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My name is AshleyGaddis and I have been formerly incarcerated. I'm currently staffed with Return Strong. I support SB 351.

From my experience, I know the importance of being able to have an in-person visit. Visitation is a moment, and probably the only space available where we are able to be yourself and be vulnerable. To not have that moment is a hopeless feeling. Just because a person has a criminal background, especially an aged one, does not mean that person can not be a positive and encouraging person in someone else's life. The truth is, that might be the ONLY support system a person has.

The prisons are unpredictable right now with pandemics, riots, assaults, drugs and mental illnesses. Its crucial that we be able to see a trusting and loving face and to KNOW that our loved one is REALLY ok. Hearing the words over the phone is nothing compared tp being able to look into their eyes and actually get a peace of mind KNOWING that your loved one is well and ok.

When does the punishment stop? Being in prison is a physical punishment for someone that has made a mistake for whatever reasoning and that alone comes with many losses. There should not be policy and authority in place that continues to break a persons spirit and mental state.

ASHLEY GADDIS, (mother, daughter, wife, formerly incarcerated)
Community Organizer/ RETURN STRONG