



Solitary Confinement Study and Reform Act ***Reps. David Trone (D-MD) and Stephanie Bice (R-OK)***

Background

Solitary confinement is an outdated and debilitating practice. The forced idleness and isolation in solitary confinement causes lasting mental and physical deterioration, and makes people more likely to engage in difficult or disruptive behavior. Research shows that even just one or two days in solitary leads to significantly heightened risk of death by accident, suicide, violence, overdose, and other causes. Solitary confinement also substantially increases the risk of recidivism as individuals placed in solitary are 15% more likely to be convicted of a crime and often exhibit more violent behavior after release.

Solitary confinement also has little-to-no effect on maintaining safety in jails and prisons. A 2016 report from the DOJ's National Institute of Justice (NIJ) found: "There is little evidence that administrative segregation has had effects on overall levels of violence within individual institutions nor across corrections systems." Furthermore, in states that have dramatically reduced the number of people in solitary confinement, like Colorado and North Dakota, corrections directors report that there has been no increase in violent incidents against corrections staff.

About the Solitary Confinement Study and Reform Act

The Solitary Confinement Study and Reform Act would create a bipartisan government commission to study the effects of solitary confinement. The Attorney General would then issue national standards based on those findings to reduce its use. States that comply with the standards would be eligible to receive mental health and drug treatment grant funding. Specifically, the Solitary Confinement Study and Reform Act would:

- Creates a bipartisan commission chosen by the President and the majority and minority leaders of both chambers to study the effects of solitary confinement;
- Establishes national standards aimed at reducing the use of solitary confinement;
- Requires federal agencies that detain or incarcerate individuals to adopt these standards; and
- Incentivizes states to adopt the national standards by providing \$20 million in community-based mental health and drug treatment grant funding for those states that comply.

Endorsed by: American Civil Liberties Union, Americans for Prosperity, Center for Constitutional Rights, Due Process Institute, National Religious Campaign Against Torture, R Street Institute, Unlock the Box Campaign, Vera Institute of Justice