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N.J. reverses decision to house transgender woman in men's prison

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New Jersey's Department of Corrections has reversed its decision to house a transgender woman in a men's prison after critics raised concerns that the transfer may have violated the state's Law Against Discrimination.

Rae Rollins, 25, is now at a women's facility in Pennsylvania, records show.

She had been the only person classified as "female" to be housed in a men's facility anywhere in New Jersey, according to online prison records.

Rollins was pulled out of the state's only women's facility in April, months after she went public with allegations that she was one of several people attacked by staff at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women in an incident that has since led to criminal charges against 10 officers.

State law says public buildings should generally admit people based on their gender identity, and a state court has said that includes prisons.

It was not immediately clear why officials reversed the decision. A prison spokeswoman declined to comment on the original transfer and did not immediately respond to a question about who made the call to send her out of state.

Rollins had a second altercation with officers in February that left her hospitalized with a concussion — and she sued to be transferred to a safer location the next month.

An internal committee decided to send her to New Jersey State Prison in Trenton.

Officials wrote in court records that Rollins had declined to participate in the decision-making process.

She disputed that characterization in a message to NJ Advance Media. She had been up and ready to attend the committee's meeting, Rollins wrote. Yet staff hadn't allowed her to leave and an officer told her the gathering had been postponed, she said.

Rollins found out later the meeting had happened anyway.

She spent several weeks at a facility that housed nearly 1,300 men at the start of the year.

That environment made her feel unsafe, Rollins wrote. She has endured constant sexual harassment and the new location "makes me hate being who i am."

Oliver Barry, Rollins' attorney, said he was notified that she would be moved out of state Wednesday night and that Rollins had been transferred as of Friday.

She is now at SCI Muncy, a women's facility near Williamsport, according to Pennsylvania Department of Corrections online records.

Five other women under New Jersey's supervision are also housed outside the state, records show.