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Date: Thursday, April 8th, 2021 (EST)

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## **Release— The PROTECT Act Passes Out of Judiciary Committee with Overwhelming Margin, Bipartisan Support**

Hartford, CT – Thursday afternoon, the PROTECT Act, otherwise known as Senate Bill 1059, passed in the Judiciary Committee with an overwhelming margin of support, in part due to legislators reaching across the aisle. In addition to demonstrating broad Democratic support for the PROTECT Act, republican support illustrated that protecting the lives of people who live and work in prison should not be politically divisive.

The vote in Judiciary today represents yet another milestone in Stop Solitary CT's journey to end prolonged isolation, ban abusive restraints, guarantee access to pro-social communication, and ensure accountability in the Department of Correction. While Stop Solitary CT has not yet had the opportunity to review substitute language, we are prepared to fight so that the bill, stemming directly from the lived experiences of directly impacted people, stays true to its foundational vision.

Reflecting on this recent success, Stop Solitary CT Steering Committee Member **Leighton Johnson** said "We will put on our victory hats and celebrate our win. Then we will put on our armor and gear up for the next fight." Echoing Leighton's sentiments, Stop Solitary CT Steering Committee Member **Kevnesha Boyd** said "Today we celebrate SB 1059's broad support. We are one step closer to restoring humanity in the Department of Corrections."

Stop Solitary CT Steering Committee Member **Barbara Fair** said, "Our legislators took a stand against state sanctioned abuse and suffering of people behind the walls of Connecticut's prisons. Last year, the United Nations cited Connecticut prisons for their abusive practices. A Supreme Court judge stated conditions under which people on death row were held were unconstitutional, cruel and unusual. We have heard stories which horrified most of us. Today, under the guidance of our esteemed Senator Winfield and Representative Stafstrom, legislators chose to close this ugly chapter in Corrections and demand humane treatment for all men, women and children held in State custody. We look forward to doing the work to make it a reality."

At present, SB 1059 enjoys broad co-sponsorship in both the House and the Senate including: Rep. Josh Elliott, 88th Dist., Rep. David Michel, 146th Dist., Rep. Anne M. Hughes, 135th Dist., Rep. Robyn A. Porter, 94th Dist., Rep. Travis Simms, 140th Dist., Rep. Quentin W. Phipps, 100th Dist., Rep. John "Jack" F. Hennessy, 127th Dist., Rep. Edwin Vargas, 6th Dist., Rep. Michael A. Winkler, 56th Dist., Sen. Martin M. Looney, 11th Dist., Sen. Will Haskell, 26th Dist., Rep. Aimee Berger-Girvalo, 111th Dist., Sen. Dennis A. Bradley, 23rd Dist., Sen. Alex Kasser, 36th Dist.