

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.acluohio.org/en/press-releases/aclu-and-disability-rights-ohio-propose-sweeping-reforms-solitary-confinement>

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COLUMBUS Today the ACLU of Ohio and Disability Rights Ohio issued a report urging extensive reforms to the use of solitary confinement in Ohio's prisons, especially for individuals with mental illness. The report, *Shining a Light on Solitary Confinement: Why Ohio Needs Reform*, calls for a series of reforms, including decreasing the time people spend in solitary confinement, increasing programming and out-of-cell time, improved data collection, and stronger legislative oversight.

Despite the overwhelming evidence that solitary confinement is damaging to a person's mental health and serves no rehabilitative function, Ohio prisons continue to use it. Even though the state has undertaken efforts to reduce the number of people in solitary confinement and provide more out-of-cell time, more than 2,400 people including over 500 people with mental illness are still spending 23 hours each day in a cell the size of a parking space.

Read the full report at www.acluohio.org/solitary.

Hear the stories of people experiencing solitary confinement in Ohio at www.acluohio.org/solitary-videos.

Solitary confinement costs two to three times as much taxpayer money, but does not make prisons or our communities safer, said Adrienne Gavula, regional director for the ACLU of Ohio. 95 percent of people in prison will one day be released, so we have an obligation to return people rehabilitated. There is nothing rehabilitative about solitary confinement, continued Gavula.

Putting people in isolation is devastating and makes recovery next to impossible, said Kristen Henry, staff attorney with Disability Rights Ohio. Psychological damage can occur in just a few days, but hundreds of individuals in Ohio are in solitary for months or years. It is time for Ohio to respond to the overwhelming evidence that solitary confinement is unsafe and ineffective and implement reforms to make the state a national leader, said Henry.

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