

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | February 9, 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.

The [ACLU released an online toolkit](#) outlining how LGBTI advocates and directly affected individuals can leverage the Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) to protect one of the most vulnerable populations in prison. Chase Strangio, Staff Attorney at the ACLU said, Somewhere along the line, corrections officials determined that isolating [lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex] prisoners would keep them safer. Heres the truth: people in solitary confinement are especially vulnerable to sexual abuse from prison staff.

A New Mexico woman who was kept in isolation months at a time in cells so filthy that a sock [allegedly] rotted into an open wound in her foot [has reached a \\$1.6 million settlement in](#) a lawsuit filed against the county where she was held.

[A report](#) released last week by John Marshall Law School includes accounts of the extreme isolation experienced by some individuals in immigration detention, and also explores why a September 2013 Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) directive falls short in protecting vulnerable detainees, especially those with mental or medical illnesses.

In South Carolina, [a freshmen senator](#) queried the states acting corrections director Bryan Stirling about conditions on the inside including the placement of individuals with mental illness in solitary confinement despite explicitly being asked not to pursue that line of questioning by the Senate Corrections and Penology Committee chairman. Senator Marlon Kimpson of Charleston, who has only been in office about six months, explained, It is well documented that the department had knowledge of the cruel and unusual punishment that has been going on.

A judge [has ordered the reopening of the Toledo Juvenile Home](#), after ruling that Governor Branstad had overreached his constitutional powers ordering the facilities closure. The girls living in the facility were rehoused this past January after an investigation found that its residents were subject to over 47,000 hours of isolation. Branstad has appealed the decision to the Iowa Supreme Court.

The debate on the use of solitary confinement on Texas death row continues. In [The Dallas News](#), a former executive assistant to the director and general counsel for the Texas Department of Corrections (now called the Department of Criminal Justice) wrote, The current conditions of confinement on Texas death row constitute overly harsh and needlessly punitive measures relentlessly applied 24 hours, a day 365 days a year that only heighten management problems.

Two former members of the Russian feminist punk band Pussy Riot [are touring the United States](#) after being released from a Russian prison. Nadezhda Tolokonnikova and Maria Alekhina plan to visit US prisons and meet with nonprofit organizations to learn about the use of solitary confinement across the country.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and

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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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