



Legislation Text

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Res. No. 53

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act.

By Council Members Dromm, Levine, Mendez, Palma, Rose and Rosenthal

Whereas, Solitary confinement typically constitutes a special form of imprisonment by segregating an inmate for 23 hours a day and disallowing any contact with the outside world; and

Whereas, According to various sources, an increasing number of jurists throughout the world have concluded that solitary confinement constitutes cruel and unusual punishment and view solitary confinement as a form torture; and

Whereas, According to a recent report released by the New York Civil Liberties Union, New York State currently houses approximately 4,500 inmates in solitary confinement; and

Whereas, Inmates in solitary confinement are generally deprived of all meaningful human interaction or mental stimulation, confined to small barren cells; and

Whereas, New York State must take a more proactive approach to not only properly protect inmates in New York State prisons and jails, but must adopt better standards that reaffirm the State's commitment to respect inmates' human dignity; and

Whereas, A.8588, sponsored by Assembly Member Jeffrion L. Aubry and currently pending in the New York State Assembly, and companion bill S.6466, sponsored by State Senator Bill Perkins and currently pending in the New York State Senate, seek to amend the New York State Correction Law by restricting the use of segregated confinement and creating alternative therapeutic and rehabilitative confinement options; and

Whereas, A.8588/S.6466 is also known as the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement

Act or “HALT Act”); and

Whereas, The HALT Act would amend the New York State Correction Law by limiting the time an inmate spends in segregated confinement to a maximum of 15 consecutive days and a total of 20 days during a 60-day period; and

Whereas, The HALT Act would end the segregated confinement of vulnerable people, including, but not limited to, individuals with physical or mental disabilities; and

Whereas, Furthermore, the HALT Act would create alternatives to isolated confinement by providing a new Residential Rehabilitation Unit for meaningful human contact and therapeutic services and rehabilitative programs aimed at addressing underlying causes of behavior; and

Whereas, New York State should establish parameters on who can and cannot be placed in solitary confinement and provide appropriate therapeutic services to individuals who are in need; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Solitary Confinement Act.

WJH
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