

Regular Session, 2014

HOUSE RESOLUTION NO. 1

BY REPRESENTATIVE MORENO

A RESOLUTION

To request the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice to evaluate the use of solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and its effectiveness and impact on housing costs, prison violence, inmate safety, recidivism, and the mental health of the inmate placed in such conditions.

WHEREAS, solitary confinement requires substantial isolation of the inmate from other inmates, and while in solitary confinement, an inmate's movements and privileges are more restricted compared to inmates in the general population, including segregation that may be for twenty-three hours a day or more in which the inmate is given limited or no opportunities for social contact with other persons; and

WHEREAS, in 2012, the American Bar Association advised that isolated confinement should be "imposed in the most limited manner possible" and further advocated for an "investigation as to how the use of long-term solitary confinement may be restricted so as to promote the safe, efficient, and humane operation of prisons"; and

WHEREAS, recent studies have been issued regarding the impact of long-term isolation on the mental health and functioning of an inmate with some studies finding that isolation can be psychologically harmful to any prisoner, with the nature and severity of the impact depending upon the individual, the duration of the isolation, and the particular conditions of the confinement; and

WHEREAS, as a result of these findings, a number of states, including Maine, Mississippi, Texas, Illinois, and Washington, are looking to reduce their use of solitary confinement and are searching for alternative strategies and best practices.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the House of Representatives of the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby request the House Committee on Administration of

Criminal Justice to evaluate the use of solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and its effectiveness and impact on housing costs, prison violence, inmate safety, recidivism, and the mental health of the inmate placed in such conditions.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the House Committee on Administration of Criminal Justice shall report its findings, including recommendations for improvement of the current system, during a public hearing held no later than January 1, 2016, and shall submit its findings and recommendations to the Department of Public Safety and Corrections and to the governor of the state of Louisiana no later than January 4, 2016.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the evaluation and report issued by the committee shall include but not be limited to information on the following:

(1) Classification levels of inmates ordered to the custody of the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

(2) Conditions and privileges associated with each classification including but not limited to information on yard time, visitation, access to books and other reading materials, access to television and radio, and access to phones.

(3) The number of inmates within each classification at each facility.

(4) A description of each type of solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown used at each facility.

(5) The number of placements in solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown, and the duration of each placement.

(6) The conditions associated with solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown.

(7) Rules and guidelines regulating the use of solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown, including but not limited to information on procedures for release from such placement.

(8) Percentage of recidivism within the facility of inmates returning to solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown.

(9) Recidivism rate of inmates who have been placed in solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, or extended lockdown prior to their release.

(10) Cost associated with placement of an inmate in solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, or extended lockdown versus the cost associated with placement in the general population.

(11) The number of inmates with a mental health condition or illness prior to being placed in solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, or extended lockdown.

(12) The number of inmates who develop mental health conditions or illnesses while placed in solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, or extended lockdown.

(13) The number of suicides and attempted suicides committed by persons placed in solitary confinement, isolation, closed-cell restriction, and extended lockdown.

(14) The identification of best practices concerning the use of isolated or solitary confinement.

---

SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES