



Legislation Text

File #: Res 0775-2023, **Version:** *

Res. No. 775

Resolution calling on the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign, H.R.4972—118th Congress, known as The End Solitary Confinement Act.

By Council Members Rivera, Gutiérrez, Restler, Farías and Hanif

Whereas, The harmful impact of solitary confinement affects individuals subjected to it, their communities, and their loved ones, disproportionality affecting marginalized groups such as Black and brown individuals, young people, LGBTQ+ people, among others; and

Whereas, A study from the Association of State Correctional Administrators and Yale Law School that examined prisons throughout the United States revealed that Black and brown individuals are more frequently placed in solitary confinement than their white counterparts, citing 2016 statistics that found Black men comprised 45 percent of those in solitary confinement despite constituting 40 percent of the total prison population; and

Whereas, The United Nations has consistently criticized the practice of solitary confinement, also known as segregation, secure housing, the hole, or lockdown, and issued the Nelson Mandela Rules in 2015 to address prolonged isolation; and

Whereas, Numerous studies have revealed severe consequences of prolonged solitary confinement on the mental health and overall well-being of incarcerated individuals; and

Whereas, The utilization of solitary confinement, despite involving only 6 to 8 percent of the total prison population, has been found to contribute to nearly half of all suicides among incarcerated individuals, as

highlighted by the findings of the Prison Policy Initiative; and

Whereas, Research conducted by Cornell University demonstrates a direct correlation between time spent in solitary confinement and an elevated risk of reoffending as extended periods of confinement in isolation can significantly diminish a returning citizen's chances of obtaining employment, due to mental health and other consequences of confinement; and

Whereas, H.R.4972, The End Solitary Confinement Act, introduced by U.S. House Representative Cori Bush (D-Mo.), ensures that incarcerated individuals have access to a minimum of 14 hours of daily time out of their cells, including dedicated programming spanning seven hours aimed at addressing crucial topics such as mental health, substance abuse, and violence prevention; and

Whereas, The legislation envisions the establishment of oversight mechanisms, including the creation of a community monitoring body to investigate complaints of abuse and to ensure the fair and dignified treatment of individuals within correctional facilities; and

Whereas, H.R.4972 strengthens the due process rights of prisoners, safeguarding their access to procedural fairness and protection against unjust treatment; and

Whereas, The End Solitary Confinement Act is endorsed by the Federal Anti-Solitary Taskforce and City Council calls for increased attention to and reform of correctional policies surrounding solitary confinement to align with humane, rehabilitative, and restorative practices within the criminal justice system; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the United States Congress to pass and the President to sign, H.R.4972-118th Congress, known as The End Solitary Confinement Act.

CMB

LS#14130
08/15/23