



NBA Star and UConn Husky Legend Caron Butler, Advocates & Legislators Call on Lamont to Sign the PROTECT Act

Hartford, CT – Former UConn Husky and NBA star Caron Butler joined Stop Solitary CT at the Connecticut State Capitol today to urge Governor Ned Lamont to sign SB 1059, the PROTECT Act. SB 1059 would end the use of isolated confinement for all incarcerated people, except in temporary emergency situations, and create a correction ombuds to provide oversight for the Connecticut Department of Correction. The bill is waiting on Governor Lamont’s signature after passing the state Senate on Friday and the House of Representatives late on Saturday night.

“My time in solitary confinement was excruciating; I often find myself wondering how much longer would it have taken to break me — a few more days, another month?” said Caron Butler, who became Assistant Coach of the Miami Heat after retiring from the NBA. Butler [was placed in solitary confinement](#) as a teenager, and today he advocates for criminal justice reform as a Trustee of the Vera Institute for Justice.

Reginald Dwayne Betts, an award-winning poet and advocate, also called on Governor Lamont to sign SB 1059. “When I was in solitary, I felt like I lived in a nation that didn’t see me, a nation that was willing to leave men, women, and children in the worst place that exists in this country. This bill means that, here in Connecticut, you are seeing people,” said Betts, who has [written about his experience in solitary](#) in the Yale Law Journal. Betts spent nearly a year and a half in isolation and was first sent to solitary at the age of sixteen.

Legislators supporting SB 1059 joined Butler and Betts in advocating for the bill to be signed into law. “One thing that is left out of this conversation is that these people in solitary, Black and brown people, they have themselves been victimized. They talk about a school to prison pipeline; this is a crib to coffin pipeline. We were born into a system that wants to devour us,” said Representative Robyn Porter. Representative Quentin Phipps said, “I truly wish we could call the passing of this monumental bill justice. But this isn’t justice; this is a basic restoration of humanity and our own morality. I want us all to remember the power of collective action, the power of truth, the power of never giving up.” Rep. Phipps and Rep. Porter are among the 44 co-sponsors of the bill, who include Senate President Pro Tempore Martin Looney and Speaker of the House Matthew Ritter.

On Friday, June 4, SB 1059 passed the Senate 26-10 with bipartisan support. The bill was called for a vote in the House of Representatives the following day. After more than seven hours of debate, it ultimately passed 87-55, also with supporters from both parties. Members of Stop Solitary CT, who had waited outside the Capitol all day and into the night, watched on a livestream as the vote was finalized around 12:30 am on Sunday morning.



“We did our job. The Senate and the House have done their job. Now it's time for our Governor to sign off this legislation, which addresses solitary confinement in Connecticut. Preserving humanity is not a political issue. It's a human rights and moral issue,” said Stop Solitary CT lead organizer Barbara Fair.

Now, SB 1059 awaits the governor's signature. “With the stroke of a pen, Governor Lamont has the power to end so much abuse and human misery. Signing SB 1059 into law is an opportunity to be on the right side of history by dramatically restricting the use of solitary confinement, a practice that I can personally attest to is dehumanizing, inhumane, and cruel,” Caron Butler said.

#####