

## **Correction Advisory Committee Public Hearing**

**January 29, 2026**

Good evening Members of the Correction Advisory Committee and the Office of the Correction Ombuds.

My name is Alex Brown. I'm here tonight because conditions of confinement are not just policy issues to me — they are lived, embodied, and long-lasting. What happens inside Connecticut prisons follows people home, shapes families, and determines whether harm is acknowledged, addressed, or ignored.

I want to thank the Office of the Correction Ombuds for releasing its first annual Conditions of Confinement Report. The findings are stark. Connecticut's correctional system is experiencing systemic breakdowns in healthcare, sanitation, staffing, and basic safety. As the report makes clear, these are not isolated incidents — they are structural failures.

But there is another layer that the report only touches on indirectly: **the failure to protect women** at York Correctional Institution from sexual abuse by correctional staff, particularly women with mental health disabilities.

A recently released [four-year investigation](#) by Disability Rights Connecticut found that the Department of Correction failed to protect incarcerated women from repeated sexual abuse by correctional officers. Since 2021, **at least six** correction officers have been charged or convicted for sexual assault. Others were under investigation or resigned without accountability.

The investigation also found that DOC knew there were blind spots in camera coverage where abuse occurred. Yet years later, the recommended cameras still have not been installed.

In **five out of seven** substantiated cases of sexual abuse, DOC failed to complete a required incident review. And in none of those cases did the department recommend trauma-informed mental health services consistent with PREA standards.

These are not just statistics. **These are people** whose bodies, dignity, and sense of safety were violated while under state custody.

I know this because **I lived it**. I experienced sexual misconduct at York Correctional Institution, and my case is documented in the Disability Rights Connecticut report, **Incident #6, Jane Doe 4**. Like many women, I was left to navigate the aftermath without support or accountability.

So tonight, I'm asking for action — and not just for women at York, but for **all incarcerated people** across Connecticut.

First, mandate **trauma-informed, survivor-centered responses** to abuse from correctional officers, including automatic mental health referrals, protections against retaliation, and clear timelines for follow-up.

Second, require the **Department of Correction to act immediately on the Ombuds' findings**, including fully implementing PREA and safety recommendations, completing all required incident reviews with independent oversight, and addressing urgent environmental health issues such as mold, sanitation failures, and unsafe living conditions already documented in the report.

Oversight only matters if it leads to change. People in custody deserve safety, dignity, and care — not silence and delay.

Thank you.

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