

# TOGETHER TO END SOLITARY



JOIN US!

Learn more at

[www.togethertoendsolitary.org](http://www.togethertoendsolitary.org)

Follow the movement to  
#STOPSolitary #together

## WHAT IS SOLITARY CONFINEMENT?

Solitary confinement is the barbaric practice of confining people to tiny, often windowless cells for approximately 23 (and up to 24) hours per day for days, months, years, and even decades with virtually no human contact. The practice has been called torture by the UN but persists in US prisons, jails, juvenile facilities, and immigration detention centers today.

### The NUMBERS

**23** – The approximate number of hours every day many of those in solitary confinement are confined alone to their cells.

**44** – The number of states – plus the federal government – that have dedicated “supermax” prisons to hold entire prison populations in solitary confinement.

**100,000** – The approximate number of people held in some form of solitary confinement right now in U.S. prisons – plus untold numbers in solitary in jails, juvenile facilities, and immigration detention centers.

### The HUMAN Cost

Long-term isolation has a profoundly negative effect on the human mind. Research shows that the psychological impacts of isolation are similar to those of physical torture—and for that reason, the UN Special Rapporteur on Torture called for an end to the practice on human rights grounds.

### A Toll on Public SAFETY

Contrary to popular opinion, solitary confinement actually endangers our prisons and communities. The lasting damage caused by solitary confinement follows prisoners into their communities when they are released, leaving them with diminished social and life skills and making them more likely to end up back in prison.

*"The SHU [solitary confinement] is a torture chamber... When I walked into California's torture chamber, I was a whole human being. And when I left there, I was a deeply fractured human being."*

-Steven Czifra, solitary survivor, testifying at a joint legislative hearing on solitary confinement in California on 10/09/2013

### The TERMS

Solitary confinement goes by many names. A few examples are:

- Segregation
- Isolation
- Security Housing
- Special Management
- Supermax

## WHAT ARE THE COSTS OF SOLITARY CONFINEMENT?

### We ALL pay the price

Increased construction and staffing costs make solitary confinement resource-intensive. Housing a prisoner in solitary confinement can cost 2-3 times what it would cost to house them in general population.

## The “Worst of the Worst” Myth

There is a popular misconception that prisoners in solitary confinement represent the most hardened criminals. In reality, we know that people are sent to solitary for a variety of reasons including for their “protection;” for political or cultural reasons such as litigating for their rights, reporting abuse by staff, reading Black history, or having Aztec art; and for disciplinary infractions like owning too many stamps, cheering during the super bowl, or forgetting to make the bed.

### Segregating the Mentally Ill

Prisons and jails, unequipped to handle the needs of people with mental illness, house mentally ill prisoners in solitary at disproportionately high rates. When people with severe mental illness are subjected to solitary confinement, they deteriorate dramatically, leading to increased rates of suicide and self-harm.

### Children in Solitary

Thousands of children in both the adult and juvenile justice systems are routinely subjected to solitary confinement. Young people's brains are still developing, placing them at a higher risk of harm when social stimulation is impeded. More than 50% of all juvenile facility suicides occur in isolation.

## WHO IS HELD IN SOLITARY CONFINEMENT?

## HOW CAN I HELP STOP THE TORTURE?

Join us! **Together to End Solitary** is a campaign linking advocates across the country in monthly actions to protest the use of solitary confinement in the United States.

**These nationwide actions take place on the 23rd of each month in recognition of the 23 or more hours per day many people in solitary confinement spend in their cells. Get involved by participating in and hosting events in your community on the 23rd of the month. For ideas and information on past and future events, and to submit your event, visit [www.togethertoendsolitary.org](http://www.togethertoendsolitary.org).**

**Spread the word! Share your actions using the hashtags #STOPsolitary #together.**

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