



# The PROTECT Act 2022

An Act Promoting Responsible Oversight, Treatment, and Effective Correctional Transparency



Jointly drafted by the Connecticut Department of Corrections and Stop Solitary Connecticut, the PROTECT Act 2022 “Substitute Bill” represents a step forward towards a safer, more humane correctional system in Connecticut. The bill codifies the progress achieved by Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 21-1 and makes the following key reforms necessary to safeguard the humanity of incarcerated persons:

## Ensures Oversight & Accountability

The PROTECT ACT 2022 creates an independent Corrections Ombuds and Corrections Advisory Committee. The Ombuds will have the authority to conduct site visits; inspect DOC records; and establish a confidential system to receive feedback from incarcerated people and other stakeholders. The Ombuds will submit an annual report to the General Assembly and publish its findings publicly to promote a safe, effective, and humane correction system in Connecticut.

The Corrections Advisory Committee will consist of nine members, including formerly incarcerated people and family members, along with experts in medicine, mental health, law and corrections. The Advisory Committee will propose a list of qualified individuals from which the governor will select the Ombuds, convene hearings on nominees, hold quarterly meetings, and semiannual public hearings to promote a safe, effective, and humane correction system in Connecticut.

## Mitigates Extreme Isolation

The PROTECT ACT 2022 codifies gains made under Governor Lamont’s Executive Order 21-1 to minimize the reliance on prolonged isolation in Connecticut prisons. Isolated confinement may be used only for individuals in disciplinary statuses and never for more than fifteen consecutive days (or thirty days total within any sixty-day period). The bill ensures minimum wellness standards in isolated confinement, including two hours out of cell and access to basic necessities. Effective immediately, all incarcerated people, other than those in disciplinary statuses, must have a minimum of four hours out of cell per day; and, as of April 1, 2023, all incarcerated people in general population must have at least five hours out of cell per day.

## Promotes Transparency

The PROTECT ACT 2022 requires Department of Corrections to publish data on critical issues, including use of force, access to education and other pro-social programming, prison labor and wages, and the internal grievance system. In addition, the bill further requires the DOC to report in 2023 on its progress in increasing time out of cell, reducing the use of in-cell restraints and addressing the presence of people with mental illness in isolated confinement.