

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://solitarywatch.org/2014/08/31/seven-days-in-solitary-83114/>

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by [Lisa Dawson](#) | August 31, 2014



The following roundup features noteworthy news, reports and opinions on solitary confinement from the past week that have not been covered in other Solitary Watch posts.

A federal judge approved the state of California's plan to reduce the solitary confinement of prisoners suffering from mental illness. According to a recent story in [The New York Times](#), about 740 prisoners will be relocated to less restrictive settings under the policy revisions. The story notes that the new policies also provide for improvements in mental health treatment and suicide prevention.

The [National Religious Campaign Against Torture](#) (NRCAT) issues a release responding to New York City's new legislation increasing oversight of the use of solitary confinement at Rikers Island. The release quotes Rev. Laura Markle Downton, Director of U.S. prisons policy and program at NRCAT: Though not an end in itself, we celebrate Mayor de Blasio's signing of the legislation requiring quarterly data reporting on who is in solitary at Rikers Island and under what conditions, because we recognize it as an important step in the process of ushering in humane alternatives.

New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio enacted legislation that will create greater transparency around the use of solitary confinement at Rikers Island and other city jails. According to a recent piece by [The New York Times](#), the law will require the Department of Correction to publish four annual reports detailing the number of individuals held in isolation, the length of time each person is held in isolation, and whether they sustained any injuries or were assaulted during their time in solitary. Despite these measures, the story also states that the law does not include any provisions that would directly curtail guard brutality. . . or the use of isolation as a punishment.

The Treatment Advocacy Center posts a blog entry, [Long Waits for Psych Beds Keeps Many Languishing Behind Bars](#), in which it shares the story of Kyle, 24, who was held in solitary confinement for close to six months at the San Diego Central Jail while awaiting treatment for severe mental illness.

In a blog entry entitled [Criminalization of Mental Illness: Its a Crime](#), the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) briefly touches on the dangers of placing people with psychiatric symptoms in isolation, which the writer likens to pouring gasoline on a fire. In its post, NAMI links to its new [fact sheet](#) on solitary confinement, as well as to Solitary Watch's [recent story](#) highlighting several videos showing inhumane treatment of prisoners with mental illness by guards.

The [Drug War Chronicle](#) outlines the various ways in which the Record Expungement Designed to Enhance Employment (REDEEM) Act, introduced earlier this summer by Sens. Cory Booker (D-NJ) and Rand Paul (R-KY), aims to fix the criminal justice system. According to the story, one initiative of the REDEEM act is to restrict the use of solitary confinement on kids, except in the most extreme circumstances in which it is necessary to protect a juvenile detainee or those around them.

The [Juvenile Justice Information Exchange](#) publishes an op-ed presenting various international perspectives on the solitary confinement of youth. The piece underscores the severe emotional and psychiatric harm inflicted on kids subjected to the practice, stating, Social isolation worsens the trauma and mental health issues already prevalent [in] this vulnerable population. It also leads to further withdrawal with negative consequences for reintegration.

Lisa Dawson served as an assistant editor, social media manager, and contributor at Solitary Watch. She continues to support prisoners and their family members who need help navigating re-entry. She is on Twitter [@endsolitary](#).

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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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