

Chris O'Brien

From: Frantz, Sarah <sarah_frantz@brown.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 12:03 PM
To: Chris O'Brien
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Subject: Testimony for 7/22 House Committee on Finance - Close the ACI High Security Center

Dear House Finance Committee Representatives,

My name is Sarah Frantz and I am a constituent of Rhode Island. I live at 96 Carrington Ave, Providence, RI 02906.

I'm writing today to demand you take action to close the ACI High Security Center. While the Governor's current budget proposes closing two modules within High Security, this budget plan needs to go further and close the High Security Center outright.

The ACI High Security Center was built to house individuals in long-term solitary confinement, which is in violation of the UN's Mandela Rules. RIDOC Director Coyne-Fague noted herself in her 2019 testimony to this Committee that "keeping people in cells 23 hours a day is not really the way to go." She also spoke on the dangerous conditions of the outdated building, further proof that the entire facility needs to close. The High Security Center is RIDOC's most expensive facility to run at a yearly cost of almost \$200,000 per prisoner. Rhode Island would save millions of dollars a year by permanently closing High Security and could re-allocate these funds to desperately needed community services.

Based on the 2017 educational budget, RI spent about \$16,000 per year per pupil, meaning that each prisoner in the High Security Center is receiving more than 10x as much funding as each student in our school system. We need to be investing money in students, who are the future of our state. We should not be investing our money in the inhumane treatment of individuals who were failed by their educational system (many studies have shown a strong link between involvement with the criminal justice system and poor educational and economic opportunities). We should be investing in these individuals' futures, not in their trauma. As a current medical student I can attest to the fact that time and again solitary confinement has been shown to be detrimental to the mental health of incarcerated individuals.

I hope that the House Finance Committee will take bold action in fully closing the ACI High Security Center.

Thank you,
Sarah Frantz
MD'21 Candidate, AMS at Brown University