

*For Immediate Release...*

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## **#HALTsolitary CAMPAIGN STATEMENT ON LEGISLATURE'S REJECTION OF GOV. CUOMO'S FLAWED SOLITARY CONFINEMENT PROPOSAL**

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(New York, NY) - Today, the #HALTsolitary Campaign, a coalition of survivors of solitary confinement, family members of people in solitary, mental health and legal experts, people of faith, and others, released the following statement in support of the Legislature's rejection of Governor Cuomo's proposal on solitary confinement in their one-house budget resolutions:

“As survivors of solitary confinement, family members of people currently in isolation, and other concerned New Yorkers who have organized, educated, and advocated to pass the Humane Alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, we commend the State Senate and Assembly for rejecting Governor Cuomo's deeply-flawed and ultimately ineffective version of our bill. We also renew our call for New York State to end the torture of prolonged solitary confinement and replace it with more humane and effective alternatives by passing HALT. Every day that passes without real reform risks another suicide, another life destroyed, another son or daughter or cousin lost. Gov. Cuomo's proposal would leave New Yorkers — including people with mental illness — in solitary indefinitely. There is broad support for HALT in the Legislature and we continue to urge its passage immediately.”

**Alicia Barraza and Doug Van Zandt, parents of [Ben Van Zandt](#) and members of the #HALTsolitary campaign, issued the following additional statement:**

“As parents of a mentally ill son who needlessly suffered in solitary confinement to the point that his only escape was to take his own life, we thank Senator Sepúlveda and Assembly Member Aubry, for their leadership in supporting the HALT Solitary Confinement Act, and the true reforms that the bill represents. The needless suffering of those in solitary and their families must come to an end.”

**BACKGROUND:** Find the #HALTsolitary Campaign's analysis of Gov. Cuomo's proposal on solitary confinement [here](#).

**Thousands of people remain in solitary confinement in NY prisons and jails each day, and tens of thousands each year: 22 to 24 hours a day in a cell without any meaningful human contact or programs.** These individuals are disproportionately Black and Latinx people, young people, gender non-conforming people, and people with mental illness.

**People continue to spend months, years, and decades in solitary ([30+ years](#)) in NY.** The sensory deprivation, lack of normal interaction, and extreme idleness of solitary can lead to intense suffering and severe psychological and physical damage. [More than 30% of all prison suicides](#) in New York take place in solitary.

The entire United Nations, including the US, passed rules prohibiting solitary beyond 15 days for any person, because it otherwise would amount to torture. **Colorado has implemented a 15-day limit** in its prisons and reduced the number of people in solitary from 1,500 to 18. **The HALT Solitary Confinement Act (S1623-Sepulveda/A2500-Aubry) similarly includes a 15-day limit** on solitary, and would create more humane and effective alternatives. States that have reduced the use of solitary have seen a positive impact on safety for both incarcerated people and staff. Community members are calling for NYS Legislators and Governor Cuomo to pass HALT.

Learn more at [www.nycaic.org](http://www.nycaic.org).

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