

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](#) | January 8, 2017

A 32-year-old man held in solitary confinement at Manhattans Metropolitan Correction Center has [been on hunger strike for about two months](#). When in in the SHU, a person is always cuffed outside the cell. They make us stand with our back to the door and place our hands through a slot before and after leaving so they can take the cuffs on and off, writes incarcerated activist and alleged hacker Martin Gottesfeld. Its dehumanizing. No matter what any prison official tries to tell us about other reasons, thats exactly the point.

The [Justice Department](#) has endorsed an ongoing lawsuit to end the placement of 16 and 17-year-olds in solitary confinement in a New York county jail. The original lawsuit, which was filed in September, alleges that the Onondaga County Justice Center violates the constitution by placing teenagers in 23-hour isolation. (Covered by [Syracuse.com](#) and others).

The Boston Globe [published an editorial](#) calling for a Massachusetts state investigation into whether prison officials may have circumvented a state policy against placing mentally ill prisoners into solitary confinement. The editorial follows a recently published investigation, which found that prison officials had put several people with documented histories of mental illness into solitary after changing or downgrading their diagnoses.

A Rhode Island legislative commission heard that 39 people with mental illness had spent time in solitary in the states prisons between 2014 and 2015. According to an article in [the Providence Journal](#), the prisoners in segregation suffered from bipolar disorder, borderline personality, severe depression, anxiety, and a host of other mental illnesses, Brian Adae, a lawyer with the Rhode Island Disability Law Center, told the 19-member Special Legislative Commission to Study and Assess the Use of Solitary Confinement in Rhode Island.

A Pennsylvania man who spent 37 years in solitary confinement [has finally been released into general population](#). Arthur Johnson, 64, sued the prison system last year on the grounds that his extended time in isolation violated his constitutional rights.

President Barack Obama published an article in the [Harvard Law Review](#) outlining The Presidents Role in Advancing Criminal Justice Reform. He specifically addressed his efforts to reduce the use of solitary confinement in the United States, noting, I believe strongly that solitary confinement is overused and can becounterproductive.

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 [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 26, 2022

by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 19, 2022

by [Mirilla Zhu](#)

October 12, 2022

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P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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