



For Immediate Release

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With COVID-19 Spiking, Correction Unions Call For Suspension of Social Visits

New Britain, CT—With COVID-19 spiking around the state, the unions representing more than 5,000 front-line state correctional employees today are calling on the Department of Correction to suspend social visits throughout Connecticut’s prisons.

In addition to suspending social visits, the CSEA NP-8 and AFSCME NP-4 Bargaining Units want the DOC to ensure adequate time for mandatory testing of staff. The agency has allowed health care providers to reduce the hours available for testing, making it difficult for staff to meet the mandatory requirements.

Union presidents Millie Brown (CSEA Local 2001), Sean Howard (AFSCME Local 387), Collin Provost (AFSCME Local 391) and Michael Vargo (AFSCME Local 1565) issued this joint statement in regard to suspending visits:

“Connecticut is unfortunately trending upward in terms of COVID-19 infection rates, deaths and hospitalizations. Our state prisons should not be exempt from heeding these warning signs and taking new proactive steps to protect staff, inmates and our families. We believe social visits as currently constructed pose a community health risk.

“We are urging the Department to suspend social visits on a temporary basis only, until the agency can implement policies and procedures in accordance with the Governor’s latest directive. There is no reason to have more than 10 people in any visiting area at this current time.

“The pandemic is far from over. To his credit, Commissioner Quiros has stressed the importance of getting in front of COVID-19, which is something his predecessor failed to do. We need the agency to implement or revisit protective measures in keeping with the justifiable concerns the governor has expressed about the latest spike. Readjusting the social visit policy is a sensible place to start.”

The CSEA NP-8 Bargaining Unit represents Lieutenants, Captains, Counselor Supervisors, Parole Managers and Deputy Wardens. The AFSCME NP-4 Bargaining Unit represents correction officers, parole officers, counselors, maintenance and kitchen and more.

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