# Assembly Bill 280 - California Mandela Act on Solitary Confinement BY Assemblymember Chris R. Holden

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**The harms of this practice disproportionately impact people of color. A 2015 report found that in California state prisons, Hispanic men make up 42 percent of the male population, but 86 percent of the male population in restricted housing. Solitary is also widespread in private, for-profit immigration detention, where it continues to be overused with little oversight.**

**AB 280 provides critical limits on the use of solitary confinement in our jails, prisons and private detention facilities. It is the first step in the long struggle to dismantle systems of oppression and challenge mass incarceration in our communities!**

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## The Challenge

Solitary confinement is one of the most severe and destructive practices found in detention facilities today. The World Health Organization, United Nations, and other international bodies have recognized solitary confinement as greatly harmful and potentially fatal. In 2015, the United Nations General Assembly ratified the Nelson Mandela Rules, prohibiting any period of segregation beyond 15 days and defining it as torture.

Despite international solidarity to end the use of solitary confinement, the practice remains common in jails, prisons, and detention facilities in California. The misuse of solitary confinement in California prisons led to a legal action filed in 2012, when California prisons held nearly 10,000 incarcerated individuals in solitary confinement, including 1,557 who had been there for 10 years or more.

The Mandela Act is urgently needed because people in California prisons, jails, and immigration detention are currently being locked in solitary confinement for months and years, with devastating and even deadly consequences. The harms of this practice disproportionately impact people of color. A 2015 report found that in California state prisons, Hispanic men make up 42 percent of the male population, but 86 percent of the male population in restricted housing. Solitary is also widespread in private, for-profit immigration detention, where it continues to be overused with little oversight.

## The Solution **AB 280 will:**

**Ban solitary confinement for designated populations including;**
- Individuals with certain mental, physical and developmental disabilities
-Pregnant people
-People under 26 or over 59 years old

**Prohibit long-term solitary confinement by limiting the time spent in confinement to not more than 15 consecutive days, or 45 days total in any 180-day period**;
-After 15 days, individuals can be transferred to appropriate and safe alternatives to isolation, including individual units with access to out of cell programming and counseling.

**Require facilities to keep clear records on the use of solitary confinement in order to provide public transparency.**

This bill will allow California to join other states including New York and Colorado in ending solitary confinement for specific populations, and join the international community in recognizing that solitary confinement constitutes torture.

For more information visit **tinyurl.com/MandelaAct**