



## **STATE PRISONS: The HALT Solitary Act Will Decrease - Not Increase - Costs to the State**

1. **HALT will create substantial savings by allowing whole prisons and buildings to close**
  - a. The NYCLU projects HALT would cause the number of people in Special Housing Units (SHUs) on any given day to drop by over 2,000 people to [under 300 people](#). There is currently a SHU capacity for holding over 3,500 people.
  - b. NY could thus close entire prisons (such as one or more of the most abusive, like Attica, Clinton, or Great Meadow, or a prison dedicated to solitary like Upstate) and house people in general population in what are now SHUs or S-blocks, and/or close many S-block and SHU buildings. (DOCCS overall has excess capacity of over 12,000 beds).
2. **HALT does not require any new construction costs in the state prisons**
  - a. There is enough *existing* space within the DOCCS prison system to house people in the alternative Residential Rehabilitation Units outlined in HALT. The RRUs are simply a statutorily defined term used to stipulate conditions that can take place in existing space.
  - b. Under a [2014](#) and [2015](#) lawsuit settlement, DOCCS has already opened units with over 800 beds as alternatives to solitary.
  - c. Under HALT, there would be fewer than 800 people on any given day in an RRU given the restricted placement criteria, mechanisms for release, and one year time limit.
  - d. For any limited additional space that is needed to implement the RRUs, existing space from the reduction in the SHU population could be repurposed with minimal cost.
3. **The Governor's proposal requires more construction and operating costs than HALT**
  - a. HALT will much more dramatically shrink the number of people in either solitary or an RRU than the Governor's proposal, because of HALT's: a) real 15-day time limit on solitary; b) more restricted criteria for who can get into solitary or an RRU; and c) more and quicker mechanisms for release from RRUs, including a one year limit.
  - b. The approved 2019-2020 budget allocated \$69 million for construction costs and \$10 million in operating costs for the Governor's proposal (for alternatives for more people).
  - c. Any funds needed for programs and treatment will be much less than the savings from closing entire prisons, buildings, and units noted above, and much less than the billions spent on prisons each year. Plus, HALT has a one year implementation period; if any additional funds are needed, they can be allocated in 2020-2021 or 2021-2022 budgets.
4. **HALT will save money by reducing harm in prisons, increasing release rates, reducing costs in the outside community, and reducing the number of people re-incarcerated**
  - a. HALT will reduce violence, incidents, and medical and mental health costs in prisons, since evidence shows that solitary increases these problems.
  - b. HALT will lead to more parole releases; people in solitary are almost always denied.
  - c. HALT will reduce medical, mental, and behavioral health costs in the community and will mean fewer people returning to prison because less time in solitary and more access to programs will improve outcomes for people returning home from prison.
5. **Regardless of fiscal costs, the human costs of solitary are unacceptable, and HALT is needed now to end the torture of prolonged solitary confinement for all people!**



## **COUNTY JAILS: The HALT Solitary Act Will Decrease - Not Increase - Costs to Counties**

1. **HALT does not require the construction of new jails or even new units within jails**, despite Governor Cuomo's false claims that it does.
  - a. The Residential Rehabilitation Units required under HALT are simply a statutorily defined term used to stipulate conditions that can take place in existing space.
  - b. HALT exempts jails with capacity of less than 500 people from even having RRUs (while still requiring a 15-day limit on solitary and the provision of programs / services beyond that limit), meaning HALT would only require [10 of the 57 jail systems](#) to have RRUs.
2. **Since jail populations will shrink due to pre-trial reforms, there is enough existing space and staff funding to provide the programs, services, and security to implement HALT.**
  - a. Jails across NY will have excess space and staff as jail populations dramatically decline due to pre-trial reforms (The Vera Institute estimates a [40% decline](#) statewide).
  - b. History indicates the [same level of security staffing](#), and likely programs and services staffing, will remain for the much smaller number of people detained.
  - c. There should thus be no construction costs to implement HALT, and at most minimal or negligible costs to repurpose existing space for use as RRUs.
  - d. There should also thus be no, or minimal, personnel costs to implement HALT. Some jails may need to shift resources to provide programs and services.
  - e. Gov. Cuomo's cost estimates are at least wildly overblown (thousands of times too high).
  - f. If there is in fact a need to shift resources and/or add money due to HALT, these minimal funds - compared to astronomical jail budgets - are necessary to end torture and provide the most basic programs. There is always the opportunity to allocate additional funds in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 budgets since HALT has a one year implementation period.
3. **HALT will save money for counties by reducing harm in jails, reducing costs in the outside community, and reducing the number of people re-incarcerated**
  - a. The Resolve to Stop the Violence Project (RSVP) in San Francisco jails - with full days out of cell and immersive programming - resulted in a 25-fold reduction in violent incidents, a five-fold reduction in rearrests for violent crimes, and a six-fold reduction in jail time, translating into cost SAVINGS of four dollars for every dollar spent.
  - b. Reducing solitary will reduce violence, and medical and mental health costs in jails.
  - c. Reducing solitary will reduce medical, behavioral, and mental health costs in the outside community, as well as re-incarceration, since people who have spent time in solitary are [more likely to die, require health services, and be re-incarcerated](#) upon release (with those harms increasing the longer a person spends in solitary).
4. **The Governor and the State Commission of Correction claim their own proposal for reducing the use of solitary in local jails will not have any cost**, showing the Governor's claims about HALT's costs to be even more blatantly false and disingenuous.
5. **Regardless of fiscal costs, the human costs of solitary are unacceptable and HALT is needed now to end the torture of prolonged solitary confinement for all people!**