

Valentine, Teri (SEN)

From: Susan S. Sered <ssered@suffolk.edu>
Sent: Tuesday, March 31, 2026 7:22 PM
To: Brownsberger, William (SEN); Hunt, Daniel - Rep. (HOU); Gomez, Adam (SEN); Reyes, Estela - Rep. (HOU); Muradian, David - Rep. (HOU)
Cc: Valentine, Teri (SEN); Walsh, Erin (HOU)
Subject: Special Commission - Classification Summary
Attachments: classification-special-commission.docx

Some people who received this message don't often get email from ssered@suffolk.edu. [Learn why this is important](#)

Dear Chair Brownsberger, Chair Hunt, Senator Gomez, Representative Reyes, Representative Muradian, and Members of the Special Commission on Correctional Consolidation and Collaboration,

As the Special Commission moves towards preparing a final report, I urge you to address the widespread problem of over-classification throughout the DOC system. Four separate studies arrived at the same conclusion: The DOC consistently over-classifies men and women, placing them in higher security settings than deemed necessary by the DOC's own "Objective" point-based tool. This over-classification happens through a mix of overrides and/or requirements for minimum-security status, but the outcome is the same: Far too many people are being held in settings that do not contribute to their reentry abilities and that put them at risk of exposure to violence and needlessly harsh practices and policies.

Understanding and operationalizing the findings of these studies is critical as the Commonwealth plans to invest substantial funds into DOC facilities in the very near future. Solving the problem of over-classification has implications for how many medium-security and minimum-security prisons the DOC should operate, and that determination in turn has implications for the level of restrictions incarcerated people live under and the costs of running each prison.

Here are the four studies:

The two-part report submitted to the Commission by the UMass Chan Medical School: DOC OPB Classification System (Females) and DOC OPB Classification System (Males):

<https://malegislature.gov/Commissions/Detail/647/Documents>

Report by the Women and Incarceration Project: https://bpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/sites.suffolk.edu/dist/1/1933/files/2025/07/U082724-Center-for-Womens-Health-Human-Rights_062325-Update.pdfonline

Detailed letter submitted by Rep. Uytterhoeven and Rep. Holmes:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1vF5Jrg6T7sCBub7BeLyEBRNaqGvs8rrhOn1n71Y_-9g/edit?usp=drivesdk

Letter submitted to the Commission by M. Claire Masinton, Staff Attorney,

MHLAC: <https://malegislature.gov/Commissions/Detail/647/Documents>

My colleagues at the Women and Incarceration Project and I would be happy to discuss the issue of classification with members of the Special Commission.

Cordially,

Susan Sered, PhD

Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice

Suffolk University

Boston, MA 02108

Email: ssered@suffolk.edu

Best regards,
Susan Sered, PhD
Professor, Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice
Suffolk University, Boston, MA 02108
[Women and Incarceration Project](#)