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July 3, 2025

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Released: First State Report on Solitary Confinement Under New Law

CHICAGO, IL (July 3, 2025) - This week, the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) released its first-ever [quarterly report on the use of solitary confinement](#) under [Public Act 103-1074](#), which was signed into law in March 2025. The report offers a narrow view into the use of solitary in Illinois prisons in April and May 2025, and is missing critical data regarding how solitary confinement is used and how long people are held there.

A coalition of advocates from Chicago Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights, Restore Justice, Uptown People's Law Center, and others advocated for Public Act 103-1074, in order to increase transparency around the use of solitary confinement in Illinois. The law mandates quarterly and annual reports from IDOC about who is subjected to solitary confinement, why, and for how long.

The data included in the first report includes only first steps towards providing transparency. "While receiving this report is a first step, it is very limited in its scope, and we still have many questions about how solitary confinement is used in Illinois prisons. We believe that sunlight is the best disinfectant," said Nicole Schult (she/her), Legal Director of Uptown People's Law Center. "We fought for transparency in this new law, and we hope future reports will provide a clearer look into this torturous practice."

Key findings from the report include:

- 2,420 people were placed in solitary confinement in April 2025. In May, the IDOC put 2,483 people in solitary confinement. It is unclear whether the reported data includes people who were placed in solitary confinement prior to April 1, 2025. The entire IDOC population as of March, 2025 was 29,029.
- There were close to 500 instances of people classified as "Severely Mentally Ill" being placed in solitary confinement each month. It is not clear from the data whether some of these instances may have been the same person placed in solitary multiple times.
- Among people who are imprisoned in Illinois, Black Illinoisans were placed in solitary confinement at a disproportionate rate in April and May. Black people comprised 63% and 65% of the people placed in solitary confinement in April and May respectively, while only making up 55% of the IDOC population.
- While the report includes data on alternatives to restrictive housing, there are no uses of such alternatives reported during April and May.

More than 150 years of research overwhelmingly demonstrate that solitary confinement harms the health and well-being of people who are imprisoned, without offering any clear evidence that it improves safety inside prisons or in our communities. 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. Despite this, there are no limits in Illinois law on how long a person can be held

in solitary confinement. These alarming facts make the need for transparency, and reform, urgent and evident.

“I’ve seen firsthand the devastating and long-lasting effects solitary confinement can have on a person’s mental and physical health,” said Brian Beals (he/him), Future Leaders Apprentice with Restore Justice. “It’s critical that we get accurate data and reporting to bring to light what is really happening with a practice that some people have endured for decades.”

IDOC indicates in the report that they are working on programming to be able to share more comprehensive data to fully comply with the law. The coalition of advocates hopes to see more robust information in the next quarterly report and calls on the General Assembly to advance [the Nelson Mandela Act \(SB 65/HB 1428\)](#), which would restrict the use of solitary confinement in Illinois.

Read the full report [here](#).

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Uptown People’s Law Center

[Uptown People’s Law Center](#) (UPLC) is a nonprofit legal services organization specializing in prisoners’ rights, Social Security disability, and tenants’ rights and eviction defense. UPLC currently has six class action lawsuits against the Illinois Department of Corrections, addressing critical issues such as access to medical and mental health care, as well as the use of solitary confinement.

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights

Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights is a non-partisan, non-profit group of civil rights lawyers and advocates working to secure racial equity and economic opportunity for all. We provide legal representation through partnerships with the private bar, and we collaborate with grassroots organizations and other advocacy groups to implement community-based solutions that advance civil rights. For more information, visit www.clccrul.org or call (312) 630-9744.

Restore Justice

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.