

DYING TO LIVE-prisoners to refuse food in order to bring attention to long term solitary torture

Rally/Press Release June 10th in Madison and on June 11th in Milwaukee

Petition to sign : <https://www.change.org/p/wi-doc-secretary-jon-litscher-waupun-prisoners-begin-food-refusal-to-protest-solitary-torture>;

or go to www.solitarytorture.blogspot.com for petition, articles on AC, profiles of prisoners etc.

Dear Editor,

I am very concerned to learn of Wisconsin's use of long term solitary confinement called Administrative Confinement or A.C. Some Prisoners have spent decades in isolation in our prisons! We have heard of some reforms of a program called "segregation" where prisoners supposed to be punished for rule violations but AC is supposed to be non punitive and instead it is punishment in the extreme. Activists who have worked with AC in other states tell us Wisconsin AC has more restrictive rules than any they have seen.

Starting June 10 some of Waupun Correctional AC prisoners are starting a "food Refusal" campaign to bring this horrific program to the attention of the public and to call for an end to Administrative Confinement in Wisconsin.

The prisoners are asking for the support of the public. There have been actions like this in other states that have resulted in greatly improved conditions.

There will be a rally/ Press conference on June 10th at 1 pm on the west wing of the Madison Capital building. For more information: 262-443-7831, sophiaorganizer1@gmail.com,414-379-2374

Another event will take place at the Court House in Milwaukee on June 11th at 12 noon- Contact 414-379-2374, sachin3567@hotmail.com

Both events will have a life-sized replica of a cell like the one these prisoners spend years in. There will be families of AC prisoners speaking as well as activists, and legislators. ALL Welcome and needed.

Readers can go to www.solitarytorture.blogspot.com to find out more, sign a petition and learn about other actions. We will keep you posted here on the progress of the "food refusal".

Background:

What is AC? Administrative Confinement (AC) is a special program that allows the confinement of prisoners indefinitely. It has very vague criteria and now confines mostly mentally ill and Black and Hispanics who the DOC deems as trouble makers. (We who know these people call them political prisoners). AC became widespread when the Supermax was built in 2000. Before that there were only about a dozen people constantly in isolation and the rules required immediate provable danger. Those rules were changed to "History of violence" and "thought to be dangerous" in order to fill the new Boscobel prison.

Now we have 102 prisoners on AC spread out into four maximum security prison. Some have been in some form of isolation for over 20 years. All shift from segregation to AC periodically but the conditions are the mostly the same. AC is supposed to be non-punitive, but the rules and deprivations are punitive to the extreme. For example, prisoners are not allowed art supplies and must write with a pen nib.

There is a general outcry against solitary confinement these days coming from our state, the nation and international community. The UN has ruled that solitary confinement for over 15 days is torture. Wisconsin has prisoners who have been in one form of isolation or another for over 20 years

Here are some conditions at WCI:

1)Most WCI AC prisoners spend 24 hours of everyday in a bathroom sized cubical. There are many complaints about the incessant yelling and banging .

2) Although studies show that frequent contact with family and friends is the best way to reduce recidivism, Waupun allows only one phone call a week. Visits are by video and sometimes are cut off after 15 minutes and are also allowed only once a week. Spiritual leaders who regularly visit other prisoners, are not allowed to visit AC prisoners

2) WCI AC prisoners NEVER go outside, never see the sun. They can go to rec a few days a week but it is an indoor cage. Few inmates go to rec because the cage is filled with urine and feces-there are no bathrooms and no emergency call buttons in the rec cage. Showers are another not -so -nice way to leave the cell for AC prisoners as the water is not warmed up and is usually freezing.

3) Both Staff working in AC and all solitary units and prisoners are usually demoralized, making for an awful stew. One big reason is there are few programs and a severe shortage of staff (professional and guards)and nothing to do. Self harm becomes an important stress reliever for a lot of mentally ill prisoners and for guards at WCI, sadism often comes to the fore. In 2014 the Center for Investigative Journalism's Bill Lueders came out with a series of article on complaints of guard assaults at WCI. Here is link to one of the articles

<http://wisconsinwatch.org/2014/07/waupun-prison-guards-accused-of-abusing-dozens-of-inmates/>Note: the same guards are still there doing the same things.

It important to note that even if WCI had the perfect set up for AC and none of the 3 points above were true, it would still be torture.

