



For Immediate Release...

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**Statement by the #HALTsolitary Campaign
on Gov. Cuomo's Proposed Solitary Confinement Regulations**

(New York, NY) -- Today, the #HALTsolitary Campaign released the following statement on Governor Cuomo's [proposed solitary confinement regulations](#):

"The proposed regulations fall far short of what is needed to truly end the torture of solitary confinement and would leave many vulnerable New Yorkers behind. The regulations would permit people to be locked in solitary for lengths that amount to torture under the United Nations standards, and people could be placed indefinitely in alternative units that may prove to be the sort of solitary by another name that took the life of Layleen Polanco. In addition, young people, people with mental illness, and elderly people with acute health conditions would still be subject to this horrific treatment, which disproportionately impacts Black and Latinx people and transgender/gender non-conforming people. Thanks to efforts led by survivors of solitary and their family members, there is ample support in the Legislature to pass the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, which truly ends the torture of prolonged solitary confinement for all people and replaces it with more humane and effective alternatives, and we continue to call for its immediate enactment when the legislative session resumes."

BACKGROUND:

Recently, Senator Sanders called for an end to solitary confinement -- just one person in a growing chorus of voices across the country to stop this torture, including from other presidential candidates. Sen. [Elizabeth Warren](#) said: "solitary confinement is cruel and inhumane. We must end this practice." Sen. [Corey Booker](#) has said: "[s]olitary confinement is torture. It is an archaic, damaging, and inefficient practice that has been proven to have irreversible effects. ... [T]his practice is wholly unjust and leaves the incarcerated worse off." [John Hickenlooper](#): "We also need to end solitary confinement, which is cruel and unusual punishment, and makes it next to impossible for [people] to reenter society when their prison term ends." [Beto O'Rourke](#): "let's absolutely end solitary confinement." [Pete](#)

[Buttigieg](#) will “[r]educe use of solitary confinement, including abolishing its prolonged use” (which is defined internationally as beyond 15 days).

Thousands of people remain in solitary confinement in New York’s prisons and jails each day, and tens of thousands each year experience this torture: 22 to 24 hours a day in a cell without any meaningful human contact or programs. They 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 (including [30+ years](#)) in NY. The sensory deprivation, lack of normal interaction, and extreme idleness of solitary can lead to intense suffering and severe psychological, physical, and even neurological 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. A summary of the bill can be found [here](#). The bill passed the State Assembly in 2018 by a vote of 99 to 45.

34 New York State Senators from Long Island to Upstate New York are officially co-sponsoring the HALT Solitary Confinement Act – a clear majority – and additional Senators have committed to vote for the bill, as well. 79 New York State Assembly Members also officially co-sponsor HALT – another clear majority – and the bill passed in that house in 2018.

The New York City Council passed a resolution in support of HALT, the second such statement by a local government (in May 2019, the Tompkins County Legislature also [passed a resolution](#) supporting HALT). The Progressive Caucus and the Women's Caucus of the NYC Council have [called](#) for a complete end to solitary confinement.

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 New York State Legislators and Governor Cuomo to pass HALT on the very next day the legislature is in session, and calling on New York City to act before then to end solitary completely in the City jails.

Learn more at www.nycaic.org.