

Solitary Watch

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

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by [Aviva Stahl](#) | September 15, 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.

Wisconsin's [Badger Herald](#) published an article on the use of solitary confinement in the state. Although the state has reduced its use of isolation, critics and advocates maintain that more substantive changes must be made.

A [local outlet](#) outlined the use solitary confinement in Minnesota and the conditions in which people are housed. All solitary cells in Minnesota have a window, a bunk, a small stainless-steel mirror, a sink and a toilet programmed to flush several times per day.

In a [New York Review of Books](#) essay entitled Solitary Confinement: The Beginning of the End?, David Cole argues that ending the use of isolation must come with broader prison reform. Even without solitary confinement, conditions for many jail and prison inmates are extraordinarily and unnecessarily severe; most of the general population in California's prisons are locked down in their cells for twenty-two hours a day. What's needed is a sea change, not an isolated fix.

Coverage of the California settlement continued, including a [VICE](#) article with interviews from several people currently or formerly held in the state's prison system.

According to a local news site, changes to the use of solitary confinement may soon be implemented in [Oklahoma](#). Nearly 1,200 Oklahoma prison inmates who spend 23 hours a day locked in their cell including some of the most dangerous offenders soon could see more recreational time under new pilot program at the state's maximum-security prison.

The Third Circuit Court of Appeals reversed a lower court ruling, noting that the experiences of one Pennsylvania man who spent 14 hours in four-point restraint, after spending several years in solitary confinement [raises serious Eighth Amendment concerns](#). As Justice Kennedy recently observed, years on end of near-total isolation exact a terrible price, wrote one judge.

According to a [class-action lawsuit filed in Utah](#), dozens of individuals found incompetent to stand trial have been denied speedy treatment for their mental health issues. Many have been forced to wait months for medical treatment, often in solitary confinement.

Aviva Stahl is a Brooklyn-based reporter who writes about science/health at the intersection of mass incarceration, national security, and trans rights. She's 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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