

MEDIA ALERT

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Restore Justice Applauds Illinois Lawmakers for Advancing Transparency in the Use of Solitary Confinement

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We applaud Illinois lawmakers for advancing transparency and responsible government in the use of solitary confinement. [House Bill 4828](#) passed through the Illinois House on Tuesday, January 7, 2025, following passage through the Senate with bipartisan support.

If signed into law, [House Bill 4828](#) would require the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) to collect and publish data on the use of solitary confinement in its facilities. In Illinois law, there are no limits on how long a person can be held in solitary confinement. This legislation would bring to light how frequently isolated confinement is used, why, and for how long.

An extensive body of research spanning more than 150 years has documented the detrimental effects of solitary confinement on the health and well-being of people who are incarcerated. These alarming effects make the need for transparency urgent and obvious. The United Nations rules on incarceration, known as the “Mandela Rules,” specify that under international human rights law, solitary confinement for more than 15 days is torture.

Representative Kevin Olickal and Senator Robert Peters sponsored House Bill 4828. Both legislators are champions of transparency and are committed to common-sense, compassionate policies that ensure people who are incarcerated are treated fairly and humanely. We are grateful for their leadership and dedication.

“Solitary confinement is one of the hardest parts of incarceration. I know individuals who spent years in isolated confinement, and it causes lasting suffering and trauma. It can literally shrink your brain,” says Restore Justice Policy Manager James Swansey. “With more clarity on how the IDOC uses solitary confinement, we can set the stage for reform that focuses on rehabilitation and safety as opposed to punishment.”

Restore Justice worked in partnership with Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, Uptown People's Law Center, and Access Living to bring about transparency in the use of solitary confinement through this legislation. Restore Justice works to improve prison conditions that erode human dignity. Many of our staff and board members are formerly incarcerated people or have loved ones in prison today.

Restore Justice, which comprises [Restore Justice Foundation](#) and [Restore Justice Illinois](#), works to address issues faced by those serving life or de-facto life sentences, their families, and their communities. Founded in 2015 by a dedicated group of advocates that included the late former Congressman, Federal Judge, and White House Counsel Abner Mikva, Restore Justice trains and supports advocates, conducts research, nurtures partnerships, and develops policy solutions that will roll back ineffective “tough on crime” policies of the past, replacing them with compassionate, smart, and safe policies for the future.