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Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | July 17, 2016

The Arthur Liman Public Interest Program at Yale Law School published a [report](#) entitled, Variations in the Housing of Individuals Sentenced to Death, which in part looks at the use of solitary on death row.

At a [10-day hearing](#) regarding the constitutionality of a federal capital case, defense witnesses testified that the long-term solitary confinement endured by those on death row is inhumane. On the stand, psychology professor Dr. Craig Haney spoke about the conditions of confinement experienced by Donald Fell, who was convicted by a jury in 2005 of carjacking and kidnapping and subsequently housed on the federal death row in Terre Haute.

Former Black Panther Russell Maroon Shoatz [has won](#) a \$99,000 settlement and a permanent reprieve from solitary confinement from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Shoatz was previously held in isolation for 22 years, and a case that challenged his treatment as cruel and unusual punishment had been set to go to trial this week.

An investigation published in [Honolulu Civil Beat](#) looks at what people convicted in the state of Hawaii endure when they are sent to a for-profit prison in Arizona to serve their sentence. Hawaii's policy doesn't apply at Saguaro [Correctional Center in Arizona]; instead, the states for-profit contractor, [Corrections Corporation of America](#), is allowed to set its own policy governing the use of segregated confinement there.

In a 9-5 decision, the 1st District Court of Appeals has [approved reshaping the legal process](#) for people who seek to use the courts to challenge their placement in solitary confinement. The ruling means that prisoners will no longer be able to file writ of habeas corpus petitions to challenge their placement in more restrictive settings, and will instead have to rely on another type of legal proceeding, known as a writ of mandamus. The majority opinion said that earlier court decisions on the issue had erroneously thrust this court into improper judicial second-guessing of the executive branch's daunting and dangerous duty to manage state prisons.

A Dodge County Circuit Court judge has [rejected a request](#) from Wisconsin hunger striker Cesar DeLeon to stop force-feeding him. DeLeon has been force-fed for about the past month, after refusing to eat as a form of protest against his placement in long-term solitary confinement. The prison cannot allow him to die on a hunger strike, said Judge Steven Bauer.

Solitary Watch's Victoria Law published a piece for the [Village Voice](#) about the continued placement of teenagers on Rikers Island in solitary confinement. June 30 should have been the day that Rikers Island ended solitary confinement for 18- to 21-year-olds. Instead, the Department of Correction (DOC) sent a request to the Board of Correction, the city agency that sets minimum standards and oversees conditions in New York City's jail system, asking for a six-month extension of that deadline.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. She's written for the New York Times, Wired, BuzzFeed News, Solitary Watch, and other outlets. Find her [@stahlidarity](#) and at [stahlidarity.com](#).

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 [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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