

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Garrett Zehr](#) | August 23, 2015

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.

A [New York Times investigation](#) found that men at the Clinton Correctional Facility in New York faced retribution after the escape of two individuals earlier this year. Dozens of men were transferred out of Clinton and held in solitary confinement and others were beaten. Only prison employees have been implicated in helping with the escape. More than 60 men have filed complaints with Prisoners Legal Services of New York, an organization that works with indigent persons who are incarcerated.

An NPR report looks at the [history of solitary confinement](#) and how it became such a pervasive practice in the United States. The story, the first of a three-part series on solitary confinement, explores Eastern State Penitentiary in Philadelphia where solitary was pioneered.

Wisconsin's Department of Corrections says it is [curbing its use of solitary confinement](#) for disciplinary purposes and that individuals will no longer face solitary for minor infractions. The length of time spent in solitary for serious offences will also be reduced and in most cases individuals will not be put in solitary as discipline for self-injury or suicide attempts.

A [review by Ontario's Advocate for Children and Youth](#) found that Canada's largest province routinely violates international law by placing youth in solitary for lengthy periods, some for more than 15 days at a time. The report recommends a ban of the use of solitary for longer than 24 hours in the province's youth justice centres.

[Yahoo News](#) explores the psychological impact of solitary confinement for youth, including physical differences in the brain and the dangers of missing out on childhood.

Peter Collins, one of Canada's leading prison justice advocates, [died in the prison hospital](#) at Millhaven Institution in Ontario after being denied parole for compassionate release earlier this month. Solitary Watch recently [featured a film produced by Collins](#) about a prolonged period he spent in solitary.

[WNYC public radio](#) covered a protest by members of the New York Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement. The demonstration in the Bronx is part of a growing collection of protests nationwide, held on the 23rd of each month to mark the 23 hours a day individuals spend in solitary.

Garrett Zehr is a Toronto-based legal aid lawyer practicing criminal defense and international human rights law, and a proud union member.

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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