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August 5, 2020

Director Dean Williams
Colorado Department of Corrections
Sent via email to: dean.williams@state.co.us

Dear Director Williams:

I want acknowledge that this is probably the most challenging time in the history of the Department of Corrections. Effectively fighting this pandemic takes the cooperation of both inmates and staff to reduce the risk of transmission and otherwise promote as healthy and safe a prison environment as possible.

As you know, people in prison have faced considerable hardship as a result of the extraordinary and necessary changes you have made to prison operations to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in prisons.

Since March, people in prison have endured the suspension of in-person visits, reduced phone calls, program discontinuation or disruption, long delays in transferring people from jail to DOC, and long periods of daily lockdown in-cell or other restrictions in normal inmate movement. This is on top of the heightened anxiety and stress of not knowing if they, or anyone they come in contact with, is contagious or not, particularly in the absence of social distancing. For those at facilities that have gotten sick or been incarcerated at facilities that have had COVID-19 outbreaks, they have gone through even more.

Pursuant to CRS 17-22.5-405(9), you have the authority to award up to 120 days of exceptional conduct earned time to people in prison who demonstrate conduct that promotes the safety of correctional staff, volunteers, contractors, and other persons under the supervision of the department of corrections.

I believe the efforts and hardships experienced by people in prison qualify as exceptional conduct and request that you apply the full award of 120 days to the earliest release date to every inmate under your jurisdiction who is eligible to receive earned time and who has not been convicted of a Class I Code of Penal Discipline infraction since March 1, 2020.

I further ask that you award this exceptional conduct earned time on a rolling basis to anyone admitted to prison from this date forward so long as prison operations are impacted by COVID-19 transmission mitigation efforts assuming they are eligible for earned time and are not convicted of a Class I Code of Penal Discipline infraction.

Please modify AR550-12 and any other DOC administrative regulations needed to effectuate this award.

I look forward to discussing this with you at your earliest convenience. I am also available to discuss any other ways you think CCJRC can help you reduce illness and the loss of life for staff or people incarcerated during this pandemic.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Christie Donner".

Christie Donner, Executive Director
cc: Sen. Pete Lee, Sen. Julie Gonzales, Rep. Mike Weissman, Rep. Leslie Herod, Mr. Adam Zarrin