



Yale Law School

HOPE R. METCALF

*Executive Director, Orville H. Schell, Jr. Center for International Human Rights
Clinical Lecturer in Law, Allard K. Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic*

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Re: Correction Ombuds Candidates

Dear Committee Members:

I write to provide my strong endorsement of all three candidates for the position of Corrections Ombuds. In their own ways, each candidate possesses the qualities and qualifications necessary for the Ombuds position. In particular, each has demonstrated a commitment to the welfare of incarcerated people, working determinedly to improve the health, safety and well-being of the men and women in Connecticut custody.¹ I believe each candidate would work diligently to earn the trust of incarcerated people and to create a correctional system that upholds this State's values and protects the welfare of everyone impacted by prisons - staff and incarcerated people alike.

Thank you for consideration and for your important public service.

Sincerely,

¹ I note with some concern that at least one submission to this Committee misconstrues the ombuds role to be that of a neutral arbiter; for that reason, the letter-writer argues that Mr. Krayske and Ms. Fair – both noted advocates for people in state custody – are unfit for service. That is simply untrue. Certainly, the Ombuds must conduct him or herself with the utmost ethics and professionalism, make findings on the facts, consider the interests of all stakeholders, and – where possible – work cooperatively with the Department of Correction. As the statute sets forth, however, the very purpose of the Ombuds is to ensure the wellbeing of incarcerated people who, until now, have had no reliable outlet to voice or remedy concerns. Indeed, the statute stipulates that the Ombuds' role includes "Taking *all possible actions*, including, but not limited to, conducting programs of public education, undertaking legislative advocacy and making proposals for systemic reform and formal legal action *in order to secure and ensure the rights of persons in the custody of the commissioner.*" P.L. 22-18, Sect. 2(a)(2)(G) (emphasis added).