



STATE OF SOUTH DAKOTA
DENNIS DAUGAARD, GOVERNOR

August 26, 2013

Gregg and Susan Spindler
3975 Pompey Hollow Road
Cazenovia, NY 13035

Dear Gregg and Susan,

It is with the utmost sympathy that I write today to express my condolences for the tragic loss of your daughter. Even before you contacted my office, I had seen news reports about this tragedy, and my wife, Linda, and I talked about how difficult this must be for the families involved.

I really admire your hope to use this tragedy to bring about positive change, and I always try to approach sad situations in the same way. During my first year in office, two inmates murdered a prison guard at our state penitentiary in a failed escape attempt. Of course, the two inmates were brought to justice. Just as important, however, I invited a national agency to conduct an outside review of our security procedures. They submitted a detailed report, and we implemented 27 changes as a result. The positive outcome of this murder is that our prisons are safer today.

The State is approaching this tragedy in the same spirit. I have asked my staff, the Department of Public Safety, and the Highway Patrol to evaluate each and every point in your letter. I understand Jim Seward talked to you about the exhaustive approach we took last year to examine the criminal justice system in this state. We applied data-driven, evidence-based practices to evaluate our approach to sentencing and considered incarceration, probation and parole, and treatment options. In some areas, this led to shorter sentences with more intensive treatment requirements. In other areas, such as chronic DUI offenders, the reform increased penalties.

As we move forward looking into the DUI laws, I expect we will use this same strategy of analysis and evaluation.

Once our state officials have had the opportunity to evaluate each proposal, I have instructed them to reach out to you to discuss your thoughts as we consider potential reforms. If you are planning to return to South Dakota, I am sure another meeting to go over these ideas would be welcome.

Thank you again for your letter and for your hope to find a silver lining in this very dark tragedy. Linda and I are thinking of you in your time of loss.

Sincerely,

Dennis Daugaard