



**For Immediate Release**

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**Release: Stop Solitary CT, Legislators Call for Veto Override on S.B. 1059**

Hartford, CT— On Wednesday, July 14, supporters of the PROTECT Act (S.B. 1059) rallied outside the Connecticut State Capitol to demand an override of Governor Lamont’s veto of the legislation. S.B. 1059 would restrict the use of solitary confinement, end abusive restraints practices, increase access to visitation, and implement oversight of the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC). After passing the legislature with bipartisan support, S.B. 1059 was vetoed by the governor on June 30.

“It is a tremendous disappointment that the Governor has chosen to veto the PROTECT Act during a time when there is a national outcry for equity and justice for all,” said Rep. Robyn Porter, who represents New Haven and Hamden. “It is my fervent hope and expectation that my colleagues and our leadership will rise to our obligation to override the Governor’s veto and deliver to the people what they are demanding, and that is his signature on the passage of S.B. 1059.”

Porter was among the multiple lawmakers who spoke at the rally. Speakers also included Sen. Gary Winfield, Rep. Anne Hughes, Rep. Christopher Rosario, and Rep. Antonio Felipe.

The governor’s surprise veto came after he had indicated to press and advocates that he intended to sign the legislation. It is his only veto of the session so far and just the fourth issued during his administration. “The governor’s veto of a bill seeking to limit the practice of solitary confinement is cruel and misguided,” said David McGuire of the American Civil Liberties Union of Connecticut. “We call on the legislature to override the veto and listen to the will of Connecticut residents.”

Along with the veto, Governor Lamont issued an Executive Order that places some restrictions on the use of solitary confinement. Speakers at the rally highlighted several shortcomings of the Order: it provides 4 hours out of cell compared to the PROTECT Act’s 6.5; it gives the DOC broad discretion to punish any disciplinary violation, regardless of severity, with 15-day stints in isolated confinement; and it leaves several important components of S.B. 1059 completely untouched. The Order places no restrictions on in-cell shackling, makes no changes to visitation, and fails to implement any measures for correctional oversight.

“The governor's executive order is an admission of the need to check torturous practices forced on

CT residents in his prisons and jails but is ultimately a half measure,” said Mel Medina, National Campaign Strategist at the American Civil Liberties Union. “His actions show poor judgment, his executive order misses the mark, and ultimately Black and Latinx in people in Connecticut prisons and jails will continue to be disproportionately harmed under Lamont's administration.”



“S.B. 1059 is not a political issue,” said Barbara Fair, an organizer with Stop Solitary CT. “It’s a human rights issue, and we have a moral obligation to end the psychological torture of our incarcerated men, women, and children.”

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