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Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | February 16, 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.

At the annual meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (AAAS), Robert King of the Angola 3, University of California Santa Cruz Professor Craig Haney and other experts [testified](#) about the psychological and physical impacts of solitary confinement. ([Science](#) also hosted a live chat with King and Haney).

[Further evidence has surfaced](#) that Evan Ebel, who spent over five years in solitary confinement in Colorado, killed Corrections chief Tom Clements and a second individual in retribution for the time he spent on the inside.

In [The Atlantic](#), Andrew Cohen describes the development of a High Security Mental Health Step-Down Unit at USP Atlanta. He writes that the unit is believed to be the first federal prison program ever designed and implemented to provide substantial long-term care and treatment for high-security mentally ill inmates, many of whom were transferred from ADX-Florence.

The Kansas Department of Corrections (DOC) has [objected to legislation](#) that would require the state to automatically place certain individuals in isolation, citing the high cost of the measure. The bill, which mandates that anyone sentenced to death or life without the possibility of parole be automatically sent to solitary confinement, could cost the DOC upwards of \$80 million.

State Assemblymember Tom Ammiano has [introduced a bill](#) that would limit the use of administrative segregation (ad-seg) and enable individuals in ad-seg to earn shortened time on the inside through good behavior.

[In These Times](#) journalist George Lavender provided a latest update on the on-going hunger strike at Menard. According to prison officials, one person still continues to refuse food. Last week, [Common Dreams](#) reported that several men at Menard had begun a liquids strike.

According to a new peer-reviewed study, published by the [American Journal of Public Health](#), there is a strong correlation between being placed in solitary confinement and engaging in self-harm or suicidal behavior. By analyzing medical records from New York City jails, scientists found that although only 7.3 percent of admissions included any solitary confinement, 53.3 percent of acts of self-harm and 45 percent of potentially fatal self-harm occurred within this group.

A [new report](#) released by the Youth Justice Clinic at Cardozo Law reveals that over a quarter of young people incarcerated at Rikers Island have spent time in isolation. Clinic Director Ellen Yaroshefsky said, "By incarcerating youth, often times putting them through long bouts of solitary confinement, we are not only setting them on a course for failure instead of addressing the underlying problems, but also are spending a lot of money in the process of doing harm."

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](#).

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public awareness, mainstream media attention, and informed policymaking on what was once an invisible domestic human rights crisis.

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by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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