

H5927 and H5928

HouseJudiciary@rilegislatre.gov

Dear Members of House Judiciary Committee,

I ask that you please support the House Bills 5927 and 5928. My name is Denise Robinson who is a Social Work major and I gravitated towards learning more about Solitary Confinement because this is in desperate need of change. As I researched the long term effects after Solitary Confinement, I could not believe how upsetting this information was. Many research studies had indicated that most inmates who were exposed to Solitary after release are more likely to die from Suicide, Homicide, and Opioid Overdose in the first two weeks after release. There is such a high risk factor of death inside and after solitary.

Being trapped in a small space with no entertainment, constantly being taken advantage of, no interactions with other inmates, being neglected and isolated does more psychological and physical damage on an individual.

An incarcerated inmate quotes "If an inmate hits or spits or verbally disrespects prison staff, that inmate will get beat up by the prison staff with the Lieutenant or captain or warden watching and sometimes the Lieutenant will also hit or kick the inmate while the inmate is handcuffed behind his back. This will also happen with inmates who have mental health issues". That is one of the thousands of heartbreaking stories by inmates who are being mistreated by the Correctional Officers. How can we sit here and let cruel people be in positions of power and abuse it?

Power is not abuse or taking advantage of people because you can. Power is advocating and helping people in need. Just because an individual is in Solitary, does not mean that individual deserves to be there and be tortured. This is why we need to pass the Willie Washington Junior Act to get justice for him and other victims. We desperately need Body Cameras in these facilities to expose the horrific acts that go down in solitary.

Please find in your hearts to help these individuals and create change and seek justice. These are real human's experiences and just because they are inmates does not mean they do not deserve the right to be heard and advocated for. As a future Social Worker, one of the core values is dignity and worth of all people. Does not matter where an individual is at in their life, they too are worth their rights. Thank you for your time.

Denise Robinson