

**Judiciary Committee Public Hearing
February 26, 2007**

Testimony of Theresa C. Lantz, Commissioner, Department of Correction

**H.B. 7213, AA Prohibiting the Use of Dogs in Cell Extractions
H.B. 7217, AAC Discharge Savings Accounts for Inmates, Responsibility for
Obtaining Biological Samples from Certain Parolees and
Discharge of Mentally Ill Prisoners**

Good afternoon Representative Lawlor, Senator McDonald and distinguished members of the Judiciary Committee. I am Theresa Lantz, Commissioner for the Department of Correction. It is my pleasure to come before you today to share my thoughts on the above mentioned bills.

I will begin my remarks by first **opposing H.B. 7213, AA Prohibiting the Use of Dogs in Cell Extractions**. This bill, if passed, would prohibit the use of canines during an inmate cell extraction. When questions were raised about our policies last October we undertook a thorough reexamination of our procedures. We determined that it would be appropriate to enhance our policy as to when the use of a canine may be authorized for this purpose. Attached to my testimony, you will find that as a result in October of 2006 I authorized that a canine may be used as a means of non-lethal physical force during a cell extraction only when there is an imminent threat to the life of staff, inmates or the public. In addition, prior authorization from the Unit Administrator or designee for this purpose is required.

Since that change in our policy last October, we have not experienced an occasion in which an inmate was in any way harmed by the use of a canine during a cell extraction or any other incident.

I would like to state in closing that the deployment of the canine unit during a planned use of force remains one viable option for the department to fulfill its mission to maintain safety, security and good order. Without this ability, the department has one less option to assist in protecting staff and inmates when they are in harms way. Therefore I would urge your opposition.

Next, I would like to briefly speak **in support** our agency bill, **H.B. 7217, AAC Discharge Savings Accounts for Inmates, Responsibility for Obtaining Biological Samples from Certain Parolees and Discharge of Mentally Ill Prisoners**. I proposed this bill to allow for the department to set aside 10% of all money deposited to an inmate's account up to \$500 dollars. This would then be given to the inmate upon discharge to assist in re-entry to the community. Additional funds in excess of \$500 would be deposited in the state's general fund in compliance with costs of incarceration.

I feel that by maintaining a savings account for inmates until they discharge is another way to assist in a positive re-integration into our communities and further supports public safety.

There are two other technical changes in the proposed bill. Sec. 5 clarifies that the Department of Correction, not the Board of Pardons and Paroles, is responsible for collection of DNA prior to release for individuals voted to parole. And lastly, Sec. 6 simply repeals an obsolete statute regarding notification of the discharge of mentally ill inmates.

I appreciate your time and would be happy to address any questions you may have.



Request for Exception to an Administrative Directive
Connecticut Department of Correction

CN 1302
REV 5/5/06

Administrative Directive Number: **6.5** Title: **Use of Force**

I request approval of the following exception to the above referenced Administrative Directive (provide detailed explanation):

Add the following language to Administrative Directive 6.5, Use of Force, Section 14, Canine as a Use of Force:

Canine as a use of physical force in the extraction of an inmate from a cell shall only be authorized when there is an imminent threat to the life of staff, inmates and/or the public.

Please see attached

Signed:
 Facility: Office of Standards and Policy Date: 10/13/2006

DECISIONS

Approved Denied

Unit Administrator/Director signature
 Date 10-13-06

Deputy Commissioner's signature
 Date 10-13-06

COMMISSIONER'S DECISION

This request is: Approved Denied Effective date of exception _____

This exception is valid through _____, by which the exception must be re-requested.

This exception is valid until such time as the Administrative Directive is updated.

This exception shall be added immediately to the Administrative Directive.

Commissioner's Signature

Date

10.13.06