

[Action Alert Text. Why should the activist take action?]

Direct release from solitary confinement is a dangerous practice!

Direct release from restrictive housing in our prisons is a public safety concern. Often, these individuals have no clear plans about where to live, where they will find employment, or how to access services they need, such as health care or assistance in obtaining forms of personal identification. They may also be emotionally unstable because they have been deprived of any social interaction for an extended period. Because of the effect of the pandemic on our prisons, reforming this practice has become even more imperative than ever before.

Prior to the onset of the pandemic in 2020, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DCSPS) released approximately 250 to 300 people each year directly to the community from restrictive housing without any form of step-down transition to prepare them to return to the community. Without any preparation, resocialization, transition coordination or reentry services, incarcerated people in restrictive housing are unlikely to return safely to our communities and more likely to reoffend. The practice of direct release from restrictive housing puts both communities and the individual inmate at risk.

The pandemic has made this situation worse. Since the onset of the pandemic, our entire incarcerated population has been placed in restrictive housing. The thousands of individuals who were released to mitigate the spread of COVID and its variants through the system were released directly from this restrictive housing situation.

What you can do to help.

Solitary confinement is a dangerous practice which some consider to be a form of torture. Releasing someone from that confinement into our communities poses unacceptable risks.

Ask your legislator to support HB0067/SB0977 and end this unsafe practice by establishing a Step-Down program for individuals in restrictive housing.

[email to legislator – Why should the legislator support this bill?]

Direct release from restrictive housing in our prisons is a public safety concern. Because of the effect of the pandemic on our prisons, reforming this practice has become even more imperative than ever before.

As your constituent I urge you to support **HB0067/SB0977** and end the unsafe practice of direct release from restrictive housing.

Even before the 2020 onset of the pandemic, the Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services (DCSPS) acknowledged that it released nearly 300 people each year directly to the community from restrictive housing without any form of step-down transition to prepare them to return to the community. The conservative organization [American Legislative Exchange Council reports](#): “Unprepared prisoners are more likely to end up homeless, jobless, or back in jail.” Often, these individuals have no clear plans about where to live, where they will find employment, or how to access services they need, such as health care or assistance in obtaining forms of personal identification. When people return to prison, not only the individual and his or her family pay the cost, but the public as well.

Transition from solitary confinement is a process worthy of planning and careful orchestration. No one should ever be released directly from restrictive housing back into the community. These transitions cannot be successfully accomplished without an assessment of the individual’s needs, including his or her emotional state, which is often destabilized as a result of long-term deprivation of human contact.

Unfortunately, this happens all too often with those who the correctional staff stigmatizes as “problem inmates.” If a person is difficult to manage – which may range from being non-communicative to being too verbose – it’s easier for the staff to place this person in restrictive housing and leave them there. But let’s remember that no-touch torture can be as brutal as physical torture.

Without any kind of preparation, resocialization, transition coordination or reentry services, incarcerated people in restrictive housing are less likely to return safely to our communities and more likely to reoffend. The practice of direct release from restrictive housing puts both communities and the individual inmate at risk.

The pandemic has made this situation worse. Since the onset of the pandemic, our entire incarcerated population has been placed in restrictive housing. The thousands of individuals who were released to mitigate the spread of COVID and its variants through the system were released directly from this restrictive housing situation.

Keep our communities safe and help ensure that those being released from incarceration are prepared to rejoin society. Support HB0067/SB0977 and put an end to direct release from restrictive housing.