

# HALT LONG-TERM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

The HALT Act A.2500 (Aubry) / S.1623 (Sepúlveda) would put a strict 15-day cap on solitary confinement, while making prisons and jails across the state safer for everyone.

Lawmakers should pass the HALT Act without delay.

## THE PROBLEM

Prolonged solitary confinement creates severe mental and physical trauma that can cause irreparable harm. The United Nations calls long-term solitary that exceeds 15 consecutive days torture. Its effects can be deadly.

Yet thousands of people are subjected to prolonged solitary confinement in New York. Our state's laws permit the use of 23-hour confinement for months and years at a time in jails and prisons across the state. Although the state has made important efforts to reform its use of solitary confinement for people in prisons, more reform is necessary to ensure that individuals held in prisons and jails are no longer subjected to prolonged solitary confinement.

## THE SOLUTION

### **PASS THE HUMANE ALTERNATIVES TO LONG-TERM SOLITARY CONFINEMENT (HALT) ACT, WHICH WOULD:**

**Prohibit long-term solitary confinement** by limiting the time spent in confinement to no more than 15 consecutive days or 20 days total in any 60-day period.

#### **Ban solitary confinement of vulnerable populations including:**

- People 21 years or younger;
- Those 55 years or older;
- Individuals with certain physical, mental, or medical disabilities; and
- Anyone pregnant or in the first eight weeks of post-partum recovery or anyone who is a new mother or caring for a child while in a jail or prison.

**Require six hours of out-of-cell rehabilitative programming** plus one hour of out-of-cell recreation per day.

**Create alternatives to isolated confinement** by requiring larger jails to provide Residential Rehabilitation Units (RRUs) –



MAY 2019

rehabilitative units with access to support services, and behavioral programs— with six hours of out-of-cell programming, one hour of out-of-cell recreation, and regular reviews for release determinations.

**Allow reinstatement of credits for successful completion of RRUs** during consideration for early release from jail or prison.

**Prohibit the use of solitary or isolated confinement for anything but serious misconduct, such as physical assault or possession of weapons or contraband.**

**Require public reporting** of who is in isolated confinement and RRUs and for how long.

## GOING FURTHER ON SOLITARY REFORM

In 2015, the state and the New York Civil Liberties Union reached a settlement that required critical changes to the use of solitary confinement in state prisons. The settlement lowered the number of violations that can lead to solitary, reduced the time people can spend in isolated confinement and improved the conditions for people in solitary.

The settlement was an important step. **But we must go further.**

### THE HALT ACT

Unlike the settlement, the HALT Act would prohibit the use of all forms of prolonged solitary confinement, ban the use of solitary confinement for all vulnerable populations, and require more out-of-cell rehabilitative programming. It would also apply to all prison and jail facilities in the state.

The HALT Act would put a strict 15-day cap on solitary confinement, while making prisons and jails across the state safer for everyone. Lawmakers should pass the HALT Act without delay.

The HALT Act would put a strict 15-day cap on solitary confinement, while making prisons and jails across the state safer for everyone.

**Lawmakers should pass the HALT Act without delay.**

For more information, please visit [nyclu.org](http://nyclu.org).