

WRITTEN TESTIMONY

Connecticut Correction Advisory Committee

Public Hearing - January 29, 2026

Submitted by: Wade Douglas Nelson

On behalf of: Cory M. Wheeler, Inmate #387770

Relationship: Limited Power of Attorney Representative

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CASE SUMMARY

Item	Detail
Inmate	Cory M. Wheeler, #387770
Current Facility	MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution
Classification	Maximum Security
Date of Arrest	October 3, 2024
Days in Custody	483 (as of January 29, 2026)
Total Bond	\$950,000 across four cases
Disciplinary Infractions	None
Next Court Date	February 17, 2026

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

October 3, 2024 - Mr. Wheeler called 911 to report a woman with a knife in his apartment building hallway. Police responded. The woman was not present upon arrival. Mr. Wheeler was subsequently arrested.

October 2024 - I retained attorney Martin Minnella (Bar #433342) for \$20,000. Combined bond was set at \$950,000.

October - November 2024 - Multiple scheduled legal calls were missed due to attorney unavailability and prison staff issues.

November 2024 - Last written correspondence received by Mr. Wheeler from defense counsel.

2025 (Full Year) - Mr. Wheeler received no written communication from Minnella & Tramuta. Counsel Jonathan Raad (Bar #444627, admitted May 2023) was assigned without notification to Mr. Wheeler or myself.

October 20, 2025 - Waterbury Police Internal Affairs issued a letter confirming their investigation finding was SUSTAINED, indicating police misconduct occurred during the arrest. This investigation stemmed from Mr. Wheeler's handwritten complaint. No bond motion has been filed by any attorney.

December 12, 2025 - Pre-trial hearing. Police officer testimony contradicted bodycam footage.

Following this hearing, attorney Minnella removed Mr. Wheeler from the prison call list.

January 8, 2026 - VOP hearing. Court viewed three bodycam videos but did not have time to review Officer Romano's footage. Officer Romano was placed on desk duty immediately after Mr. Wheeler's arrest. His bodycam footage is likely the exculpatory video.

On or about January 13, 2026 - Mr. Wheeler was transferred to MacDougall-Walker CI, maximum security classification. No disciplinary infractions preceded this transfer. No hearing was held. Notice was provided only shortly before transfer, and Mr. Wheeler had already been removed from the prison phone call list by his attorney.

January 16, 2026 - Phone conversation with Mr. Wheeler. He confirmed that new attorney Kirsten Coffin showed him bodycam evidence for the first time - 460 days after his arrest.

CONDITIONS OF CONFINEMENT CONCERNS

- 1. Initial Detention** - Mr. Wheeler reports being held unclothed in a holding cell for approximately 24 hours following arrest. A SWAT medical officer administered multiple injections without consent. Footage from the holding cell and ambulance may document these conditions.
- 2. Property Loss** - Police left Mr. Wheeler's apartment window open during the arrest. Two cats escaped. One (Nova) was never recovered. The other (Luna) was recovered approximately three months later and is currently with me in Minnesota. Mr. Wheeler's vehicle was impounded, subsequently stolen, recovered by police, and the thief released. The vehicle has not been returned to Mr. Wheeler.
- 3. Classification** - Mr. Wheeler was transferred to maximum security with no documented disciplinary infractions. Notice was given only shortly before the transfer. The attorney I hired had already removed Mr. Wheeler from the prison phone call list prior to his receiving notice of the transfer.

QUESTIONS FOR THE COMMITTEE

1. What is DOC policy regarding transfer of pretrial detainees with no disciplinary infractions to maximum security?
2. What was the documented justification for Mr. Wheeler's transfer?
3. What is DOC policy regarding notification to inmates and their legal representatives prior to classification changes?
4. Does the Committee have concerns about the timing of this transfer relative to court proceedings?

REQUESTED ACTIONS

1. Investigation of the transfer decision and documentation
2. Review of DOC policies on pretrial classification and transfers
3. Referral to the Correction Ombudsman for independent review
4. Written response regarding findings

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION AVAILABLE

- October 20, 2025 Internal Affairs Letter (SUSTAINED finding)
- Power of Attorney Documentation
- January 8, 2026 Court Transcript (pending receipt from VOP attorney)
- Bar Complaints filed against Martin Minnella and Jonathan Raad
- Judicial Review Council Complaint will be filed against Hon. Hunchu Kwak (awaiting transcripts)

AVAILABILITY

I am available to testify via Zoom at the January 29, 2026 hearing. I am also willing to appear in person if the Committee determines that would be more appropriate.

Respectfully submitted,

Wade Douglas Nelson
Limited Power of Attorney for Cory M. Wheeler

Date: January 20, 2026