



## **For Immediate Release**

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### **Release: Stop Solitary CT Mobilizes in Hartford on the First Day of the Legislative Session**

Hartford, CT — On February 9, 2022, the first day of the Connecticut General Assembly's 2022 session, Stop Solitary CT held a call to action to protest state-sanctioned violence against incarcerated people and mobilize support for the PROTECT Act, which would significantly reduce solitary confinement in Connecticut and support the wellbeing of incarcerated people and correctional staff. The bill would also establish a commission charged with independent oversight of the Connecticut Department of Corrections (DOC). The rally featured speeches from justice reform advocates, faith leaders, legislators, and people impacted by incarceration.

Last June, Governor Lamont vetoed the PROTECT Act, formally SB 1059, after the bill passed both the House and Senate. In its place, the Governor issued Executive Order 21-1, which included no provisions for correctional oversight and gave incarcerated individuals less additional out-of-cell time than what was guaranteed in the PROTECT Act. Stop Solitary CT is making a renewed attempt to get the PROTECT Act signed into law during the 2022 legislative session.

The rally happened outside the State Capitol at 11 AM. Speakers and supporters included ACLU Smart Justice, CT Justice Alliance, CONECT, the Katal Center, CT Legal Rights Project, One Standard of Justice, CT Alliance to End Sexual Violence, CT NAACP, Women Against Mass Incarceration (WAMI), Voices of Women in Hartford, 1199 SEIU, and CT Child Advocate Sarah Eagan. Pastor John Lewis from Christ Chapel New Testament Church spoke about the responsibility of religious communities to weigh in on the practice of solitary confinement. Another speaker was Colleen Lord, a member of Stop Solitary CT whose son died while restrained in shackles at New Haven Correctional Center. Several legislators came outside and stood in solidarity with the crowd. All spoke about the importance of continuing the fight to make sure that restrictions on solitary confinement are codified.

For those who wanted to participate virtually, the rally was also live-streamed. Students from Quinnipiac and Yale participated in shows of support for the PROTECT Act from their respective campuses.

“It is time to hold Governor Lamont and the Department of Corrections accountable for the continued use of solitary confinement and extreme isolation on incarcerated people,” said Tammy Jones, who spoke at the rally on behalf of the Katal Center. Jones continued, “An executive order is only as good as the paper it is written on and does not do nearly enough to protect incarcerated people from the torturous conditions of solitary.”

Reflecting on the event, Stop Solitary CT Lead Organizer Barbara Fair said, “Although restricting the use of isolation in prisons is not listed as a priority on this session’s legislative agenda, voices from across the state showed up in solidarity at the state Capitol with a demand for Governor Lamont: ‘We are here for unfinished business. We are here to finish what should have been completed last session.’ Our children and adults have been suffering for decades within systems of care across this state. We will not be silenced. Instead of prioritizing being tough on our children in crisis and reallocating millions to law enforcement and corrections we should be focusing on how best to take care of our children.”

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