



Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail

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VPRJ WELCOMES DIGNITARIES FROM THE MIDDLE EAST

Williamsburg, Virginia – On Friday, February 7, Superintendent Colonel Roy Witham welcomed visiting dignitaries from various countries in the Middle East to the Virginia Peninsula Regional Jail. This distinguished group is part of a trip sponsored by the U.S. Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) focusing on judicial discipline in the U.S. legal system, and the judiciary system's role in preserving democratic practices such as due process, trial by jury, and the right to representation and a fair trial, among other staples of democratic processes. Their visit to Williamsburg was organized by the Reves Center for International Studies and the Presidential Precinct, a consortium of two universities and three presidential sites, William & Mary, the University of Virginia, Morven, Highland, and Montpelier, which engages and inspires emerging leaders from every region of the world. This is the second such program VPRJ has participated in within the past year.

The visiting delegation, made up of judges, professors, and magistrates, along with representatives from the Reves Center were given a tour by the Superintendent which included a visit to the Intake/Release department and the Medical department. Delegation members were also taken into a depopulated housing unit where they could freely explore the environment, inspect the cells, and ask questions of the Superintendent.

“It was a privilege to be asked once again to host dignitaries visiting from foreign nations who are in the United States learning about our Rule of Law and the processes we utilize to establish justice for all,” said Superintendent Colonel Witham. “Such opportunities come rarely, and we have received two in the space of six short months. The chance to meet with individuals from different nations, representing various auspicious governmental organizations, and to show them a professional example of a correctional facility in the United States is an honor. We enjoyed their visit immensely, and look forward to the opportunity host another delegation, in partnership with the Reves Center and the Presidential Precinct.”

The tour lasted for just over an hour. Dignitaries were personally escorted through the facility by Colonel Witham, enabling him to directly answer any questions the delegation had. Delegation members represented the countries of Chad, Iraq, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, as well as the Palestinian Territories. The International Visitor Leadership Program (IVLP) is the U.S. Department of State's premier professional exchange program. With an 80 year legacy and over 225,000 alumni, the program has a proven track record of cultivating lasting relationships for a future marked by collaborative foreign policy.