



For Immediate Release

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Release: Stop Solitary CT Holds Press Conference After SB 459 Passes Both Chambers of State Legislature

Hartford, CT – Stop Solitary CT held a press conference and rally at the State Capitol on Monday, May 2 to celebrate the passage of the PROTECT Act (SB 459) and urge Governor Ned Lamont to sign the bill into law. SB 459 passed the Senate 29-6 last Wednesday and the House 98-45 late on Thursday night, receiving broad bipartisan support in both chambers.

If enacted, SB 459 would place statutory limits on solitary confinement and provide much-needed oversight of the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) by creating a corrections ombuds and a civilian advisory board with formerly incarcerated people as part of its membership. It would also promote transparency by requiring the DOC to report on its use of force, among other critical issues.

“At its core, our campaign is about so much more than changing the torturous practice of prolonged isolation. It’s about transforming the whole dehumanizing culture of prisons in this country,” said Stop Solitary CT Steering Committee Member Allie Perry. “It won’t be done overnight. But it can be done, it will be done, and it must be done. Our humanity depends on that. And this bill, enacted into law, will jumpstart the process.”

State Representative Anne Hughes (D-Easton) similarly emphasized how SB 459 would create pathways for system-wide change. “The hardest thing that we as legislators realize is that we have to reckon with state-sanctioned abuse and neglect and torture and indifference to our community members that we’ve allowed and normalized over decades,” said Hughes, who co-sponsored the bill. “It’s past time to reckon with that abuse.”

A version of the PROTECT Act passed the state legislature last year, but Governor Lamont vetoed the bill and issued an executive order in its place. Recently, a spokesperson for Governor Lamont [stated](#) that the Governor intends to sign SB 459, which would codify the executive order’s restrictions on isolated confinement into law and create robust structures for oversight to make a significant difference in the lives of incarcerated people.

“The passing of SB 459 truly gives me hope in our system again. Being caged and forgotten isn’t rehabilitation. I want to thank Stop Solitary CT for your overwhelming number of hours, days,

weeks, months spent on getting this bill passed and Governor Lamont for promising to sign the bill into law,” said Caron Butler, assistant coach for the Miami Heat and long-standing supporter of the PROTECT Act, in a statement read at the press conference.

After the event, Stop Solitary CT Lead Organizer Barbara Fair said, “Today was deeply rewarding for me. Several individuals formerly incarcerated in Connecticut prisons spoke powerfully to life after unspeakable trauma and to the mental fragility it caused. It did not fall on deaf ears. We are looking forward to Governor Lamont signing SB 459 into statutory law. In doing so, he will make a giant step toward restoring the humanity lost in Connecticut’s correctional system decades ago.”

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