

April 9th, 2019

Senator Benning, Chair
Senator Rogers, Vice Chair
Senator Mazza
Senator Lyons
Senator Hooker

Dear Committee Members,

Thank you for your consideration and attention to the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility which houses women in Vermont who are incarcerated. It has been well established that the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility lacks the physical space and built environment conducive to the rehabilitation and services that Vermont's female prison population needs and deserves.

The capital bill under your consideration proposes to allocate \$250,000 to Buildings and General Services for a feasibility study to "evaluate options for the site location of a new correctional facility to replace Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility". While we appreciate the shared concern regarding the current facility and its significant limitations, we disagree with the scope and focus of the proposed study. The focus of any evaluation of the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility must be broader than the building and facilities.

We the undersigned are requesting that the language be amended to require the State of Vermont to use the proposed funds to ***evaluate alternatives to incarceration and the services required to meet the needs of Vermont's female prison population***. In addition, this evaluation should include but not be limited to participation by the Department of Corrections. This evaluation must also include key stakeholders including organizations which currently provide services at Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility.

Most of the women at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility are incarcerated as a result of criminal responses to trauma. If the State of Vermont wishes to decrease its overall prison population and create a system where incarceration and rehabilitation co-exist, we must work collaboratively and creatively to achieve that vision.

Sincerely,

Karen Tronsgard-Scott, Executive Director
Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence

Jen Oldham, Executive Director
Vermont Works for Women

Tom Dalton, Executive Director
Vermonters for Criminal Justice Reform

James Duff Lyle, Executive Director
American Civil Liberties Union of Vermont

TJ Donovan, Attorney General
State of Vermont