

Chair Dwayne Sampson,

I am writing in opposition to the Department of Correction's effort to seek a variance from Board Minimum Standards to ban physical mail and contract its digitization to Securus.

Mail is a lifeline to prisoners. When family contact is regular, prisoners demonstrate improved outcomes post-incarceration, including a reduced chance of recidivism and improved mental health. Digital scans are not an equivalent substitute.

I am concerned about contracting Securus, given the company's invasive privacy policy and their troubled history of illegally recording privileged conversations. Your proposal constitutes a serious violation of both the incarcerated and their loved one's right to privacy, and the protections granted to them under the Fourth Amendment.

If you are truly concerned with the wellbeing of those in New York's prisons, you will protect the right of the incarcerated to receive physical mail. There is scant evidence to support the claim made by Louis Molina that mail is a large source of contraband. If this is your concern, you should look toward the evidence that indicates that correctional officers bring in the most contraband.

Meet your duties by maintaining basic standards of care for prisoners, and protect the right to receive physical mail. Thank you for your time.

Elena Schaef