

Dear Sir/Madam:

My name is Angela Hall and I am speaking on behalf of myself and members of Supporting Our Loved Ones Group (S.O.L.O.G.), a support group for the family and friends of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated Alaskans.

In review of the Department of Corrections Rehabilitation and Reentry report to the legislature, one of the Department's "Central Eight" risk factors for criminal recidivism is noted as family and/or marital discord.

We believe the importance of healthy familial support is vital to the success of resident rehabilitation and re-entry efforts. Therefore, it is important that the Department of Corrections develop visitation policies that afford families the opportunity to have meaningful and consistent visitation opportunities.

We would like visitation policies to be reviewed to consider some of the following:

A less stringent visitation room environment that allows for a more relaxed atmosphere while also maintaining professional supervision of interaction between visitors and residents.

Alteration of current rules regarding physical contact, to include at the very least hand holding between adult visitors and residents.

Increased physical contact between minor visitors and their adult family members in residence [who are not restricted from contact with children] to include intermittent hugging, cuddling, kisses [all within reason and societal norms], sitting side by side and engaging in book reading, small toy play, or table games.

Return of vending machines so that family members and residents can enjoy meals and/or snacks during visitation (at facilities with visitation rooms large enough to accommodate this).

Increased hours of visitation, particularly at Goose Creek Correctional Center, that would allow optimum visitation time in relation to travel time to the facility.

Continuation of family banquets and potlatches which provide a full day of engagement between visitors and residents in an enjoyable atmosphere that provides some measure of normalcy in an otherwise abnormal environment.

We would welcome the opportunity to sit down with members of the Department of Corrections and the Legislature to openly discuss improvements to visitation policy and procedure that would enhance visitation and thereby improve rehabilitation and re-entry efforts which in turn would reduce recidivism. We appreciate the Department of Corrections continued efforts to improve the lives and futures of our incarcerated loved ones.

Thank you for your hard work and dedication to the people of the State of Alaska.

Sincerely,

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Angela Hall

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S.O.L.O.G.

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