



## Press Release

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Date: Thursday, March 18th, 2021 11:00 a.m. (EST)

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### **In Advance of PROTECT Act Hearing SSCT Releases Two Reports focused on Alternatives to Isolation & Isolation in DOC; Rallies Outside Capitol with Civil Rights Organizations, Legislators, and Directly Impacted People**

Hartford, CT – Standing alongside Stop Solitary CT, Representative Josh Elliot, Representative Christine Palm, the Katal Center, ACLU Smart Justice, the Connecticut Justice Alliance, and many directly impacted community members highlighted their support for the PROTECT Act, SB 1059, which is scheduled for a public hearing on Monday March 22nd. Organizers encouraged members of the public, whether directly impacted or not, to speak out about the injustice that is solitary confinement.

Reflecting on the importance of the public hearing, **Stop Solitary CT Steering Committee Member Kevnesha Boyd** said, “We imagine a correctional system without excessive punishment, one that focuses on rehabilitation and human decency. S.B 1059 addresses how traumatizing the actual prison environment is from a holistic perspective.”

For members of Stop Solitary CT, the public hearing is the apex of years long campaign to protect the lives of people who live and work in prison. Stop Solitary CT organizers spoke about making public policy decisions based on our collective humanity, a struggle for empathy, and a fight for equity. **Barbara Fair, Stop Solitary CT Steering Committee Member and Organizer** said, “We stand collectively to condemn any form of solitary confinement. It should not be a part of prison culture. It's an abusive practice which should be abolished across the board. No one should experience what the International community has cited as torture. Ending extreme isolation is not a political issue. It is a human rights issue.”

In order to foster effective public discourse, Stop Solitary CT also **released two reports** on Thursday, March 18th at 12:00 pm. The reports were **sent to every member of the Connecticut Legislature**.

The first report, *Demystifying Isolation*, highlights the importance of changing data collection practices in the Department of Correction. The report notes that DOC data on isolated confinement is not easily accessible, fails to show how many people are placed in restrictive housing each year, and invisibilizes routine isolation in the general population. Describing the significance of the report, Stop Solitary CT Steering Committee Member and Organizer **Joseph Gaylin** said, “Data collection must shine light on inhumanity, so that we, as a community, can hold the State accountable. At

present, I believe that DOC data on isolation obscures the harsh reality prolonged isolation in Connecticut.”

The second report, *Alternatives to Isolation*, outlines the many tools that Connecticut could use to ensure safety without sacrificing humanity. The report encourages policymakers to “think outside the box” and understand isolation as a problem, not a correctional “tool.” Reflecting on the report, **Ify Chikezie, a member of the Lowenstein International Human Rights Clinic at Yale Law School** said, “Prolonged isolation is abusive and counterproductive. Other correctional systems are implementing alternative practices that don’t rely on depriving people of human connection, and they are seeing reductions in self-harm, recidivism, and violence as a result.”

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