



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Jessica Ramos

## Senator Ramos and the Senate Majority Pass the ‘HALT’ Solitary Confinement Act

JESSICA RAMOS March 18, 2021

**ALBANY, NY**—Senator Ramos and the Senate Democratic Majority passed the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act (HALT). Sponsored by Senator Julia Salazar, this legislation (S.2836) limits the use of segregated confinement for all incarcerated persons to 15 days, implements alternative rehabilitative measures, including the creation of Residential Rehabilitation Units (RRU), expands the definition of segregated confinement, and eliminates the use of segregated confinement for vulnerable incarcerated populations. Additionally, this bill establishes guidelines for humane conditions in segregated confinement, outlines reporting requirements, and adds due process protections by prohibiting placement in segregated confinement prior to a disciplinary hearing and by allowing access to counsel. The Nelson Mandela Rules adopted by the United Nations, define segregated confinement for more than 15 days as torture. HALT will bring New York in compliance with this international standard and save the State tens of millions of dollars over the next several years.

State Senator Ramos issued the following statement:

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*“Every day thousands of New Yorkers are locked in solitary confinement. These inhumane practices have lasting and some times fatal effects on a person's physical, emotional, and mental health and have led to the loss of life of far too many family members, friends, and neighbors. Today we vote to pass the HALT Solitary Confinement Act to honor the lives of Layleen Polanco, Kalief Browder, Benjamin Van Zandt, and the countless others that were taken from us too soon and to see to it that no more New Yorkers are subjected to the torture of prolonged confinement.”*

The Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act (HALT), S.2836, will:

- Limit the use of segregated confinement in state prisons and county jails and implement alternative rehabilitative measures, including the creation of Residential Rehabilitation Units (RRU).
- Restrict the use of segregated confinement for all incarcerated persons for up to 15 days.
- Expand the definition of segregated confinement to include any form of cell confinement where an individual is held for more than 17 hours a day.
- Mandate additional out-of-cell time and rehabilitative programming for individuals diverted to rehabilitative units after the 15-day limit has been reached.
- Prohibit segregated confinement for special populations for any period of time.
  - Special populations are:
    - Individuals age 21 or younger,
    - Individuals age 55 and over,

- Individuals with a disability,
  - And individuals who are pregnant, up to eight weeks postpartum, or caring for children in a facility.
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- Prohibit the denial of services, treatment, or basic needs such as clothing, food, and bedding while an individual is held in segregated confinement.
  - Mandate that staff must undergo 37 hours and 30 minutes initial training prior to assignment on segregated confinement units and 21 additional hours, annually, after assignment.
  - Add due process protections by prohibiting placement in segregated confinement prior to a disciplinary hearing and by allowing access to counsel.
  - Require DOCCS to publish monthly reports on its website with semi-annual and annual cumulative reports of the total number of people in segregated confinement.

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#### RELATED LEGISLATION

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### **2021-S2836**

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- Introduced

- ◦ In Committee Assembly
  - In Committee Senate
- ◦ On Floor Calendar Assembly
  - On Floor Calendar Senate
- ◦ Passed Assembly
  - Passed Senate
- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Restricts the use of segregated confinement and creates alternative therapeutic and rehabilitative confinement options

January 25, 2021

Senate Floor Calendar

Sponsored by **Julia Salazar**

Do you support this bill?