

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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close

Search

close

close

by [Aviva Stahl](#) | March 16, 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 United Nations Human Rights Committee held a two-day hearing to evaluate US compliance with the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, and explicitly examined the extensive use of solitary confinement. Last fall the [American Civil Liberties Union](#) released a shadow report outlining how the US falls short of its obligations.

Mayor Bill DeBlasio [appointed Joseph Ponte](#) as the next Commissioner for New York City's Department of Correction. Under Pontes leadership, the state of Maine [reduced its use of solitary confinement](#) by two-thirds.

The Bureau of Prisons [opened a two-week period](#) for the public to comment on the regulations governing Communication Management Units. The units, termed an experiment in social isolation by the [Center for Constitutional Rights](#), are primarily populated by Muslims despite the fact that Muslims represent about 6 percent of the overall federal prison population.

In Colorado, the Senate Judiciary Committee [voted unanimously](#) in favor of Bill 64, which would prohibit the state from placing individuals with serious mental illness in long term solitary confinement. The bill was supported by the [ACLU](#), the state Department of Corrections and both local political parties.

A story from the [Medill News Service](#) features solitary confinement survivor Brian Nelson, while a piece on [Policy Mic](#) features survivor Five Mualimm-ak. Anthony Graves, who was exonerated after spending 12 years in solitary on Texas death row, spoke out on [Texas Public Radio](#), and both Graves and Nelson were included in a long feature story on solitary on [Truthout](#).

The US Justice Department has [asked a federal court](#) to issue a restraining order against the Ohio Department of Youth Services, which would temporarily require them to stop placing boys with mental illness in solitary confinement. Acting Assistant Attorney General Jocelyn Samuels said, The way in which Ohio uses seclusion to punish youth with mental health needs victimizes one of the most vulnerable groups in our society.

[The Sacramento Bee](#) reported that after prison guards discovered someone hanging in his cell, they waited nearly four hours before cutting him down. David Scott Gillian was in administrative segregation at Pleasant Valley State Prison, about 200 miles south of Sacramento, when he killed himself.

[The Juvenile Justice Information Exchange](#) released a long article examining the use of solitary confinement in New Jersey's juvenile detention facilities.

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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