



**Jewish Leaders in support of S.1623/A.2500  
A BILL TO HALT SOLITARY CONFINEMENT**

266 W. 37th St Suite 803  
New York, NY 10018

Office of the New York State Senate Majority Leader  
Senator Andrea Stewart-Cousins  
28 Wells Avenue, Building #3  
Yonkers, NY 10701

Dear Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins,

As rabbis, cantors, Jewish communal leaders, and rabbinical students who live, work, or study in your district—and as religious leaders affiliated with T'ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights—we are writing to urge you to bring the HALT Solitary Confinement Act, S.1623 (Sepúlveda)/A.2500 (Aubry) to the floor of the Senate for a vote as soon as possible.

The **Humane Alternatives to Long Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, S.1623/A.2500**, is the critical bill to remedy the harm of solitary confinement. It would end the torture of solitary confinement for all people in New York prisons and jails, and create more humane and effective alternatives.

Solitary confinement is both a moral and a religious issue. Genesis reminds us that no human being should be alone. G-d then creates a helpmate to end man's isolation. Classical rabbinic sources extol the virtue of repentance at the heart of rehabilitation. The false accusation that was the basis of our ancestor Joseph's imprisonment in the Torah weaves through it a long thread on the danger of shackling people whose freedom is taken at the expense of their dignity.

The American Friends Service Committee estimates that there are currently 80,000 people living in solitary in the U.S. In addition to increased risk of racial violence, suicide, PTSD and hallucinations, adults incarcerated in solitary report that they are targeted with food deprivation as well as frequent bouts of sexual violence and assault.

In addition to T'ruah, other voices supporting this bill include The Labor-Religion Coalition of NYS, the Mental Health Association of NYS, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, the NY

Association of Psychiatric Rehabilitation Services, the National Religious Campaign Against Torture, and the Coalition for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement.

Please join us to say that human beings should not be kept apart. You can raise up the voice of youth in poverty who are jailed and battered. You can be a light for what is human, restorative and good.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Adam Baldachin  
Rabbi Jonathan Blake  
Rabbi Lester Bronstein  
Rabbi Joan Glazer Farber  
Dr. Matthew Goldstone

Rabbi Jill Hammer  
Rabbi Shai Held  
Jeff Hoffman  
Dr. Ora Horn Prouser  
Cantor Michael Kasper

Cantor Lisa Klinger-Kantor  
Linda Ripps  
Rabbi Ellie Shemtov  
Rabbi Jonathan Slater  
Student Rabbi Devon Spier