

Questions for Commissioner of Correction Nominee

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Commissioner of Correction ([CGS §§ 18-80 and 18-81](#))

- Must be an experienced correctional administrator.
- Administers the Department of Correction's (DOC) institutions, facilities, and activities.
- Establishes custodial and rehabilitative methods and operates community-based programs.
- Responsible for supervising parolees.
- Establishes disciplinary, treatment, education, training, and other services and programs throughout DOC.
- Arranges for civil legal services for indigent inmates within available appropriations and legal representation for such inmates before administrative boards where permitted or constitutionally required.

Questions

1. When Gov. Lamont announced your nomination, he [noted](#) your “focus on criminal justice reform – and in particular, rehabilitation and reentry.” Can you describe (a) some of the changes you made in Utah related to this focus and (b) some of the reforms you would like to see to Connecticut's criminal justice system?
2. Prior to serving as the head of Utah's Department of Corrections, you were a correctional officer, sergeant, lieutenant, captain and chief deputy in the Salt Lake County Sheriff's

Office. How did these different positions prepare you for your role as the head of a corrections agency?

3. The [TRUE Unit](#) is a program at Cheshire Correctional Institution that provides inmates 18 to 25 years old age-appropriate supports and services with the goal of preventing recidivism. As part of the program, the young inmates reside in a separate unit of the prison and are paired with older “mentor” inmates. Are you familiar with this program, and do you have any intentions to expand it or establish another such unit in any of the other prisons?
4. In July 2018, a [class action lawsuit](#) was brought against the former DOC commissioner in which the plaintiffs claimed that the department had refused to provide life-saving treatment to inmates with hepatitis C. That same month, DOC took over responsibility for inmate health from UConn's Correctional Managed Health Care division. As described in the [Connecticut Mirror](#), in the years leading up to this transition, there had been concerns raised over the quality of medical and mental health services inmates were receiving. What steps do you plan to take to ensure that inmates are receiving necessary and appropriate medical and mental health services?
5. Connecticut’s prison population is aging, as is the case nationwide, and as they age, their health care needs change. Did you encounter this as an issue when you were in charge of the Utah Department of Corrections? If so, what steps did you take to address these changing needs and do you think that comparable changes are warranted in Connecticut?
6. Budget constraints could affect DOC’s programs and services. Based on your observations, what do you think needs the most attention?
7. Two bills before the legislature this session would make certain changes to the earned risk reduction program, by adding to the list of offenses for which an inmate is ineligible for the program ([HB 5527](#)) and by, among other things, requiring inmates to adhere to their offender accountability plan in order to earn such credits ([HB 5525](#)). What are your thoughts on these proposals?
8. Inmates are given, or allowed to use, certain things such as televisions, radios, reading materials, weights, and exercise equipment. Some people believe that inmates should not have them. What is your position?
9. The DOC commissioner has the authority to release prisoners sentenced to two years or less to halfway houses, group homes, mental health facilities, or other community correction

programs ([CGS § 18-100c](#)). What is your philosophy about releasing prisoners under this authority?

10. What are your thoughts about the circumstances, if any, in which it is appropriate to use administrative segregation in prison? If there are circumstances in which you believe it should be used, for how long a period do you believe it is appropriate?

11. What do you think is the most effective way of dealing with the problem of recidivism?

KD:bd