

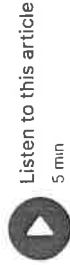
EXCLUSIVE: Minnesota DOC employee quits after male inmates allowed in women's prison

Bradley Sirvio is a convicted murderer and inmates Sean Windingland and Elijah Berryman are both convicted of sexually abusing children. They're all around women now.

By Liz Collin · September 9, 2024



Alicia Beckmann talks with Alpha News reporter Liz Collin on her podcast. (Alpha News)



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A longtime Department of Corrections (DOC) employee has left her career after biological men are now being allowed in Shakopee state prison—Minnesota's only prison for women. She shared her story exclusively with Liz Collin on her podcast.

After working for more than a decade as a GED instructor, Alicia Beckmann recently left her job because of a new transgender policy. According to Beckmann, the policy puts both corrections staff and inmates at risk.

The Minnesota Department of Corrections first transferred biological males Christina Lusk and Bradley Sirvio to Shakopee after Lusk successfully sued the state in 2023. A New York Post report last week revealed Gov. Tim Walz's administration paid nearly \$449,000 to a left-wing legal nonprofit as part of the resolution of Lusk's case.

In 2023, Gender Justice of St. Paul filed a discrimination complaint against the Minnesota DOC for housing Lusk in a men's prison and "denying access to sex-reassignment procedures including a vaginoplasty."

Beckmann pointed out that Lusk and Sirvio—who was convicted of murder—are not the only biological male/trans prisoners who have been transferred to Shakopee.

According to online records, at least five biological males are now or were at Minnesota's women-only prison: inmates 150000, 259787, 266901, 151045, and 268078. That list includes Lusk, who was released to probation in January.



From top left to bottom right: Nathan Charles Johnson, Sean Windingland, Elijah Thomas Berryman, and Bradley Richard Sirvio. All are housed at MCF-Shakopee, according to DOC records. (Minnesota Department of Corrections)

Beckmann explained how this has “created an unsafe environment.” She said Shakopee was “a very gender responsive facility. We are taught that women are biologically different from men. We have curriculum specific for women, so the environment has shifted drastically. I know that a lot of the incarcerated women do not feel comfortable in their living unit, they don’t feel comfortable walking about the property, they were uncomfortable in my classroom.”

In speaking about the current situation of having biological males in the women’s prison, Beckmann said, “I think it has just created a lot of risk, a lot of unknown confusion, frustration, anger. It just has a vibe that doesn’t sit right with a lot of us who work at Shakopee because we are a women’s correctional facility.”

The recent developments at Shakopee also stem from policy changes at the DOC, specifically a 10-page trans inmate policy issued in January 2023 and revised in April of this year.

Beckmann explained, “It was really confusing to a lot of us. Sometimes policies are sent out without any warning, any conversations, any training. They just appear.”

The policy mentions “safety” several times but Bradley Sirvio is a convicted murderer and inmates Sean Windingland and Elijah Berryman are both convicted of sexually abusing children and they’re all around women now.

“We house every custody level. We have what would be considered low-level offenders who are there on DWI charges, theft charges, drug possession. Then, you bring in biological males who are violent, who would be housed at a custody level four facility. I just believe we’re re-victimizing some of these women, re-traumatizing them. They are incarcerated, however, they all have a past and a lot of their past includes physical, sexual, and emotional abuse. I think allowing men to live amongst these women is traumatizing and it’s also unsafe for staff,” she said.



Christina Lusk was the first inmate in the state to be transferred to the women's prison. (Minnesota Department of Corrections)



Beckmann also mentioned how there is a fear of speaking out at the DOC.

"We just fear saying anything. I've been away from the DOC now for a few months and I still fear any kind of retaliation from the agency for speaking out, and I'm speaking out for these women who deserve a chance to be rehabilitated and returned to society. I just don't think the way they're doing it is appropriate," Beckmann said.

Leaving the job has been difficult for Beckmann, who explained, "What kept me going is the passion for this job. I was very dedicated to the women of Shakopee, to my students. I know that education helps reduce recidivism and I really just wanted a brighter future for these women."

"I helped the women at Shakopee get their GED or high school equivalency. I taught math primarily, but the other subjects were social studies, science, and reading. I spent six hours a day with the women Monday through Friday. A lot of one-on-one tutoring, classroom instruction, things you would typically see in an adult basic education classroom in the community," Beckmann said of her role.

Alpha News reached out to the Department of Corrections for clarification on its policy and to ask if such a policy is really safe for the incarcerated women in Shakopee but did not receive a response.

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Liz Collin

Liz Collin has been a truth-teller for 20 years as a multi-Emma-Award-winning reporter and anchor. Liz is a Worthington, Minnesota native who lives in the suburbs with her husband, son and loyal lab.