

CVH Whiting Forensic Hospital Task Force Testimony

By Paul Hammer

Earlier this year, the landmark Police Accountability bill was enacted into law in Connecticut. The law will help ensure that police will serve the people, not abuse the power vested in them. Now it is time to introduce and pass an accountability bill applying to others who serve and also have the potential to abuse, and these include all staff in CVH and Whiting, in every psychiatric hospital and every prison.

Internal regulations have proved insufficient to ensure basic human rights inside these institutions. We need oversight by peers and professionals. We need better vetting and better training. We need disciplinary records to be transparent to prevent transfers of abusive staff to other facilities. We need cameras in every corner and film that is digitized, archived and available for review. We need to fund improvements in these facilities now and to move quickly towards a healing and least restrictive environment.

As a former 'resident' of CVH, I can tell you that these changes cannot happen soon enough.