



STATE OF CONNECTICUT

DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION
24 WOLCOTT HILL ROAD
WETHERSFIELD, CONNECTICUT 06109

Theresa C. Lantz
Commissioner

Telephone: 860-692-7482
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November 8, 2006

*Mr. Roger C. Vann
American Civil Liberties Union Foundation of Connecticut
32 Grand Street
Hartford, Connecticut 06106*

Dear Mr. Vann:

I am in receipt of your letter of October 30, 2006 which expressed concerns about the use of canines during cell extractions within the Connecticut Department of Correction as a result of the recent report by Human Rights Watch.

Based on that report, I was asked by Governor M. Jodi Rell to review the practice and revise its use if that was found to be appropriate. That review has resulted in amendments to 2 of the agency's Administrative Directives which govern the "Use of Force" and the "Canine Unit".

While the previous language of those Administrative Directives had set the threshold for the use of canines in a cell extractions at the level of, "...a clear and imminent danger to the safety of staff or inmates..." the revision now requires that, "Canines, as a use of physical force in the extraction of an inmate from a cell shall only be authorized when there is an imminent threat to the life of staff, inmates and/or the public."

Our highly trained canines are used during cell extractions only under rare and extreme circumstances, and only when all other alternatives have been exhausted. When an inmate presents an imminent threat to life however, I would rather had a dog face that risk than a correctional officer.

Sincerely,


Theresa C. Lantz
Commissioner

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