

**TESTIMONY OF MICHAEL LOMBARDO ON SB 115  
PUBLIC HEALTH COMMITTEE  
MARCH 8, 2013**

Greetings Rep. Johnson, Senator Gerratana and members of the Public Health Committee.

My name is Michael Lombardo; I am a resident of Rocky Hill, where I live with my wife and son. I am a Correctional Counselor with the State Department of Correction. I am also a Union Representative and member of AFSCME Local 1565.

I am here today in support of SB 115, An Act Concerning The Approval Process For Residential Nursing Facilities Serving Inmates And Mental Health Patients.

My family resides approximately three minutes from the proposed facility for inmates and patients with mental illness. Like many in my community, I believe this facility is a bad fit for the neighborhood and the town.

I am concerned the state will utilize private security that is untrained, unskilled, and doesn't have the mandatory training in dealing with inmates. Outsourcing of public safety is unacceptable.

I am also troubled by the possible scenarios raised by the proposed facility. People who visit at a correctional facility must go through a thorough background check prior to entering a correctional facility. A vast majority of visitors are compliant, however how will the private security deal with visitors that may become non-compliant regarding visiting rules and regulations.

Just because these inmates are deemed to have six months or less to live and have serious metal health problems doesn't mean potential problems may not exist.

I have witnessed some people who have been in and out of the criminal justice system their entire life and unfortunately most of them are dependant on drugs or alcohol. The narcotics have ruined their lives. The Department of Correction has a well trained k-9 unit including drug sniffing dogs to detect possible narcotics either entering or exiting a correctional facility. Does this private security company have a k-9 unit in place???

All it takes is one inmate to tip something off. The department of correction has an Emergency Response Team in tact handling potential riots, escapes, and any major disturbances. Does the private security company have an Emergency Team in tact??

So how will this private security team deal with these issues? The state says people will be physically incapacitated. I have seen firsthand, the older you get the wiser you get. I have also seen elderly men take down younger men because the elderly inmate was wiser. It can happen and might happen here. Is the state willing to state private security and that facility can guarantee these inmates won't escape and what happens if they do?

What is the plan then?

To qualify for medical parole status, inmates must be within six months of dying. Presently, our state prison system has infirmaries and a wing at the Uconn Medical Center to manage some inmates with serious health issues. The state has closed prisons in Mansfield and Cheshire. Why not re-open one or both of them and place 400 to 500 beds there? These facilities are in place and should be staffed with well trained Department of Correction Personnel.

In conclusion, the state's attempt to save money by favoring private security over well trained Department of Correction Staff is a clear message.

**PLEASE DON'T PUT MONEY OVER PUBLIC SAFETY.**

I urge you to support SB 115.

I thank you for your time and consideration.