

Re: Department of Justice Report on the DOC, Action Needed Now

Governor Baker, EOPSS Undersecretary Peck and Commissioner Mici,

I am writing to you concerning the DOJ recent report, It is very troubling, the fact that this investigation has been done in 2005, 2011, and now in 2020, makes me feel like no one cares to take the bold steps needed to implement change. Change in the regulations not the names of the units or the time being reduced by 15 mins or 2 hours it is not enough, it is still isolation and damaging not corrective.

What upsets me the most is the officers who fail to do the job they are making a good salary to perform. I must point out the behavior exhibited and lack of responsibility to get medical help for a person in danger of self-harm is criminal. We need people who have expertise and knowledge as a professional in these positions. All the investigations are a waste of money, and time if there are no measurable changes. Are we just going to miss another opportunity to act on data that has taken years to gather, this is a gross waste of resources, time and people. Look at the communities they are returned to, the damage follows many people home. Leaving families and love ones and the community to deal with a situation created by a failed system called corrections. That is unfair to everyone.

I feel the courts need to intervene when responsible prison authorities abandon the concepts of decency and act uncivilized. No prison should operate in a manner that does not allow a person to rehabilitate and they should not inflict physical or mental torture on anyone.

Change will work to ensure safety for everyone. The much needed culture changes would create a better environment to work and live in. The guards that are in need of relief are the ones who take their personal and untreated trauma out on people they do not like or judge for reasons of indifference, race, sex, or life style. It is not the role of the staff to harm or allow anyone to cause harm. This is lawless, and should not be tolerated from anyone in society or on the job.

It is a waste of our tax dollars, if we are not focused on community safety. MDOC can be one of the models of change we are witnessing all around the country if we act on this now. Thank you.

Cassandra Bensahih

Concerned citizen, voter, taxpayer, organizer with Massachusetts Against Solitary Confinement