

Stop Solitary CT Testimony on Raised Bill No. 889, An Act Concerning the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division and the Publication of reports and Presentations by the Office of Policy and Management

Good morning Senator Winfield, Representative Stafstrom, and esteemed members of the Judiciary Committee. My name is Joseph Gaylin. I am a Steering Committee Member of Stop Solitary CT and am testifying on behalf of the organization on An Act Concerning the Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division and the Publication of reports and Presentations by the Office of Policy and Management.

Stop Solitary CT commends the State's efforts to track and publicly display information regarding the State's correctional system. Public access to data collection is particularly important and, in our experience, we found the data related to isolated confinement to be largely hidden from public view and formatted in such a way as to impede effective data analysis. In particular, we were unable to obtain access to the Department of Correction's report to Criminal Justice Policy and Planning Division pursuant to PA 17-239 via the Internet and had to rely on a Freedom of Information request to obtain full access to the report. Increasing accessibility and clarity of such data will empower the state to make better policy decisions moving forward, and would improve the public's ability to digest and analyze this important information.

As it relates to isolated confinement, we recommend a number of changes to the data collection process in our model legislation, the PROTECT Act, which has been raised by this committee. In the meantime, we want to emphasize the importance of public access to datasets and reports. As an organization, we look forward to working with members of this committee and the Office of Policy and Management to improve data collection as it relates to isolated confinement.

Thank you for your time, hard work, and dedication to effective criminal justice policy.