



**Solitary Confinement Jeopardizes  
Our Public Safety**

**The Overuse of Solitary  
Confinement Wastes  
Taxpayer Dollars**

**There Are Better, More  
Cost-Effective Alternatives**

**Because Solitary  
Confinement Damages  
People it Must be  
Reserved for Extreme  
Circumstances**

Solitary confinement is an extreme and inhumane form of punishment that is not evidence-based, wastes taxpayer money and jeopardizes public safety, and more cost-effective alternatives that better ensure the safety of our communities should be utilized.

### **Solitary Confinement Jeopardizes Our Public Safety**

- Normal human contact with the outside world is essential for ensuring successful re-entry to the community and reducing recidivism rates
- Solitary confinement does not facilitate rehabilitation and can create or exacerbate pre-existing mental illnesses and other social, mental and emotional problems
- A significant number of people in solitary confinement are released directly to the streets even though they are unprepared to re-enter the community.
- People released directly from solitary confinement into the community have higher recidivism rates

### **Because Solitary Confinement Damages People it Must be Reserved for Extreme Circumstances**

- People are held in solitary confinement for years and even decades where they are subject to conditions of extreme social and sensory deprivation in small cells for 22-24 hours a day with almost no access to other human beings, natural light, exercise, TV, radio or even books.
  - Solitary confinement can have shattering psychological effects on anyone
- Solitary confinement is frequently used against children and people with mental illnesses
- Locking children in solitary confinement damages their social and psychological development
  - Courts have consistently found that long-term isolation for the mentally ill is cruel and unusual punishment because it worsens their disease and prevents them from getting proper treatment.
    - Suicide rates for people in solitary confinement are far greater than for those in general population

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### **The Overuse of Solitary Confinement Wastes Taxpayer Dollars**

- Building solitary confinement units costs 200-300% as much as building regular prison housing units
  - The cost of incarcerating a prisoner in solitary confinement is often more than double that of conventional prisons. Because of its enormous cost, solitary confinement should only be used as a last resort
- Because the vast majority of prisoners in solitary confinement eventually are released back into the community, it is imperative that we invest our limited public dollars in proven alternatives that lead to greater rehabilitation and pave the way for successful re-entry to the community

### **There Are Better, More Cost-Effective Alternatives**

- The state of Mississippi reduced its solitary confinement population by 90 percent, saw its violence rates plummet and saved millions of dollars by implementing alternatives to long-term isolation
- Because it is the most restrictive form of incarceration, solitary confinement should only be used for people who pose an active and ongoing threat to prison staff and other prisoners
- Prisoners in solitary confinement should be regularly evaluated to determine if they are being properly treated and can be incarcerated safely and effectively in a less restrictive environment at lower taxpayer expense.
- People should be able to earn their way out of solitary confinement through exhibiting behavioral improvements and engaging in rehabilitative programs