

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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close

Search

close

close

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | May 4, 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.

Colorado has [passed a bill limiting the use of solitary confinement](#). Under the new legislation, individuals held in isolation will have their case reviewed every 90 days. The state will also create a step-down program to ease the transition for those previously placed in solitary.

Three men with mental illness have [sued a Massachusetts prison](#), Bridgewater State Hospital, for subjecting them to condition of confinement so extreme they would shock the conscience of a reasonable person. Lawyers allege that the number of hours patients at the prison spend in isolation or restraints is about 100 times greater than at the five other facilities run by the state's Department of Mental Health.

[National Geographic](#) featured a profile on Laura Bates, who teaches Shakespeare to people in long-term solitary confinement in supermax prisons.

The Maine Supreme Judicial Court has [dismissed the government's appeal](#) in a case that may help establish stricter guidelines for placing someone in isolation. Franklin Higgins spent two years in solitary confinement after being indicted for the murder of another prisoner, but was eventually acquitted. His lawyers successfully argued that the state had unjustly relied on Higgins' grand jury indictment when they initially transferred him into administrative segregation.

[Vice](#) published an update in the case of the transgender teenage girl held in solitary confinement in a men's prison in Connecticut.

An Oregon prisoner has [failed in his efforts](#) to hold Department of Corrections and state officials responsible for his time spent in isolation. For more than two years, Joshua Robert Brown passed all but 40 minutes of his day in solitary confinement. Although the 9th Circuit Court concurred with a lower court that the Snake River Correctional Institution had violated Brown's due process rights, the Court also concluded that state employees qualified for immunity.

[According to a state expert](#), those placed in solitary confinement at the Metropolitan Detention Center in New Mexico are not being given the hour per day outside of their cells previously mandated by the courts. Prisoners are allegedly being denied recreation time for relatively minor infractions, including not making their bed properly.

A New Jersey pastor has [published an Op-ed](#) calling for an end to solitary confinement in the state.

[AlterNet](#) is the latest outlet to publish a piece on Communications Management Units, which have been nicknamed little Guantanamos for greatly restricting prisoners' contact with the outside world.

A group of psychologists have [released a letter](#) addressed to President Obama and Secretary of Defense Chuck Hagel, in which they condemn the use of solitary confinement and other interrogation techniques as tantamount to torture. These techniques are included in the current Army Field Manual under Appendix M; that section applies to those who do not qualify as Prisoners of War under the

Geneva Conventions, like those detained at Guantanamo.

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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So what exactly do you think should be done about it? Have you ever worked in a prison? Do you understand how dangerous many of these segregated individuals are?

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