This letter was written by a person incarcerated at Chowchilla.</br/></br/>

Hello,</br/></br/>

I hope this letter finds all of you in good health. I thank all of you for your courage and being on the frontlines.</br/></br/>

As for being incarcerated, a mother, and facing the COVID pandemic, it has been lonely, scary, and isolating. Lonely due to having no family visits or even regular contact, I get to hug my loved ones, visit. It’s lonely because our emails are held for days, and the video grams (30 second duration) are held up for months, so that hearing and seeing our loved ones is almost nonexistent.</br/></br/>

Scary due to the fact that at the onset of COVID in March 2020, our staff did not wear masks, or if they did, wore them improperly. We did not get any masks until June or July while staff were coming to work and testing positive, we could do nothing to protect ourselves.</br/></br/>

Scary because the staff brought the virus and now inmates are testing positive and we don’t get a ventilator, we don’t get proper medication, they don’t even provide inmates the proper masks -- we get fabric masks that are too tight, too loose, or perfect and each one is sprayed with a chemical fire retardant that we have to breathe into our lungs and brains.</br/></br/>

If one building is quarantined, the staff working that quarantined building comes to another building to respond to alarms or even to work overtime. They do not wash their clothes, body, or change gloves or masks. The COs are the enemy bringing COVID to ALL inmates. And we are powerless against this.</br/></br/>

Isolating due to our modified program if not straight lockdowns, in our cells crowded with less than six feet between us sitting on our individual beds. We have to turn in the cellblock cleaner/sanitizer every night at 7:00 and go without until 6:30am the next day. We live in our cells, we bathe, eat, shit, and sleep, brush our teeth -- breathe in this cell, but we cannot keep a disinfectant in our cells overnight.</br/></br/>

The bacterial soap ordered for the institution is given to staff in the gallons, yet inmates get maybe eight fluid ounces to last for 30 plus days between five or more inmates in one room -- yet we must wash our hands constantly. Our body soap is not antimicrobial or bacterial soap -- it is perfumed and beautifying.</br/></br/>

The staff do not practice six feet social distance. They hug each other with masks off. One staff was overheard saying “If I catch COVID, I’d rather bring it in here (CCWF) and give it to inmates than take it back home to my kids.”</br/></br/>

Scary, terrifying, isolating, lonely. Powerless. I do not feel safe. I feel trapped and doomed to die. I have been trying to fight off depression along with several others because we can only exercise in the shower, in our cells, or maybe half an hour outside every four days. Maybe. If the staff are “training.”</br/></br/>

I don’t even get that. The staff treat us as the contagion -- yet we would not have COVID if not for them. We are a deserted island, surrounded by electric fences and brick walls. It’s scary, lonely, isolating, and depressing especially during COVID.</br/></br/>

Sincerely,</br/>

[Redacted], Inmate during Pandemic.