

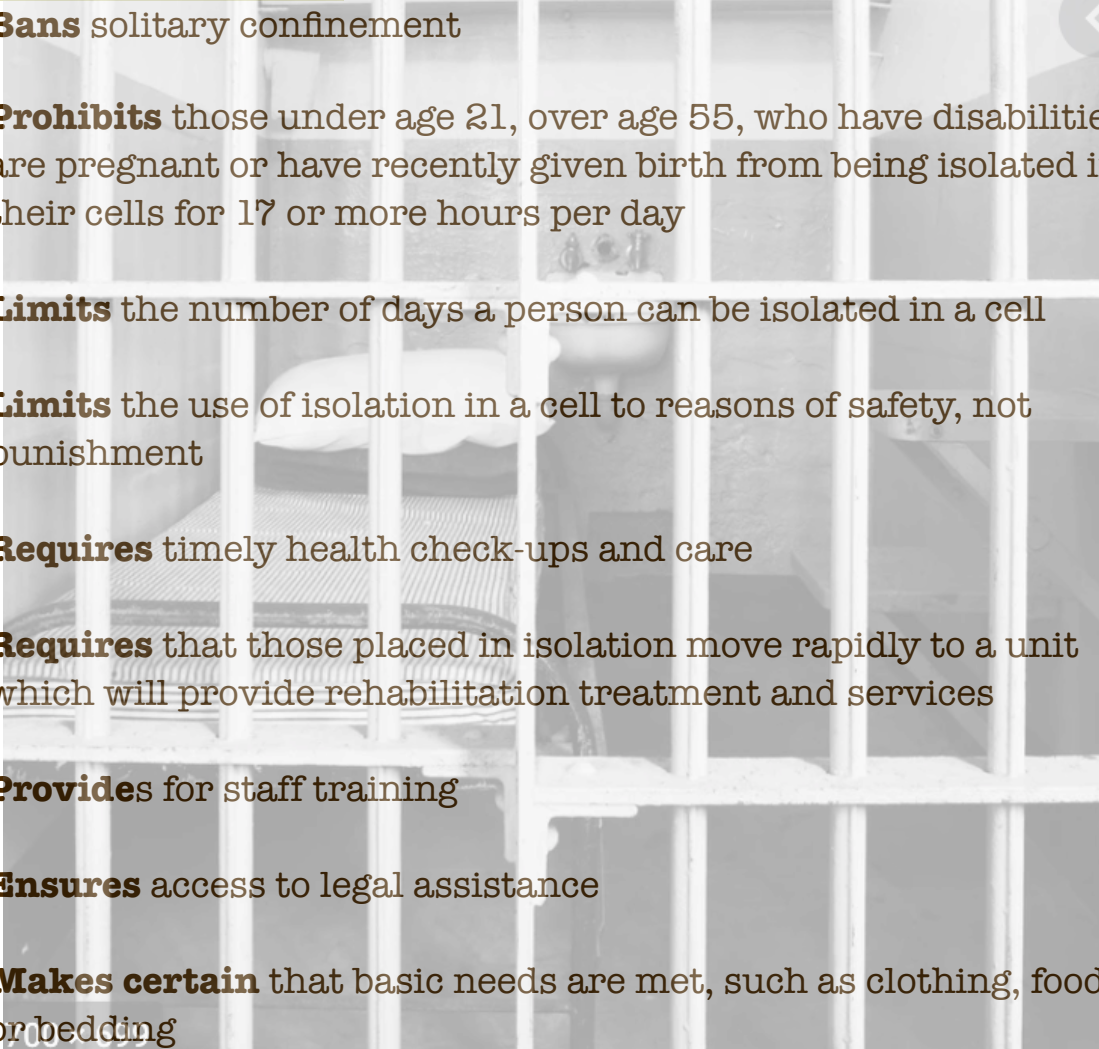
# Ban Solitary Confinement in Maine: Support LD 696

**M**ainers are joining a **nationwide**<sup>1</sup> campaign **against**<sup>2</sup> the use of solitary confinement. We the undersigned support a **ban on solitary confinement, which is any form of cell confinement for more than 20 hours a day. We also support setting standards for isolating a person alone in a cell for more than 17 hours a day.** Solitary confinement does not make communities safer. Solitary confinement or long isolation in a cell is **cruel, very damaging** to both people and communities, **and expensive.**

The **problems of solitary confinement or forms of isolation in a cell for many hours** are well established:

- It's a **form of torture**<sup>3</sup>, causing terrible suffering and physical harm
- It is **unjust**<sup>4</sup> because it happens more to black, brown, the poor, LGBTQ and other minorities
- It is **unethical**<sup>5</sup> because it is used to control young people and people with mental illness
- It **increases violence**<sup>6</sup> when those harmed by the practice are released into the general population without treatment
- **Suicide and self-injury occur more often**<sup>7</sup> for those held in isolation
- Holding people in isolation **costs taxpayers more**<sup>8</sup>
- People who have been in solitary confinement or long isolation in a cell are **more likely to return to jail or prison**<sup>9</sup>

## LD 696 has these pieces in it:

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- **Bans** solitary confinement
  - **Prohibits** those under age 21, over age 55, who have disabilities, are pregnant or have recently given birth from being isolated in their cells for 17 or more hours per day
  - **Limits** the number of days a person can be isolated in a cell
  - **Limits** the use of isolation in a cell to reasons of safety, not punishment
  - **Requires** timely health check-ups and care
  - **Requires** that those placed in isolation move rapidly to a unit which will provide rehabilitation treatment and services
  - **Provides** for staff training
  - **Ensures** access to legal assistance
  - **Makes certain** that basic needs are met, such as clothing, food, or bedding

**In conclusion**, we support LD 696 because isolation in a cell for more than 20 hours a day should never be used in Maine. Additionally, any form of isolation in a cell for more than 17 hours per day should only be used short term with the goal of returning a healthier person to the general jail or prison population as quickly as possible. Isolation in a cell must not be used as punishment.

**W**e support LD 696 because it bans solitary confinement now and spells out important steps toward a system that is more humane, healthy, and less costly.

## **SOURCES**

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