

HB 2345 A STAFF MEASURE SUMMARY

Carrier: Sen. Prozanski

Senate Committee On Judiciary

Action Date: 05/08/23
Action: Do pass the A-Eng bill.
Vote: 3-0-0-2
Yeas: 3 - Gelser Blouin, Manning Jr, Prozanski
Abs: 2 - Linthicum, Thatcher
Fiscal: Has minimal fiscal impact
Revenue: No revenue impact
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Meeting Dates: 5/1, 5/8

WHAT THE MEASURE DOES:

Directs the Department of Corrections (DOC) to establish on their publicly facing website, a dashboard with specific data regarding adults in custody (AICs) placed in a disciplinary segregation unit, effective February 1, 2024.

ISSUES DISCUSSED:

- Legislative workgroup
- Nelson Mandela Rules on Solitary Confinement
- Basic demographic data on those who are put in segregation
- Changing the use of solitary confinement by DOC will require a cultural shift

EFFECT OF AMENDMENT:

No amendment.

BACKGROUND:

The Department of Corrections (DOC) and prisons and jails all over the country use segregation, also known as solitary confinement, restrictive housing or colloquially as "the hole," which can include isolation and sensory deprivation. There are different types of segregation, including administrative (institutional safety concerns), disciplinary (sanction for rule violations), and protective custody (protect AICs when at risk of harm). In Oregon, stays in segregated housing can be lengthy, and people of color and those with mental health needs have been overrepresented. In 2015, DOC partnered with Vera Institute of Justice (Vera) in the Safe Alternatives to Segregation Initiative. In October 2016, Vera released a report entitled "The Safe Alternatives to Segregation Initiative: Findings and Recommendations for the Oregon Department of Corrections." This report included the results of an assessment of Oregon's use of segregation and suggestions for reform. In May 2018, Vera published "Rethinking Restrictive Housing - Lessons from Five US Jail and Prison Systems." DOC was one of the five partner agencies in the report, and Vera documented its findings, recommendations and reported on DOC's progress in improving the quality of life in its administrative segregation unit for adults with serious mental illness. In March of 2022, a legislative workgroup was formed to continue discussions on solitary confinement and its impact on AICs in DOC custody.

House Bill 2345 A directs the Department of Corrections (DOC) to establish on their publicly facing website, a dashboard with specific data regarding adults in custody (AICs) placed in a disciplinary segregation unit, effective February 1, 2024.