

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Annalena Wolcke](#) | June 14, 2021

A new report found that at least 786 people died in Louisianas jails and prisons between 2015 and 2019. The report is the result of research conducted by Andrea Armstrong of Loyola University New Orleans College of Law and a team of law students as part of the Death Behind Bars in Louisiana project, [reports the Louisiana Illuminator](#). The report found that suicide was the second most likely cause of death (after medical causes) over a span of five years. Among other findings, the report states that 43 percent of suicides in Louisiana jails happened when the person was held in solitary confinement. Of the three children under 18 who committed suicide, two of them were in solitary when they died. The [full report can be found here](#). Armstrong and her team have also launched the [Incarceration Transparency](#) website, which includes a publicly searchable database of individual death records from Louisiana jails and prisons.

On June 5, Connecticut passed the PROTECT ACT, which will limit the states use of solitary confinement in a 87 to 55 vote, reports [local news station WTNH](#). Now, it is up to the governor to sign the bill. In an [op-ed in the Hartford Courant](#) last week, NBA star Caron Butler had written in support of passing the bill. Before he began his career as a professional basketball player, Butler was incarcerated as an adolescent and spent time in solitary. It was damaging, physically and mentally, he writes in the op-ed. Simply put, solitary damages lives.

I feel like Im being punished: According to an [article by the Colorado Trust](#), the Colorado Department of Corrections (DOC) put incarcerated people in solitary confinement as a coronavirus measure. However, by placing people into prolonged isolation for weeks and months on end, the DOC was violating Colorados own rules, which stipulate that a person cannot be in solitary for longer than 15 days at a time. (In a 2017 [op-ed in the New York Times](#), then-DOC director Rick Raemisch announced that the state had ended the use of long-term solitary confinement). Matthew Harter spent 82 days in Covid-19 quarantine. Im gonna have to see a therapist about this when I get out, he told the Colorado Trust.

A federal appeals court in Nevada is allowing a lawsuit against CoreCivic to move forward. [The Associated Press reports](#) that Rudy Rivera sued the private prison corporation for negligence after it held him in solitary confinement for 355 days without ensuring that Rivera had a court hearing. The year I spent in there trying to plead my way out was the hardest time of my life, and Im still struggling with the effects it had on me and my family, Rivera wrote in an email shared with the AP. I hope CoreCivic now realizes that they cant just point their finger in the other direction and avoid the consequences of their actions and inactions.

Annalena Wolke Anna interned with Solitary Watch before beginning a masters degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice at Oxford, where her research focuses on ethnicity in German prisons.

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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