

SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN NEW YORK'S PRISONS & JAILS

What You Should Know & Can Do to Help Stop the Torture

Solitary and Other Forms of Isolated Confinement are Inhumane & Counterproductive

People in isolated confinement in New York's Special Housing Units (SHUs) spend 22 to 24 hours a day locked in a cell the size of an elevator, alone or with one other person. They may be permitted one hour to exercise alone in a cage. They do not receive any meaningful programs or therapy, and cannot make phone calls. The sensory deprivation, lack of normal human interaction, and extreme idleness can lead to intense suffering and severe psychological damage. The use of solitary confinement increases recidivism and has never been shown to reduce prison violence.

There are Far Too Many People in Isolated Confinement in New York, Disproportionately People of Color

On any given day, as many as 4,500 men, women, and children are in solitary confinement and other forms of extreme isolation in New York State prisons. Hundreds more are in solitary in local jails across the state. Most SHU sentences are for nonviolent misbehavior. People of color are overrepresented in the SHUs even more than in the general prison population.

People are in Isolation for Far Too Long, Regularly Months, Years, and Even Decades

Most people sent to isolation spend months or years there. Some individuals have been in solitary confinement in New York's prisons for more than two decades. The UN Special Rapporteur on Torture has denounced solitary confinement exceeding 15 days. New York places no limit on the total time someone can spend in isolated confinement.

Even Particularly Vulnerable Groups are Subjected to Isolated Confinement

Children or people with mental illness fare even worse in "the box"—yet they are disproportionately likely to end up there. Even pregnant women, elderly people, and people with severe physical disabilities are held in isolation in New York. Members of the LGBTI community have suffered additional staff abuse by being placed in solitary confinement.

The HALT Solitary Confinement Act Would End Long-Term Solitary in New York and Replace It with More Humane and Effective Alternatives

Now with 41 Co-Sponsors in the NYS Assembly (Aubry) and 13 Co-Sponsors in the NYS Senate (Perkins), the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act (A. 4401 / S. 2659) would:

- **Fundamentally transform the response to people's needs and problematic behaviors**, from deprivation and isolation to additional support, programs, and therapy, by creating Residential Rehabilitation Units to replace the SHUs, with substantial congregate out-of-cell time and meaningful human interaction and programs.
- **Ensure no person is ever held in isolated confinement beyond 15 days.**
- **Drastically restrict the criteria** that can result in separation from the general prison/jail population.
- **Never place particularly vulnerable people in isolation for even one day**, including the young and the elderly, pregnant women, people with a disability or mental health need, or people who identify as LGBTQI.
- **Make prison and jail processes fairer, with more transparency and accountability, and help better equip staff to work with people.**

What You Can Do (and Encourage Others to Do)

LEARN the facts about solitary confinement and other forms of prison isolation in New York at:

www.nycaic.org

www.solitarywatch.com

www.correctionalassociation.org

www.nycjac.org

www.nrcat.org

www.no-separate-justice.org

www.boxedinny.org

WRITE to your state legislators, and to the following officials demanding that they pass the Humane Alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, A. 4401 (Aubry) / S. 2659 (Perkins) and end the torture of isolated confinement. You can find your state legislators here: <http://www.nysenate.gov/> and here: <http://assembly.state.ny.us/mem/search/>. Please incorporate your own experiences and choose two or three of the above facts and/or demands to incorporate as well:

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo
Governor of the State of NY
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Commissioner Anthony J. Annucci
NYS DOCCS
1220 Washington Ave, B2
Albany, New York 12226

JOIN the Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement at www.nycaic.org. We hold monthly meetings in person and by tele-conference and engage in actions, vigils, workshops, and advocacy. Please visit our site to sign up for our monthly email newsletter and/or listserv and find out how you can get involved. You can also follow CAIC on Twitter [@nycaic](https://twitter.com/nycaic), like us on Facebook at facebook.com/NYCAIC. For more information, email caicny@gmail.com or call Scott Paltrowitz at **(212) 254-5700**.

SHARE a narrative for CAIC's website or Facebook page of how solitary confinement has impacted you, or invite your loved ones on the inside to write about their experiences. We also have a newsletter available for free to individuals in prison and jail. Email stories and newsletter requests to caicny@gmail.com.

INVITE CAIC to provide materials or hold an event – film screening, panel discussion, training, workshop – about isolated confinement at your school, community center, or place of worship. We have a range of materials and would be happy to collaborate to plan an event. Contact caicny@gmail.com.

ATTEND an upcoming CAIC meeting or event. Visit www.nycaic.org for the latest updates.

- **CAIC Monthly Meeting:** CAIC holds a monthly meeting to strategize and plan its efforts to end the torture of solitary confinement in New York State. Please check out www.nycaic.org for more or updated information or contact Scott at 212 254 5700 or spaltrowitz@correctionalassociation.org.
- **No Separate Justice Vigil:** Outside of Metropolitan Correctional Center (MCC) (150 Park Row): First Monday every month. Help expose human rights abuses in “war on terror” cases, including solitary.



The New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC) brings together formerly incarcerated people, family members of currently incarcerated people, concerned community members, advocates, and organizations interested in challenging the use of isolated confinement in New York prisons and jails. The campaign believes we need sweeping reform aimed at fundamentally transforming the way our institutions respond to people's needs and problematic behaviors. Learn more about our work – and join us! – at www.nycaic.org.