

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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Our Weekly Roundup of News and Views on Solitary Confinement

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | June 11, 2017

The Federal Bureau of Prisons has systematically violated the Eighth Amendment rights of people with mental health issues locked up at Lewisburg prison in Pennsylvania, [according to a lawsuit](#) filed by the DC Prisoners Project of the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. The isolation of prisoners with mental illness and the denial of necessary treatment is cruel, inhumane and serves no legitimate security purpose, said Jonathan Smith, Executive Director of the Washington Lawyers Committee. Across the nation, prison officials are recognizing the severe harm created by these types of isolation practices and the costs to the system and public safety. It is long past time for the Bureau of Prisons to reform its practices. The lawsuit was [covered by the Marshall Project](#) and other outlets.

Connecticut passed legislation prohibiting the Department of Corrections from placing people under 18 in administrative segregation. [According to the AP](#), the bill also requires the DOC commissioner to study the use of restrictive housing for inmates and report back to the General Assembly by Jan. 1, 2019. Additionally, the agency must provide annual data on the use of restrictive housing and administrative segregation, commonly referred to as solitary confinement. The legislation now goes to the desk of Gov. Malloy.

On any given day last month, an average of 27 children were placed in solitary confinement at Wisconsin's prison for teens, according to records filed as part of a civil rights lawsuit. As [the Journal Sentinel](#) reports, that represents more than 16% of the population at Lincoln Hills School for Boys and Copper Lake School for Girls, which share a campus 30 miles north of Wausau.

Freed political prisoner and Puerto Rican independence activist Oscar Lopez Rivera [appeared on Democracy Now](#). He spent about 35 years locked up including 12 years and four months in solitary confinement before his sentence was commuted by President Obama. In ADX, for the first 58 days, I was awakened every half-hour, 58 days straight, he said. So that will give you an idea what it is to be in prison, to be under those conditions.

In a feature story for [Vice magazine](#), Solitary Watch contributor Aviva Stahl explores what transgender women experience in immigration detention, both in male facilities and in the now-shuttered trans pod in Santa Ana, California. Before the pod existed, the de facto situation for the trans folks in immigration custody was to place them in administrative segregation, Keren Zwick, said one immigration attorney, which was a euphemism, effectively, for solitary confinement. Another trans pod recently opened in a private detention facility in New Mexico.

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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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