

1-21-2025

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing this letter to bring attention to some of the ongoing issues in the DOC. I am aware there was a law put into place called the Protect Act, this law is not being followed. I have a friend in Cheshire CI who is consistently put into segregation for minor things, not emergencies or safety issues. They also consistently violate the time frame that a person is legally supposed to be in segregation sometimes having him in segregation for a month at a time and then calling in Chronic. During chronic they can have some property but are still in segregation and get one phone call a week which makes it very hard to keep community ties. They also continue this after the month only doing two phone calls a week, non-contact visits and only with immediate family, we know that community ties are very important to rehabilitation yet the DOC is punishing people in ways that makes it challenging to maintaining those community ties.

Another consistent issue I have seen, my cousin was in jail for a drug charge and with my friend who is currently at Cheshire CI is that they put inmates in blocks where they know they have issues with other inmates. Then when a fight breaks out they blame the inmate and there's major consequences. I know they were aware of my cousin and my friend having issues with a person in the block they were housed in because I called the prison, with my cousin I even contracted his lawyer with no results, his lawyer told me there was nothing she could do. This creates safety issues. With my friend who is currently in Cheshire CI they put him in a block with someone knowing there was issues then when a fight broke out gave him two years no contact visits

Mental health issues are not addressed in the prison. My friend who is in Cheshire CI asked for months to speak to mental health, it never happened. I called the prison several times with no results. I had to contact the ombudsman and he had to go to the prison to speak with my friend and advocate for him to finally get a mental health counselor to speak with him.

The prisons also use excessive force when it is not needed. My friend has never been violent with staff yet he always has cuts on his wrist from the handcuffs when he is put into segregation. Again, this is at Cheshire CI.

My cousin as I mentioned previously was in prison for drug charges, he needed help with his mental health and addiction but got none. We knew he was struggling with his mental health, we called the prison and notified them. He was supposedly in protective custody but somehow ended up hanging himself, a CO did not even find him, an inmate did. Where was the supervision? We have an ongoing investigation going but there is a law suite now. My cousin also had Fentanyl in his system. Where was he getting drugs when he was supposed to be in protective custody? Side note, the amount of drugs that my friend and cousin reported are in jail should not be ok with the DOC. What is being done to address this issue? The DOC is also refusing to release video footage to my uncle's attorney of the day my cousin died. They should be required to do this. I don't understand why the DOC thinks they should not have to answer for things. I was a teacher for 10 years and am currently a LCSW and I can't imagine things going wrong with a student or client and feeling I am above having to answer for them.