rotten food and no access to basic hygiene products such as toilet paper, menstruation products, or toothpaste. On May 23, U.S. Senator Andy Kim and Representative Rob Menendez went inside the facility to speak with detainees. Senator Kim met with a pregnant woman who said she is not receiving full obstetrics and gynecological care, and with a woman who had a miscarriage but received no care and was left to manage the miscarriage on her own.



Detainees have also told relatives and advocacy groups that the water tasted metallic and undrinkable; that people were being denied medical care or necessary medications; and that diseases such as the flu or COVID-19 were spreading throughout the facility. In addition, in late May, the Department received a report about a detainee taken to University Hospital with [tuberculosis, a highly infectious disease](#).

By statute, the DOH Commissioner is allowed to enter and inspect public and private detention centers as well as to have “full access” to any premises if there is any reason to believe a violation may be occurring. DOH is responsible for protecting the health of the people of New Jersey, including identifying any practices that would allow for the unchecked spread of communicable illnesses, including but not limited to unsafe food preparation or storage, inadequate ventilation, and other unhygienic conditions.

GEO Group has thus far continued to refuse entry to Delaney Hall for a full inspection, placing its detainees, its workforce, and the entire New Jersey public at risk.

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