



Alan Gold

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Thank you for the opportunity to give you my thoughts on the conditions in the Institutes of the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

My name is Alan Gold, and I am a member of One Standard of Justice; however, today I am here as a grandfather of an incarcerated individual.

First, I would like to commend Ombudsman DeVaughn Ward for all the hard work he has done since being appointed. While I know he has been overwhelmed until now, he has been a great help to my wife and me in navigating the system.

One of the major problems we have encountered, and from what we have been able to ascertain occurs throughout the system, is with medical and mental health help. It seems that, especially during the warmer months, there are not enough Correction Officers who report to work on weekends, holidays or nice summer days, leaving all the incarcerated in "lockdown", confined to their cells. And the single individual responsible for their medical and mental wellbeing may not come in for various reasons, leaving those who require medications to have to go without. And, at Garner Institute, at least, those on medications with mental health issues seem to be mostly overmedicated.

And in what I consider an asinine decree by one person in the mailroom at Garner, and upheld on appeal, was the banning of Origami paper which many of the incarcerated individuals were, and had used, for a long time. The Japanese art of Origami helped the mental state of the inmates during the times they were locked in their cells with pretty much

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nothing else to do. Even the COs could not believe that Origami paper, which mostly comes in 4" X 4", 6" X 6" & 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " X 8 $\frac{1}{4}$ " squares, was a danger to the Institute. After all, magazines, newspapers, letters and such are also paper, but not banned. It would seem to me that leaving those who are incarcerated with nothing to do is more of a danger than letting them fold a single sheet of paper and create some of the most intricate animals and other things without additional paper, cutting, taping or gluing. I have some examples of the paper I am talking about, as well as pictures of Origami items made by my grandson for you to see.

I want you to know that I understand those incarcerated have either been charged or convicted of breaking the law, and have to pay a penalty for doing so. However, they are still human beings and deserve to be treated as such. They are husbands, wives, sons and daughters, grandchildren and nieces and nephews, who have made a mistake, and most will be placed back in society when their sentences are up. They should not be made more "hardened" by the system that is supposed to be "correcting" them, but instead is just punishing them.

Thank you, again, for your time.