



October 28, 2019

Jacqueline Sherman, Interim Chair
Michelle Ovesey, Acting Executive Director
Members of the Board of Correction
1 Centre Street, Room 2213
New York, NY 10007
Sent via email

Re: Proposed Restrictive Housing Rule

Dear Interim Chair Sherman, Members of the Board, and Acting Executive Director Ovesey:

Girls for Gender Equity (GGE) writes to you following the most recent meeting of the Board of Correction to join with advocates in urging the immediate release of the Board's full draft rulemaking package as submitted to the Law Department.

GGE is an intergenerational, advocacy and youth development organization that is committed to the physical, psychological, social, and economic development of girls and women. GGE is committed to challenging structural forces, including racism, sexism, transphobia, homophobia, and economic inequality, which constrict the freedom, full expression, and rights of trans and cis girls and young women of color, and gender non-conforming youth. Though the Board first voted in January 2016 to craft humane standards for the Department of Correction's operation of restrictive housing, the overwhelming danger of isolation is clear and the need to codify new rules is especially urgent for those who are currently in isolation and those who have died because of it.

We are disappointed that the CAPA process has not yet begun and that the Board's package – that we heard last week was submitted to the Law Department over a month ago – has not been shared. We request full transparency to understand what the Board believed important to reform and what we expect will be removed due to external pressure.

A comprehensive rulemaking package on restrictive housing is essential for the safety of people incarcerated in the City's jail system. The reform process spanning 2014-2018 introduced new kinds of restrictive housing, and we have seen the harms of ESH on incarcerated young adults. Rather than reinforce restrictive and isolated confinement in new forms, the City must eliminate these practices entirely. We appreciate the brief overview of the anticipated proposed rules, but are deeply discouraged that the previous meeting of the Board perpetuated adaptations to solitary confinement through separation status admissions, especially without moving forward the restrictive housing rulemaking process. We request that when the Board reconvenes for another public meeting on October 31st that the variance prolonging the operation of separation status housing be voted down.

Public trust in this Board to have a fair process – a Board empowered by the City Charter to be independent – will only be strengthened by transparency. We did not hear a date or deadline for releasing the proposed rules, nor an agreement to release the initial proposal that was sent to the law department. Again, we urge the Board to release both immediately.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "C. Pope". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Charlotte Pope
Deputy Director of Policy & Government Relations
Girls for Gender Equity
cpope@ggenyc.org
718.857.1393 ext. 122