

Chris O'Brien

From: Alice Hamblett <alice.t.hamblett@gmail.com>
Sent: Tuesday, July 21, 2020 2:26 PM
To: Chris O'Brien
Cc: Rep. Abney, Marvin L.; marvinla@aol.com; Rep. Slater, Scott; slateroc@aol.com; Rep. Marszalkowski, Alex; ALEXDISTRICT52@gmail.com; Rep. Amore, Gregg; GREGGAMORE@verizon.net; Rep. Barros, Jean P.; jeanphilippebarros@yahoo.com; Rep. Diaz, Grace; Rep_Diaz; Rep. Edwards, John G.; JOHN.EDWARDS.V@gmail.com; Rep. McLaughlin, James; jimclaughlin1943@gmail.com; Rep. Mendez, Mario F.; mfmendez621@gmail.com; Rep. Morin, Michael A.; mmorin732@cox.net; Rep. O'Brien, William W.; WILLIAMOBRIEN2012@gmail.com; Rep. Price, Justin; Rep_Price; Rep. Quattrocchi, Robert J.; BOBBYQUATRO@gmail.com; Rep. Tobon, Carlos E.; carlosetobon@gmail.com; Rep. Vella-Wilkinson, Camille; VELLAWILKINSON@gmail.com
Subject: High Security and Public Health

Dear House Finance Committee Representatives,

My name is Alice Hamblett and I live at 219 Washington Road in Barrington, RI. I was born and raised in Rhode Island and am now a student at Brown's School of Public Health (SPH).

I have spent much of my time at SPH learning about the impact that mass incarceration has on the health of communities. Most recently, I have studied the spread of COVID-19 in prisons and jails. The global pandemic has made it increasingly clear that we cannot continue to incarcerate our community members at such an exorbitant rate and in such a punitive manner.

In Rhode Island, we can make substantive, brave changes to better support our community members who are incarcerated. Specifically, we can close the High Security Center at the ACI in Cranston. I understand that the Governor's current budget proposes closing two modules within High Security. However, this is simply not enough. The High Security Center must be closed 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 She also spoke on the dangerous conditions of the outdated building, further proof that the entire facility needs to close.

I urge you to read the following articles that address the negative health impacts of solitary confinement: ["Reducing the Use and Impact of Solitary Confinement in Corrections"](#) from the *International Journal of Prisoner Health*, ["The Cardiovascular Health Burdens of Solitary Confinement"](#) from the *Journal of General Internal Medicine*, and ["Public Health and Solitary Confinement in the United States"](#) from the *American Journal of Public Health*. It is also worth noting that, in 2018, the [American Medical Association \(AMA\)](#) issued a statement of support for reducing the use of solitary confinement due to its harmful impact on the physical and mental health of those who are incarcerated.

Cost is also important. 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.

I hope that the House Finance Committee will take bold action in fully closing the ACI High Security Center. Now is the time for brave, substantive change so that we better our state for all of its residents, particularly for those who are marginalized.

Thank you.