



**ALLIANCE OF NEW YORK STATE YMCAs  
YOUTH AND GOVERNMENT  
Legislative Bill**

**Bill # 29**

**Referred to Committee:  
5**

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**Action on the Bill**

**Assembly**

**Senate**

\_\_\_  Passed

\_\_\_  Passed

\_\_\_  Defeated

\_\_\_  Defeated

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1 **AN ACT TO:** Reform solitary confinement by addressing and implementing concise parameters.

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3 **The People of the State of New York, represented in the**  
4 **Senate and Assembly do enact as follows:**

5 **Purpose**

6 The purpose of this bill is to reform solitary confinement for prisoners by reducing consecutive time allowed in  
7 isolation and setting clear and concise parameters for consequences leading to solitude.

8 General idea of the bill- To decrease the number of suicides and mental health issues intensified by alienation from  
9 human contact while in solitary confinements.

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11 **Summary of Provisions**

12 **Section 1: Definitions**

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14 **Section 2:**

15 Prisoners cannot serve more than 10 consecutive days in solitary confinement without access to mental  
16 rehabilitation.

17 Inmates who commit non violent acts may not be placed in solitary confinement.

18 Convicts must be informed of the length of their solitary sentence prior to the commencement of their confinement.

19 Clear expectations and consequences for violations that qualify for solitary confinement must be explicitly stated.

20 Inmates may not be placed in solitary confinement for more that thirty consecutive days per violation.

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22 **Justification:**

23 Solitary confinement seriously damages a person's psychological well being. Many inmates experience an increase in  
24 depression and suicidal thoughts. When compared to the general prison population, rates of suicide and self-harm,  
25 such as cutting and banging one's head against the cell wall, are particularly high in prisoners assigned to solitary  
26 confinement. One third of suicides in prisons take place in solitary. There is no limit or set time on how long an  
27 inmate can be isolated from the general population. On any given day 80,000 to 100,000 inmates are held in  
28 isolation in the United States' prison system. Studies show that the physiological and psychological consequences of  
29 solitary confinement are extremely dangerous to the well being of inmates. For 23 hours a day, 4,000 inmates are  
30 locked in concrete 6-by-10-foot cells, sometimes for years, with little if any human contact, no access to  
31 rehabilitative programs and a diet that can be restricted to a foul-tasting brick of bread and potatoes. Prisoners  
32 facing solitary in New York oftentimes do not receive any meaningful rehabilitative programs or treatments.

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34 **Fiscal Implications**

35 Will have a minimal impact, by reducing the number of inmates in solitary confinement overall prison costs should be  
36 reduced due to the fact that it cost more to keep an inmate in solitary than in the general population.

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38 **Effective Date**

39 January 1, 2018