

Name: Anonymous Anonymous

Title:

Organization or Agency:

Topic: Meeting Date Not Listed

NA

Testimony:

To the members of the Correction Advisory Committee and the Office of the Ombudsman:

I'm here today to speak in support of the continued, responsible use of restrictive housing also known as confinement because it is one of the few tools the Department of Correction has to keep facilities safe and functioning.

Most discussions about confinement focus only on how it feels to the person placed there. What often gets ignored is what happens to everyone else when this tool isn't used. When someone breaks the law in the community, they go to jail. When someone continues to break the rules inside jail by assaulting others, threatening staff, or carrying weapons like shanks, PREA, other incidents there has to be a real response. For example Taking a weapon or someone that would be considered breaking the law in the real world and putting that person right back into general population puts other inmates and staff at risk and sends the message that violence has no real consequences.

This creates a serious accountability problem. Without the ability to immediately separate dangerous individuals, housing units quickly become unstable. The inmates who are following the rules the majority end up living in fear, while dangerous behavior spreads. We've seen this play out in other systems, like Rikers Island, where control was lost and inmate safety got worse, not better. Connecticut should not repeat those mistakes.

It's also important to clear up what confinement actually looks like today. This is not the old version of "the hole" people picture from the 70's and 80's or in movies. Inmates in restrictive housing still have regular human contact. Many facilities have cells house two people, and some even single cells allow constant communication with others nearby. Inmates receive recreation, showers, medical care, mental health services, and access to books and religious materials. This is not sensory deprivation it's secure housing with structure and oversight.

Restrictive housing isn't about cruelty. It's about protection. It protects inmates who don't want trouble from being targeted. It helps stop violence before it spreads. And in many cases, it protects the violent individual from causing even more harm. Weakening or removing this tool without a real replacement doesn't make facilities safer it does the opposite.

So I ask the committee and the Ombudsman directly: if restrictive housing is limited or taken away, what is the plan for the inmate who repeatedly assaults others or refuses to follow basic rules? Until there is a proven, safe alternative that actually works inside real facilities not just on paper this tool needs to remain available.

Accountability is not the enemy of rehabilitation. You cannot rehabilitate in chaos. Safety has to come first, because safety is what makes rehabilitation possible. If there is a better, proven solution that protects inmates and prevents violence, it should absolutely be considered. But until that exists, removing a tool that is currently preventing harm puts everyone inside these facilities at risk. That is not progress, and it is not humane.