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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 2, 2017

A legislative commission in Rhode Island, tasked with studying the use of solitary confinement in the state, has reported back to lawmakers and made recommendations for reform. According [to one local outlet](#), the Department of Corrections has already made some policy changes with regards to the number of phone calls permitted to people in the box, and also agreed to track the number of people in isolation.

The Onondaga County Justice Center and two civil rights organizations have reached an agreement to curb the use of solitary confinement as a punishment for 16- and 17-year-olds held there, reported [a Syracuse, New York news outlet](#). Under the settlement, young people will only be placed in isolation in their cells when the sheriffs office determines that there is an imminent safety risk that less restrictive measures cannot adequately resolve.

[Video has been released](#) of an individual in solitary confinement on Rikers Island receiving oral sex, during what was supposed to be a supervised visit. Efforts to reduce the use of solitary at the jail have been met with stiff resistance from the correctional officers union, although Rikers has also been plagued by repeated reports of staff violence and misconduct towards people incarcerated at the facility.

The ACLU of Iowa is [petitioning the states Department of Education](#) to revise its code for room seclusion, after an internal review found that students were sometimes placed in seclusion for minor infractions, like stepping out of line. Iowa must update its rules to reflect growing consensus that seclusion and restraints should not be used to discipline or punish children, Daniel Zeno, policy counsel for the ACLU of Iowa, said in a statement.

A Montgomery, Alabama, federal court ruled that mental health care from that states Department of Corrections is so inadequate that it violates the Eighth Amendment, reported the [American Bar Association Journal](#). Amongst other findings, the judge noticed that there is no practice that prevents people with mental illness from being placed in solitary, and that being in solitary only causes existing mental health issues to deteriorate.

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