

Name: Edwin Ortiz

Title:

Organization or Agency:

Topic: Meeting Date Not Listed

NA

Testimony:

My name is Edwin Ortiz, and I'm currently incarcerated in Conn. I understand that jail is not meant to be a luxury. That is not the issue. The issue is whether incarcerated individuals are treated with basic human decency. The conditions described here are not about comfort; they are about dignity, health, and humane treatment.

One ongoing concern is the repeated denial of scheduled cell cleanups. There have been periods where I and others have gone months without being allowed to clean their cells. When this issue is raised with staff, it is often met with indifference and no corrective action. Requests for grievance forms have been met with sarcasm, signaling a lack of accountability. Being forced to live in unsanitary conditions is dehumanizing and presents clear health risks.

Another serious concern is the excessive use of lockdowns. Recreation and time outside of cells may appear insignificant, but for incarcerated individuals, this time is essential to mental well-being. It is often the only opportunity to escape isolation and temporarily manage stress. When lockdowns occur frequently—sometimes multiple times a day or several times a week—that opportunity is repeatedly taken away.

The mental impact of these lockdowns is significant. Each lockdown announcement brings an immediate sense of despair and emotional exhaustion. Over time, this creates ongoing psychological strain and contributes to deteriorating mental health.

This testimony is offered not as a complaint, but as documentation of lived conditions. Incarceration should not result in the loss of basic human dignity. Clean living environments, reasonable time out of cells, and respectful treatment are minimum standards. I want to acknowledge and thank the coalitions and advocates who continue to raise these issues. All that is being asked is to be heard—and for meaningful change to follow.

I respectfully urge the Judiciary Committee to address these issues and work toward ensuring safe and humane conditions in all Connecticut correctional facilities.