

# Solitary Watch

## Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2012/01/10/california-considers-new-rules-for-solitary-confinement-in-state-prisons/>

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close

Search

close

close

by [Jean Casella and James Ridgeway](#) | January 10, 2012

The [Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity](#) coalition today reports on the content of a meeting held in late December with an undersecretary of the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR), regarding the future of the states Security Housing Units (SHUs). Prisoners in the SHUs at Pelican Bay, Corcoran, and elsewhere are held in round-the-clock solitary confinement, some for years or even decades; many are there because they have been validated as gang members based on the word of other prisoners.

Following a series of highly publicized [hunger strikes](#) and a [hearing](#) in the California State Assembly, the CDCR promised to revisit the process through which it condemns prisoners to long terms in the SHU. Any proposed changes apparently would not affect the Administrative Segregation Units, or ASUs, where prisoners are also held in solitary; a number of hunger strikers have been sent to ASU.

The following notes from the December meeting serve as a status report on that process.

On December 28, 2011, two members of Prisoner Hunger Strike Solidarity's mediation team spoke with Undersecretary Terri McDonald about the status of the new regulations on gang validation/SHU classification policies and procedures.

Undersecretary McDonald stated the following:

Although the Undersecretary's comments do not provide all of the detail we need, this information is helpful in general terms. We will provide more information as we learn it.

James Ridgeway (1936-2021) was the founder and co-director of Solitary Watch. An investigative journalist for over 60 years, he served as Washington Correspondent for the Village Voice and Mother Jones, reporting domestically on subjects ranging from electoral politics to corporate malfeasance to the rise of the racist far-right, and abroad from Central America, Northern Ireland, Eastern Europe, Haiti, and the former Yugoslavia. Earlier, he wrote for The New Republic and Ramparts, and his work appeared in dozens of other publications. He was the co-director of two films and author of 20 books, including a forthcoming posthumous edition of his groundbreaking 1991 work on the far right, *Blood in the Face*. Jean Casella is the director of Solitary Watch. She has also published work in The Guardian, The Nation, and Mother Jones, and is co-editor of the book *Hell Is a Very Small Place: Voices from Solitary Confinement*. She has received a Soros Justice Media Fellowship and an Alicia Patterson Fellowship. She tweets @solitarywatch.

Accurate information and authentic storytelling can serve as powerful antidotes to ignorance and injustice. We have helped generate public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

Only with your support can we continue this groundbreaking work, shining light into the darkest corners of the U.S. criminal punishment system.

by [Juan Moreno Haines](#)

October 25, 2022

by [Solitary Watch Guest Author](#)

October 13, 2022

by [Vaidya Gullapalli](#)

September 29, 2022

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Set my ppl FREE!

Would like to be able to look at this concept paper as I was directly involved in the Arizona STG Step Down Concept in 2007 that was very successful and still is today. Maybe somebody from this list of experts will allow me to peek and comment to them my ideas on their conceptual thinking and planning of this revelation that is now making its way into reality.. Anyone who thinks my view can be helpful please email me at [toersbijns@yahoo.com](mailto:toersbijns@yahoo.com) and give me a peek at it.

<http://www.youtube.com/user/CToersbijns/feed?feature=context> changing my views on solitary confinement after 24 years as a correctional administrator.. now research is showing me the negativity of such a concept. Still learning more but convinced its not the best tool in the shed; rather if it must be used, it must be done so there are no mentally ill or long term placements that are detrimental to the human being cast there to suffer a needless plight.

This is most encouraging news I for one am glad we are making progress in this not sensitive and important issue of solitary confinement in our prisons and not just CA. Read my book based on much data provided by people that live, work and know solitary confinement to understand the culture on both sides.. Not advertising just letting you know that after 25 years of correctional work this retired administrator recognizes the impacts of solitary confinement and has suggested, recommended or implemented many features listed here as possible solutions to the dilemma at hand.

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