

Judiciary Committee

JOINT FAVORABLE REPORT

Bill No: SB-391 / [Bill Status](#) / [Public Hearing Testimony](#)

AN ACT CONCERNING THE AVAILABILITY OF BREAST CANCER SCREENING, DIAGNOSIS AND TREATMENT SERVICES FOR WOMEN

Title: COMMITTED TO THE CUSTODY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION.

Vote Date: 3/30/2026

Vote Action: Joint Favorable

PH Date: 3/18/2026

File No.:

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SPONSORS OF BILL:

Judiciary Committee

REASONS FOR BILL:

This bill requires the Department of Correction to adopt a policy permitting incarcerated persons screened for breast cancer to be treated at the nearest hospital rather than at UConn Health.

RESPONSE FROM ADMINISTRATION/AGENCY:

DeVaughn L. Ward, Esq., State of Connecticut Correction Ombudsman: He testified in support of SB 391 because access to timely and appropriate medical care remains a major concern in prisons. He emphasized that the bill allows the Department of Correction to arrange breast cancer screening and treatment at licensed health care facilities when services are not available on-site, reducing delays in diagnosis and improving health outcomes.

Sharonda Carlos, Deputy Commissioner of Administration, Department of Correction (DOC): She testified in support of 391 because it authorizes the DOC Commissioner to arrange breast cancer screening, diagnostic, and treatment services for women in DOC custody at the nearest licensed health care institution, instead of requiring transport to the University of Connecticut Health Center. She also notes that the bill allows for on-site mammography or referral to a nearby licensed institution if on-site services are unavailable.

Rosemary Lopez, Women's Legislative Policy Analyst, & Werner Oyanadel, Latino and Puerto Rican Policy Director, Connecticut General Assembly, Commission on Women,

Children, Seniors, Equity and Opportunity (CWCSEO): They testified in support of SB 391 because it improves access to breast cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment for women in the custody of DOC. They emphasized that the bill allows the Commissioner of Correction to coordinate care with nearby licensed health care facilities when services are not available on-site, reducing logistical barriers, enabling timely evaluations, and supporting preventive care for incarcerated women, particularly at York Correctional Institution.

Senator Heather Somers, 18th District: She testified in support of SB 391, emphasizing that it closes a critical gap in healthcare access for women in custody by allowing the Department of Correction to use licensed healthcare institutions closer to prisons for breast cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment. She noted that the bill reduces delays, lowers transportation and security burdens, improves continuity of care, and increases the likelihood of early detection and better health outcomes, while maintaining high standards of care.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF SUPPORT:

Matthew Baidak: He testified in support of SB 391, emphasizing the importance of timely breast cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment for women in the custody of DOC. Drawing from his family experience, he highlighted delays in detection and urged that the bill be extended to all incarcerated individuals, including transgender and male persons, beginning at age 40 to prevent late-stage diagnoses and more costly treatments.

Mary Lee A. Kiernan, President & CEO, & Simone Quartey, Director of the Center for Equity & Justice, YWCA Greenwich: They testified in support of SB 391 because timely cancer screening and treatment for incarcerated individuals is critical to health equity and dignity. They emphasized that the bill addresses systemic barriers in correctional healthcare, prevents potentially life-threatening delays, and aligns with YWCA Greenwich's mission to empower women, promote justice, and ensure humane and compassionate healthcare for all.

Jess Zaccagnino, Policy Counsel, ACLU-CT: She testified in support of SB 391, emphasizing that access to timely breast cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment is a constitutional right for incarcerated women. She noted that SB 391 allows the Department of Correction to coordinate care at licensed health care facilities when services are not available on-site, improving health outcomes and addressing systemic gaps in correctional health care.

NATURE AND SOURCES OF OPPOSITION:

None expressed.

Reported by: Trevor Ellis

Date: April 6, 2026