

Michael Mosley
Waterville
LD 696

To the honorable members of the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee,
Solitary confinement is torture. I don't need any qualifiers for that because there are no words that can explain that reality in any kinder terms.

I write to you today as a resident of Waterville, a father, and a respected member of my community who helps other parents advocate for the issues that matter to them and their family. However there was a time when I myself was behind bars for a short time.

I was placed in solitary confinement during a severe mental health crisis. Started with 7 days of 24 hour lockdown. After that first week I was moved to the block for 23 hour a day lockdown with an hour to shower, exercise or watch television. If I felt I could have managed it I would have simply ended my life before that first 7 day period ended.

Most people wouldn't outright admit something like that but I need you to understand what happens to the human mind when it becomes untethered from both time and human contact during a period of mental and emotional turbulence. What happens to the human spirit when you don't have books or the capacity to do anything productive other than to sit with your own thoughts. And what happens when the only thoughts you are capable of forming are all of the reasons you should hate yourself and how you already hate your own existence.

There is no good reason for putting people in such a situation. None. It did not rehabilitate me to further exacerbate my mental health crisis. It did not make me a better person to be locked in both a prison and a cage of my own mind.

I am lucky. I survived that. I was able to escape that situation, recover and move on. But there are those who never do. There are those who will always be locked in that box no matter how free their bodies might become.

Here's an easy way to not perpetrate that harm onto others in the future, don't put them in the box to begin with.

Thank you for your time.