STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION

OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONER

Ned Lamont
Governor

Sharonda T. Carlos
Interim Commissioner

May 1, 2026

Attorney DeVaughn L. Ward
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Dear Attorney Ward:

I am writing in response to your report regarding the May 5, 2025, strip search of Ms. Michelle Troconis, #433612, at York Correctional Institution.

At the onset, I'd like to emphasize that the Department of Correction recognizes both the importance and the significance of strip searches for maintaining safety in the correctional environment. While every effort is made to emphasize the critical need to respect and uphold the dignity of every individual, it is a sober fact that strip searches have been an invaluable tool for the discovery of dangerous contraband in our facilities and the preservation of a safe and secure environment within the facilities. With the introduction of body scanners into the Department (i.e., presently at both York and Manson Youth Correctional Institutions), we anticipate being able to diminish significantly the need for this method of search while still being able to provide a safe environment for the incarcerated population, for visitors, and for staff.

With that said, I would like to address your report's final recommendation first. The implementation of the body scanners has altered the landscape of the Department's search protocol and, as such, is implicated in my response to your other recommendations.

You are recommending that the Department "alter its practices and modernize its security approach through the expedited, statewide implementation of body scanning technology." The Department is in wholehearted agreement with this position and fully supports the expansion of the use of body scanners statewide. With the available appropriations for this endeavor, we look forward to body scanning being the standard and effective method of search utilized within the Department.

The introduction of body scanners to York and MYI led to the rewriting of the relevant Administrative Directive: A.D. 6.7, "Searches in Correctional Facilities," which was published on January 16, 2026, and superseded the Directive that was in place on May 5, 2025. This revision of the Directive addresses many of the concerns highlighted in your Report.

The new Directive corrected the inconsistency that was found in the older version of the Directive and that led, in part, to the circumstances cited in the facility's report of the May 5, 2025 incident, YCI-2025-05-063, and in your Office's findings, Specifically, the older Directive stated that "a pat search shall be conducted . . . at the conclusion of all contact visits" (Section 4 (b) (ii)) *and* that "a strip-search shall be conducted . . . at the conclusion of any contact visit" (Section 5 (b) (ix)). This was addressed in the January 16, 2026, version of the Directive, which now clearly states that "at all times, and when circumstances permit, the least invasive search method shall be utilized" (Section 4). The Directive then lists the Department-authorized search methods from least invasive to most invasive: metal detector, pat search, body scan, and strip search (Section 4 (a)). Pat searches "may be conducted whenever necessary to further any correctional purpose" (Section 6 (a)), such as after an inmate fails a metal detector search and refuses to surrender or denies he or she possesses a concealed item (Section 5 (b) (ii)).

Significantly, Section 8 of the new version of the Directive provides the guidelines for strip searches, culminating in the caveat that strip searches may be conducted "when a body scanner is not available" (Section 8 (a) (v)). It also specifies the documentation that is required as it pertains to strip searches: i.e., (1) when there exists "reasonable suspicion that the inmate is concealing contraband[, it] shall be documented on Form CN 6701, Strip Search Report;" (2) "all cross-gender strip searches shall be reported on Form CN 6604, Incident Report;" and (3) controlled strip searches "shall be documented in accordance with Administrative Directives 6.5, Use of Force, and Administrative Directive 6.6, Reporting of Incidents" (Section 8).

Accordingly, the newly revised Administrative Directive 6.7 addresses your recommendations that the limited circumstances in which strip searches are warranted are defined, "with specificity;" that the documentation requirements be similarly clarified and enforced; and that the use of body scanners be established within the Department.

As for your recommendation that the Department "investigate whether the facts of this incident reflect broader systemic concerns," please be advised that the administration at York has scrutinized incident reports from the past five (5) years and has discovered that the events of May 5, 2025, reflect an isolated incident. In fact, in your interview with the second incarcerated individual cited in the Department's Incident Report, your Office reported that this individual "stated that she had never been subjected to a strip search prior to a visit on May 5, 2025, or at any other time." This, considered in conjunction with the Department's endeavor to implement body scanners statewide, is demonstrable of the Department's commitment to less invasive search methods and its diminished reliance on strip searches.

The Department has also accepted your recommendation for enhanced training that will underscore the policy as articulated in the revised Administrative Directive 6.7: that strip searches are to be utilized when there exists an extreme risk of threat to the safety of the facility, the incarcerated population, staff, and/or visitors; or when a body scanner is not available. These circumstances are clearly delineated in the Directive (Section 8 (a)).

Please note that the administration at York C.I. also issued a roll call notice on April 15, 2026, reminding staff of the requirement that "each employee of the Department shall act in a

professional, ethical, and responsible manner at all times. Unprofessional behavior with supervisors, subordinates, the public, and inmates will not be tolerated. This expectation extends to all duties, including the conduct of strip searches. Strip searches must be conducted in a professional, respectful, and policy-compliant manner at all times, ensuring the dignity of the inmate is maintained while adhering to safety and security requirements. Any deviation from these standards will not be tolerated."

You note that Officer Cardona, the staff member who conducted the strip searches of Ms. Troconis, was not subjected to discipline. It is correct that, at the facility level, Officer Cardona's supervisor timely coached her as to proper strip search procedure as was in effect at the time of the incident, including the need to call a supervisor and to document the reasonable suspicion that led to the strip search (i.e., Ms. Troconis being out of place prior to the announcement that count had cleared). Please note that formal discipline is not up to the facility to impose. An incident may be referred for, and, if deemed necessary, an investigation conducted, as appropriate. If the investigation determines that there has been a policy violation, the report may be forwarded to Labor Relations for a review regarding discipline, if warranted. Any imposition of discipline would be in accordance with Administrative Directive 2.6, "Employee Discipline." The Incident Report regarding the May 5, 2025, incident, YCI-2025-05-063, was forwarded to the Director of Security and the investigation is currently underway.

In sum, I would like to emphasize the steps the Department has taken since the events of May 5, 2025. While your recommendations do highlight areas of concern that existed at the time of the incident, most have been addressed through the revision of Administrative Directive 6.7 on January 16, 2026. With the planned training for staff and the anticipated expansion of body scanners throughout the State, the Department will be addressing the remaining recommendations contained within your Report.

Sincerely,

Sharonda Carlos

Sharonda Carlos
Interim Commissioner

cc: Deputy Commissioner William Mulligan
District Administrator H. Rodriguez
District Administrator E. Garcia
District Administrator C. Washington