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Dear Joint Committee on Judiciary

Thank you so very much for taking the time to read my letter and consider my testimony on conditions of confinement in Corrections. I wanted to quickly touch on three areas that I believe are very important to the current problems in corrections.

First, Connecticut has an aging prison population that is continually growing. The correctional system was not built, nor designed to house or address many of the needs that these aging individuals have. There definitely needs to be specific housing units in each and every correctional facility designated for individuals

50 and over. Currently many elderly prisoners are mixed in random units and placed in double cells with younger prisoners. As a result, many of these same elderly prisoners are being bullied, extorted, robbed, assaulted and taken advantage of. For these individuals, their time in corrections is not safe. This situation must be addressed.

Second, highly processed foods comprise the vast majority of the Correctional Food Services menu. By relying on the theory that a "calorie is just a calorie" (i.e. caloric equivalency) Food Services uses large amounts of highly

processed carbohydrates and processed meats to feed ^{prisoners} daily and as cheaply as possible.

Unfortunately, the daily consumption of both highly processed carbohydrates and processed meats has been directly and scientifically linked to a number of diseases such as obesity, high blood pressure, diabetes, coronary artery disease and cancer. Food Services needs to have a whole foods option which can be done that's cost effective and improves long term health outcomes (and medical care savings) for prisoners.

And finally third, our current correctional system has become more drug ridden and unfortunately more violent. That is because there is little to no hope. More security is not the answer. Creating more hope is. By offering time credit incentives for work, school, and acting as a citizen, legislators would be positively empowering prisoners to work towards their freedom and a more successful future filled with hope. Most importantly, there can be no more "carve outs" where certain prisoners are excluded from hope. By giving hope to some, but despair to others, only maintains the current status quo of negative distraction and escapism through drug use.

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Thank you so much for your time and attention

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