**TESTIMONY OF THE CONNECTICUT JUSTICE ALLIANCE**

*Judiciary committee *

SB. NO. 459 AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMISSION FOR CORRECTIONAL OVERSIGHT, THE USE OF ISOLATED CONFINEMENT, SECLUSION, RESTRAINTS, STRIP SEARCHES, SOCIAL CONTACTS FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS, TRANSPARENCY FOR CONDITIONS OF INCARCERATION AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING.

FAVOR OF BILL SB 459

MARCH 14, 2022

Dear Chairs Winfield & Stafstrom, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is Sage Grady and I am a Justice Advisor with the [Connecticut Justice Alliance](https://www.ctja.org) (CTJA) and I’m writing this testimony to communicate my strong SUPPORT for [SB. NO. 459 AN ACT CONCERNING THE COMMISSION FOR CORRECTIONAL OVERSIGHT, THE USE OF ISOLATED CONFINEMENT, SECLUSION, RESTRAINTS, STRIP SEARCHES, SOCIAL CONTACTS FOR INCARCERATED PERSONS, TRANSPARENCY FOR CONDITIONS OF INCARCERATION AND CORRECTIONAL OFFICER TRAINING](https://www.ctja.org).

The CTJA is a statewide youth–adult partnership working to end the criminalization of youth. The Alliance includes Justice Staff, Justice Advisors, and Steering Committee members, which includes lawyers, researchers, clinicians, and social workers, who work across issues areas such as mental/behavioral health, family advocacy, substance abuse, youth services, LGBTQ+ issues, legal representation, education, community and residential services, and public policy reform.

Solitary confinement usage should be cut down extremely because it is more harmful than rehabilitative. Being confined in a cell for hours on end will have a mental strain on incarcerated people overall. It is not humane to confine human beings to a space with little to no walk room for days or weeks on end without having their basic needs met. No matter what a person has done, NOBODY deserves to be treated less of a person just because of a mistake. We need to ensure basic hygiene needs are being met, and having access to fresh air for longer than 2-4 hours should be mandatory especially in pandemic times.

I also believe that the misuse of lock downs should be banned as well as there is no reason all people in the facility should be confined to their cell for however many hours they have to because of a meeting or a training taking place. Not having access to staff is not their problem and the impact of not having appropriate staff needs to be addressed.

I also agree that correctional officers should have wellness and mental health checks as well. The people currently incarcerated are under their care and if they're not well, you can't treat people well. If there is a correctional officer having a hard time or going through things in life outside of work that potentially affects work, or trauma problems that can potentially lead the correctional officer to mistreat, or misuse their power of authority, or even potentially harm the people in their care, it's better if wellness checks are mandated because then we can prevent problems & they can be handled sooner rather than later.

Wholeheartedly,

Sage Grady, Justice Advisor

For Justice Advisor inquiries please reach out to Community Connections Associate, Jordyn Wilson at Jordyn@ctja.org