



Governor Ned Lamont,

Yesterday, dozens of Connecticut residents, in nearly 40 vehicles and representing almost a dozen community organizations around the state, gathered for a protest in front of your mansion in Hartford. We brought horror stories from inside our state's prison and jails, and we reiterated our call to release our incarcerated loved ones amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Your COVID-19 response, to date, continues to actively exclude people who are incarcerated in Connecticut. Collectively, our groups represent thousands of community members with incarcerated loved ones in Connecticut. We demanded that you listen to public health experts who have made clear that the best way to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in prisons and jails is through decarceration.

At your COVID Update press conference today, you dismissively responded to our protests by saying, "Call me." Yet without a direct number to you, which you know citizens do not have, Connecticut residents are diverted to a general 211 line. Put another way-- there is no obvious way for directly impacted constituents to just "call you."

This is no time for flippant comments. Given the severity of the novel coronavirus, we demand a meeting with you; we want to know what your plan is to safely protect incarcerated people in Connecticut from COVID-19 and we want a clear explanation as to why you are not following the precedent set by neighboring states and releasing people as a response to COVID-19.

Our loved ones cannot wait another day. We agree with you that we are in a public health emergency. Incarcerated people in Connecticut need a plan that is based on a public health response. Families need to know what is happening to our loved ones.

We, the undersigned, request a meeting with you in no less than two days by Zoom video to discuss your plan to address and mitigate the spread and impact of COVID-19 in Connecticut prisons and jails. To set up this meeting, your staff can coordinate with Kenyatta M. Thompson, (860) 937-6094 or kthompson@katalcenter.org. We look forward to your response.

Sincerely, your constituents,

Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice

Gregg Gonsalves, PHD, Department of Epidemiology of Microbial Diseases, Yale School of Public Health

One Standard of Justice

Second Chance Educational Alliance

Stop Solitary CT