

DEBBIE DINGELL  
6TH DISTRICT, MICHIGAN

102 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515  
(202) 225-4071

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON  
ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
SUBCOMMITTEE ON  
HEALTH  
COMMERCE, MANUFACTURING, AND TRADE  
COMMUNICATIONS & TECHNOLOGY

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WATER, WILDLIFE, AND FISHERIES  
ENERGY AND MINERAL RESOURCES

**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
**Washington, DC 20515**

DISTRICT OFFICES:

2006 HOGBACK ROAD  
SUITE 7  
ANN ARBOR, MI 48105  
(734) 481-1100

WOODHAVEN CITY HALL  
21869 WEST ROAD  
WOODHAVEN, MI 48183  
(313) 278-2936

WEBSITE: [DEBBIEDINGELL.HOUSE.GOV](http://DEBBIEDINGELL.HOUSE.GOV)

June 8, 2026

The Honorable Gretchen Whitmer  
Governor of Michigan  
111 S. Capitol Avenue  
Lansing, MI 48933

Dear Governor Whitmer:

I am writing to express my continuing concern regarding the ongoing reports of toxic mold and other serious health, safety, medical, and living condition issues at the Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility in my district in Ypsilanti, Michigan. The recent deaths of three women in custody—including two women who died on May 13 and May 17, and another woman who died over this past weekend on the morning of June 6—underscore the urgent need for immediate intervention and accountability.

This facility is the only correctional facility in the state that houses women, and it falls within the jurisdiction of the Michigan Department of Corrections (MDOC). Concerns have been raised repeatedly by women in custody, their families, advocates, attorneys, medical professionals, and the public. Too many continue to report that the underlying problems remain unsolved. It is essential that you give this issue your immediate attention and take urgent action to address the serious issues threatening the safety of these women under MDOC supervision.

No one should be subjected to conditions that threaten their health and well-being. But for years, there have been alarming reports of the condition of and treatment facing women in custody at the facility. Several have come forward with their experiences of having to clean toxic mold without proper safety equipment and describe a disturbing lack of medical care. Instances of toxic mold are particularly troubling because of the potential for respiratory illness and other long-term health consequences. The women's experiences raise significant questions about whether adequate safeguards are in place to provide safe, humane, and adequate care to those in its custody, especially in light of the sudden and tragic deaths of Rebecca Fackler, Khaira Howard, and Ashley Hoath, who died within a month of each other.

I've visited the facility for hours and spoken directly with women who are terrified for their wellbeing. Their concerns—and the concerns of the broader community—remain unaddressed, and public confidence in the facility has plummeted. These concerns warrant immediate review and meaningful corrective action to ensure that all individuals in state custody are treated humanely and provided with a safe environment.

The State of Michigan has both a legal and moral responsibility to ensure that correctional facilities are safe, humane, and operated in a manner that protects the health and dignity of every person in its custody. Transparency and accountability are essential to maintaining public trust in this facility, but unfortunately, the state's failure to make testing results publicly available and its continued lack of response to residents' legitimate concerns have only eroded confidence in the facility's safety.

I urge you to direct every appropriate effort to ensure that any studies, inspections, environmental assessments, or reports concerning toxic mold and other health and safety conditions at Huron Valley Women's Correctional Facility are released to the public. If the Attorney General's office is preventing the release of these materials, I ask that you work with the Attorney General to make them available, along with clear next steps to address what led to these conditions. As long as these reports remain unavailable, questions will persist about the severity of the problems and whether they are being adequately addressed. The women at Huron Valley, their families, staff, and the people of Michigan deserve access to the facts and the confidence that comes from an open and accountable process.

Given the urgency of these concerns, I request answers to the following questions by Friday, June 19, 2026.

1. How many grievances related to mold, environmental hazards, medical care, or unsafe living conditions have been filed during the past five years?
2. How often is the facility tested for environmental and safety hazards, and by whom?
3. What remediation efforts have been undertaken in the last year, and how has the state verified their effectiveness?
4. What is the process to address a safety concern after it is identified by a woman in custody or staff member of the facility?
5. When a woman in custody falls ill or is injured, what is the process for getting her timely and appropriate medical care? Who makes this decision?
6. If care is delayed or denied for a woman in custody for any reason, what options are available for her to appeal the decision?
7. In the last year, how many women have needed medical care? How many requests for medical care have been denied?
8. What investigations have been initiated regarding the deaths of Rebecca Fackler, Khaira Howard, and Ashley Hoath? Were any of these women receiving ongoing medical treatment at the time of death, and were there any outstanding requests for medical care?
9. How do you ensure investigations into deaths at the facility are independent and not influenced by staff who were potentially involved in the incident?

10. How many deaths have occurred at the facility in the past 10 years and what were the causes?

11. Are there any other threats to the health of women at the facility that the letter did not address? What steps are you taking to address those threats?

Thank you for your attention to this serious matter.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Debbie Dingell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Debbie Dingell  
Member of Congress