SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

As many people testified to, solitary confinement has extremely negative mental and physical effects and it leads to inmates to becoming more hostile over time, while also causing them to develop long-term mental and physical disabilities. This bill would end the barbaric practice of solitary confinement, requiring corrections officers to use less harmful tactics to manage erratic inmates.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

Department of Correction, Commissioner, Rollin Cook: Opposes bill because they “must enforce some level of reasonable consequence” for certain infractions like an inmate escaping, an inmate assault against a DOC employee, or an inmate related incident involving a dangerous weapon.

Division of Public Defender Services, Chief Public Defender, Christine Perra Rapillo: Supports bill because it “will help increase the individual’s chances of successful reintegration into their communities without being hindered by the lingering effects of trauma from solitary confinement” and “assure that the damaging effects of isolated confinement will not be upon any inmate”.

Office of the Child Advocate, Child Advocate, Sarah Healy Eagan: Supports bill because it would end the use of solitary confinement for youths which is dangerous for their mental health.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:
ACLU-CT, Executive Director, David McGuire: Supports bill because “solitary confinement can result in irreparable harm” and people in “solitary confinement are vulnerable to damaging psychological effects of isolation, including extreme loneliness, anxiety, rage, and depression, among other potentially debilitating emotional and psychological problems”.

CT Criminal Defense Lawyers Association, Executive Board Member, Molly H. Arabolos, Esq.: Supports bill because “it will assure that no inmate will suffer the negative effects of isolated confinement” and “prevent the hardships, both physical and psychological, that inmates suffer as a result of solitary confinement”.

CT Juvenile Justice Alliance, Deputy Director, Christina Quaranta: Supports bill because it will “fully end harmful isolation policies and practices” and “juveniles, mentally ill individuals, and pregnant women should be excluded from solitary confinement of any duration”.

CT Legal Rights Project, Executive Director, Kathy Flaherty: Supports bill because it will end the “physical isolation of individuals who are incarcerated [that] results in trauma, and negatively impacts their mental health”.

National Association of Social Workers-CT, Executive Director, Stephen Wanczyk-Karp: Supports bill because “it is irrefutable that segregation, especially over the long term, can result in serious, potentially permanent mental health dysfunctions, including anxiety, depression, anger, cognitive disturbances, perceptual distortions, obsessive thought, paranoia, and psychosis”.

NAMI-CT, Director of Advocacy and Policy, Susan Kelley: Supports bill because “the proposed ban is necessary and appropriately based on the high rate of serious mental illness among incarcerated individuals and the negative effects of solitary confinement”. Suggests amendment that defines solitary confinement as “housing of an adult or juvenile with no meaningful contact with others and with access to few or no programs”.

Quinnipiac University School of Law, Civil Justice Clinic and the Juvenile Sentencing Project: Supports bill because “subjecting those incarcerated, including juveniles, to this type of isolation in confinement is dangerous, no matter what it is called”. Suggests amendment to refine the definition of length someone could be held in isolation.

Colin Christman: Supports bill because solitary confinement is “inhumane and reflects poorly on each of us as members of a civil society” and it “decreases sleep quantity and quality, increases stress hormones, decreases immune function, causes profound weight loss, accelerates degenerative brain disease, and causes actual physical pain”.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

Council 4, AFSCME, Collin Provost, Mike Tuthill, and Rudy Demiraj: Opposes bill because "administrative segregation is a needed tool in keeping order in a difficult correctional system" and solitary confinement is used to “move violent or disruptive inmates away from other inmates who they sometimes prey upon, and to prevent such inmates from assaulting staff".