

Name: Cassandra Gates

Title:

Organization or Agency:

Topic: Meeting Date Not Listed

NA

Testimony:

First, my visitation with Anthony was terminated based on false or inaccurate information. No evidence was provided, there was no opportunity to dispute the allegations, and no clear appeal process. These decisions lacked transparency and due process. Visitation is not just a privilege—it is a critical support system. Losing it caused emotional harm, ongoing stress, and serious mental health strain for both of us. Second, there are serious concerns regarding unanswered Freedom of Information requests. An FOI request was submitted on November 25, 2025, and another on January 28, 2026. Neither has received a response. These requests relate directly to visitation decisions and prior incidents. We believe the loss of visitation and lack of response may be retaliatory, possibly connected to prior reports involving a correctional officer and complaints about disrespectful behavior. The timing of these events raises serious concerns about accountability.

I also want to address conditions at Cheshire Correctional Institution. There are ongoing mold issues, unsanitary showers, and extremely cold temperatures, sometimes with no heat or hot water. These conditions pose real health risks and worsen mental health, especially for individuals struggling with anxiety, depression, or substance use disorders.

Finally, frequent lockdowns due to low staffing levels are causing further harm. While staff deserve time off, incarcerated individuals should not be punished for staffing shortages. Lockdowns limit movement, programs, communication, and visits—cutting people off from the very supports that help prevent mental health crises and substance abuse relapse.

Mental health, recovery, and family connection matter. I am asking for transparency, accountability, and humane treatment. These issues affect not only individuals, but families and communities as a whole.

Thank you