

Dear Chairwoman McEntee, Vice Chair Knight, and Members of the House Judiciary Committee,

I respectfully request to remain anonymous due to fear of retaliation. Thank you for accepting my testimony. I am a resident of Providence, Rhode Island.

I am writing in support of H-8275, the Restrictive Confinement Oversight Act.

When I first entered the ACI, I was placed in solitary confinement because I am transgender. Initially, I was told this was for my protection. While I was extremely exhausted at the time and able to rest for a short period, I know from experience that prolonged solitary confinement is deeply harmful. If I had remained there longer, it would have had serious consequences for my mental and physical health.

I say this because I have lived through it. I was held in solitary confinement in the federal Bureau of Prisons for five years. I also spent 72 days in solitary at the ACI, and I can say firsthand that the conditions in state solitary confinement were even worse.

During my time at the ACI, I experienced degrading and inhumane treatment, particularly as a transgender person. Staff were often disrespectful and hostile toward LGBTQ+ individuals. While I was detoxing, I was denied necessary medical treatment. I was sworn at, threatened, and treated as less than human.

I was denied my one hour of daily time out of my cell. I was not provided food during my first 24 hours because staff told me I was “not worth feeding” and made degrading comments about LGBTQ+ people. I was explicitly told that I did not deserve food or medical care.

After that weekend, I was transferred into federal custody and placed at the Wyatt Detention Facility, where I was again put into solitary confinement. I remained in solitary for the entire time I was awaiting sentencing. I was ultimately sentenced to 10 years.

During my incarceration, I was also subjected to violence. I was raped and beaten by other incarcerated individuals because I am a transgender woman. Instead of being protected, I was isolated in conditions that caused further harm.

Solitary confinement is often used under the justification of safety, especially for vulnerable populations like transgender individuals. But in reality, it isolates people in conditions that can be psychologically devastating and strips them of their dignity.

H-8275 is critical because it brings oversight, transparency, and accountability to the use of restrictive housing. No one should be subjected to prolonged isolation, abuse, or neglect under the guise of safety.

I urge you to pass this bill to ensure that people—especially those who are most vulnerable—are treated with humanity and respect.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A Resident of Providence, RI