

1 **RESOLUTION OF IMPLEMENTATION:**
2 **END THE PRACTICE OF PROLONGED SOLITARY CONFINEMENT IN**
3 **CONNECTICUT PRISONS AND JAILS**
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5 **WHEREAS**, The writer of the Letter to the Hebrews exhorts all to “remember
6 those who are in prison, as though you were in prison with them; those who are
7 being
8 tortured, as though you yourselves were being tortured” [Hebrews 13:3]; and
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10 **WHEREAS**, On any given day approximately 70,000 individuals in United States
11 prisons and jails are being held in solitary confinement, variously called
12 “administrative segregation,” “isolation,” “the hole,” “restrictive housing,” “the
13 SHU” (segregated housing unit); and
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15 **WHEREAS**, Juan Mendez, former United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture,
16 has deemed that being held in isolation in excess of 15 days amounts to cruel,
17 inhuman and degrading treatment, in short to torture¹; and
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19 **WHEREAS**, The National Religious Campaign Against Torture, with a
20 membership of over 300 faith organizations, including the United Church of
21 Christ, has called for the end of the use of prolonged solitary confinement in all 50
22 states and the federal prison system because it is costly, inhuman, and ineffective
23 and harms prisoners and our communities; and
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25 **WHEREAS**, In recent years, the Connecticut Department of Corrections has
26 limited its use of isolated confinement, and during this time staff assault, inmate
27 assault, use-of-force incidence, and suicide have all decreased². But none of these
28 minimal reforms are codified by law; and
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30 **WHEREAS**, In 2017 the Connecticut Legislature took an initial step towards
31 abolishing solitary confinement with the passage of HB 7302, “An Act Concerning
32 Isolated Confinement and Correctional Staff Training and Wellness,” which
33 banned the placement of children in the harshest form of solitary confinement and
34 also required annual reporting by the Department of Corrections on the use of
35 solitary³; and
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37 **WHEREAS**, The Connecticut Department of Corrections still, however, uses
38 solitary confinement statewide in its prisons and jails, including in Northern
39 Correctional Institution, Connecticut’s supermax prison, holding individuals in
40 excess of 15 days;

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42 **WHEREAS**, In the fall of 2017 Colorado’s Department of Corrections became the
43 first state in the United States to limit the use of restrictive housing to 15 days
44 maximum⁴; and both the Assembly and Senate of Connecticut’s neighboring state,
45 New York, have now passed Humane Alternatives to Long-Term Confinement
46 legislation;

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48 **THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED**, that we, the delegates to the 2019 Special
49 Meeting of the Connecticut Conference of the United Church of Christ, declare our
50 support for ending the practice of the use of prolonged (15 or more consecutive
51 days) solitary confinement and commit ourselves to advocate for humane
52 alternatives; and

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54 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge our member congregations(1) to
55 become educated about the harms of solitary confinement, (2) to learn from
56 directly impacted individuals about the ways prolonged confinement is torture, and
57 (3) to advocate for humane alternatives; and

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59 **BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that we urge our member congregations join
60 Stop Solitary Connecticut, a coalition that is a project of the National Religious
61 Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT); and

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63 **BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED**, that we request our Conference Legislative
64 Advocate make advocating for the end of the practice of prolonged solitary
65 confinement a priority.
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¹ Solitary Confinement Should be Banned in Most Cases, UN Expert Says, UN News Centre (Oct. 18, 2011); UN Special Rapporteur on Torture, Interim Report of the Special Rapporteur on Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment, ¶ 76, U.N. Doc/ A/66/268 (Aug. 5, 2011)

² Connecticut Department of Corrections, Incidents Report, FY 2015-2016 (2016).

³ <https://www.acluct.org/en/legislation/2017-hb-7302-solitary-confinement-reform>

⁴ <https://www.aclu.org/blog/prisoners-rights/solitary-confinement/why-i-ended-horrorlong-term-solitary-colorados-prisons>