

Solitary Confinement

NMCDLA supports:

- ❑ Banning the use of solitary confinement on minors;
- ❑ Banning the use of solitary confinement on prisoners who are pregnant;
- ❑ Banning the use of solitary confinement on prisoners with serious mental illnesses;
- ❑ Prohibiting prisoners to be placed in solitary confinement for periods longer than fifteen consecutive days, and for a maximum of sixty days per year; and
- ❑ Requiring that New Mexico detention facilities report who they are placing in solitary confinement and why.

NMCDLA believes in the following points which can be found in the ACLU's Solitary Confinement report from 2013:

- ❑ New Mexico is one of only a handful of states in which local jails hold more than or nearly equal to the population of prisoners in our state prisons. Research conducted for The ACLU's Solitary Confinement Report revealed that every county jail in New Mexico, with the possible exception of one, uses solitary confinement in some form or another.
- ❑ The solitary confinement levels in New Mexico state prisons require almost *three times* the staffing, and presumably three times the staffing costs.
- ❑ In 1980, New Mexico experienced one of the deadliest riots in the nation's history. A study of events leading to the prison riot "attributed the riot directly to the strategy of isolating prisoner leaders, which led to the fragmentation of prisoner solidarity and in turn led to growing violence."
- ❑ There is a broad consensus among mental health experts that deep psychological harm can result from prolonged solitary confinement. The American Bar Association defines an excessive term in solitary confinement as more than 30 days. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture defines an excessive term as more than 15 days.

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