The House Committee on Corrections & Institutions supports the plan to expand Wi-Fi within Vermont's correctional facilities. This will improve working conditions for Corrections Officers and other Department of Corrections (DOC) staff by switching from manual to digital records collection, allowing for enhanced monitoring including compiling bodycam footage, offering staff educational opportunities through the Community College of Vermont (CCV), and departmental trainings. It will also improve living conditions and outcomes for incarcerated individuals by offering opportunities for vocational training, expanded educational offerings through CCV, and improving inmate health through telehealth visits and medical alert bracelets.

The House Energy and Digital Infrastructure Committee also received testimony on this amended FY26 budget request from DOC Commissioner Deml (March 18) and Agency of Digital Services Secretary Reilly-Hughes (March 19). As the HEDI committee had requested, DOC and ADS are now working closely together on this project. ADS supports this IT expansion as a workforce improvement project and requests that any funds be appropriated to the ADS IT Modernization Fund. The HEDI vote on the $1m amended request was XX-XX.

This project is turn-key and affordable – the switch from purchased to leased equipment means that hardware will not become obsolete over time, and approximate necessary start-up funding reduced from $3 million to $1 million. This project is supported by the Governor, the Department of Corrections, and the Agency of Digital Services, and our committees follow suit in adding our support.