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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](#) | June 18, 2017

A demonstration against solitary confinement was held outside the home of Michigan Department of Corrections Director Heidi Washington. According to [one local outlet](#), the demonstration follows the suicide (still under investigation) of a young man on May 2nd at Oaks Correctional Facility in Manistee, where most of the 70 have been incarcerated.

Joaquin Guzmans (El Chapo) defense team and federal prosecutors continue to battle it out over what kinds of conditions the defendant should be subject to while he awaits trial. Guzman is currently locked up on the 10 South unit of the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Manhattan, where he is in solitary confinement and unable to access contact visits, even with his attorneys. [The NY Daily News](#) writes that the defense said the current set-ups no way to get ready for a massive 2018 drug trafficking trial and the government was just being speculative and implausible in its safety worries.

An LGBT site published a blog post by a gay man who spent time in solitary confinement. [He writes](#), when I was in there I thought I was going to go insane. You are totally closed off. To cope, I ended up laying on my bed and closing my eyes. Then, I took deep, shallow breaths over and over again to keep my heart from racing.

A video published by [the Daily Mail](#) shows a 75-year-old Florida prisoner being tackled to the ground by guards and carried out of his solitary confinement cell. Orange Countys Medical Examiner said Howard suffered cardiac arrest one day after the incident, and died from injuries related to the force. The examiner said his death was a homicide.

California passed legislation prohibiting local governments from signing new contracts to hold federal immigration detainees, and also funded a state inspection program for immigration detention centers, according to [Reveal](#). ICE has come under criticism for using solitary confinement excessively, especially when it comes to LGBTQ detainees and hunger strikes.

Women held at a privately operated jail in Tennessee were told that they would be placed in solitary confinement if they talked about what caused the rashes that had appeared on their bodies, [according to a recently filed federal lawsuit](#). Inmates attempted to inform their family members about the scabies infestation over the phone and asked their families to research scabies on their behalf. Because (CoreCivic) monitors all phone calls, those inmates immediately had their phone privileges revoked, in retaliation for attempting to bring light to the epidemic, states the lawsuit.

The Alaska Department of Corrections and the state chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union announced a new partnership focusing on working to reduce the use of solitary confinement in the jails and prisons across the state. [According to a local outlet](#), DOC officials say the goal of the partnership is reexamine procedures, including how an inmate can request segregation and offering alternative sanctions. They also hope to make it more difficult to get in to solitary confinement by vetting prisoners on the front end, and finally, making it easier for inmates to get out.

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.

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by [Caitlin Konya](#)

October 5, 2022

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P.O. Box 11374
Washington, DC 20008

info@solitarywatch.org

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