

Name: Akosua Koram

Title:

Organization or Agency:

Topic: Meeting Date Not Listed

NA

Testimony:

I am writing this letter greatly relieved that I am leaving York Correctional Institution. As I leave, I want to make sure that the conditions of confinement are better for every incarcerated person that resides here. The issues I would like to address are medical issues and conditions of confinement in segregation.

Medical issues are foremost of importance because everyone deserves adequate healthcare. I am blessed to not have any serious issues while a resident of York but even in my limited interactions with Medical it was not always a positive experience. I can recall having to exaggerate symptoms in order to get seen by medical for issues such as a sinus infection and serious diarrhea. The Correctional officers and nursing staff often act as gatekeepers so that residents are not seen by doctors. I cannot understand the interest they have in denying us access to healthcare. I have heard countless horror stories of the uncleanliness of the infirmary and negligence by medical staff.

When it comes to conditions of confinement in segregation I have first hand knowledge. I had the experience of serving two years in segregation under a special needs status where I was clothed in a green uniform. First of access to anything is rare especially on J tier in the segregation unit. J- tier is housed for residents with severe disciplinary issues, mental health patients, and other people seen as vagrants by administration. Recreation is limited to an hour twice a day including showers. You are placed on restraints every time you come out of your cell even for showers. I had a difficult time securing clean uniforms, bras and underwear from the officers and the workers. Requests were mostly ignored by officers and complaints to social workers were dismissed. Not to mention the sewage problems that allowed other residents feces to travel into the cells. We were never allowed to clean our cells with supplies.

I have a story of one Thanksgiving in 2023 where another resident flooded the whole tier. I had water in my cell past my ankles and spent Thanksgiving weekend with only blankets an Officer kindly gave me to clean up the mess. The worker cleaned the water on the tier but we were left in our cells with water. This event was a common occurrence along with a host of other nuisances.

I would like to see a recreation table placed on J-tier along with a television and games. Just because J-tier is for severe discipline doesn't mean it cannot be therapeutic. York Correctional Institution is not the worst prison in the world but has a long way to go in granting basic needs to its residents. I hope you can help me in making that happen! Thank you and God bless you all!