

END INHUMANE SOLITARY CONFINEMENT

STOP HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE IN VIRGINIA PRISONS

WHAT IS SOLITARY CONFINEMENT?

Solitary confinement is the isolation of a person in a jail or prison cell for all or nearly all of the day with little environmental stimulation or opportunity for human interaction. Studies have shown that the isolating conditions of solitary confinement can cause serious and lifelong psychological harm and trauma and often is described as torture by those who have endured it.

THE SITUATION IN VIRGINIA

Solitary confinement is widespread and overused in Virginia, and far too many people are placed in solitary, often on flimsy or false pretenses, or because they are exhibiting symptoms of mental illness. According to the Virginia Department of Corrections' own numbers, more than 7,000 people incarcerated in Virginia prisons were placed in solitary confinement units known as "restrictive housing" at some point between July 1, 2018, and June 30, 2019. That number does not include people placed in solitary confinement conditions through other types of housing units in Virginia prisons, let alone Virginia jails or juvenile detention facilities. **As a result, solitary confinement in Virginia is largely shielded from oversight and accountability.**

OUR GOALS

We call on the Virginia General Assembly to end this inhumane practice in Virginia prisons, jails and juvenile correctional facilities. Solitary confinement should be prohibited except in rare circumstances – such as when a prisoner poses a real and imminent threat of physical harm – and only for as little time as necessary. This legislation will make the Commonwealth safer and more just by demanding that Virginia prisons and jails consider humane alternatives before implementing a dehumanizing and barbaric practice that is known to exacerbate and even cause serious mental illness.

FACT

MORE THAN

7,000

PEOPLE IN VIRGINIA PRISONS WERE PUT IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT UNITS IN ONE YEAR.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

Here are a few things you can do to get involved:

- Stay up-to-date on this issue through our social media.
- Subscribe to our email list: acluva.org.
- Take action through our Lobby Guide: acluva.org/lobby-guide.
- Become a member: acluva.org/join
- Start a People Power group to work on this issue: peoplepower.org

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Virginia