



For Immediate Release

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Release: Coalition Gathers to Demand that Legislation Address Both Police and Correctional Officers in Special Session, Argue for Open Legislative Process

Hartford, CT— A coalition of legislators, community leaders, and civil rights organizations gathered outside the Capitol Building on Wednesday afternoon to demand substantive change during a special session. Stop Solitary CT called on the Governor and legislative leaders to pass a bill that redirects police and correctional funding to black and brown communities, closes Northern C.I., abolishes solitary confinement, and fully funds independent oversight of police departments and correctional facilities.

“Time’s up for baby steps to justice. Justice delayed is justice denied and we have been denied for too long. The time is now for doing what’s right,” said Barbara Fair of Stop Solitary CT.

Legislators emphasized that the special session was a moment of reckoning for the State of Connecticut. “The call of this moment is to look again at the lack of equity in the systems that exist in our society,” said Sen. Gary Winfield (D-10), co-chair of the Judiciary Committee. He continued, “When we are called into session this must be what undergirds the work we do then and going forward. Whether it be on police accountability, prison reform, or a host of other issues, we must center in our work the concept of equity and the voices we have heard across this nation for the last several weeks.”

Rep. Josh Elliot (D- 88) argued, “It is important to recognize, at a time when police brutality is at the fore, that we cannot simply begin and end the conversation at the police. There are systemic patterns of oppression running through our governmental structure through our carceral and injustice system.”

Stop Solitary CT insisted that police and correctional officer accountability should be considered two sides of the same coin. Because the special session is going to be limited to issues related to both Covid-19 and police accountability, legislation must address the pressing need for decarceration as well as oversight of the Department of Correction.

Claudine Fox of the ACLU of CT emphasized, “The systemic racism at the root of policing also drives incarceration. Police are gatekeepers to a criminal legal system that harms Black and Latinx people in our state daily. The Connecticut General Assembly must come back in for a special session that goes beyond thoughts and prayers and instead takes meaningful action to invest in Black and Latinx people, not prisons and policing.”