

From: [Richenda Kramer](#)
To: [BOC \(BOC\)](#)
Subject: RMAS
Date: Monday, April 12, 2021 9:54:36 PM

I have been a member of the Campaign for Isolated Confinement for 8 years. Before that I was a volunteer at American Friends Service Committee in Newark, where I read and answered letters from prisoners, many of whom were in solitary, and, over the years, I learned of the suffering this inhumane treatment causes.

When I read the description of the BOC plans for changing SHU to the RMAD, it struck me that there is remarkably little difference, and the damage to the people kept in it will be just as great as those in solitary. And in some ways the changes are worse. The general limit now is for 30 days, but the proposed rule under RMAS is 60-120 days, and a person could be held indefinitely.

Maine, Colorado and Mississippi have significantly cut down on solitary confinement and have all experienced a two-fold benefit: in addition to saving money, the level of violence diminished and the prisons became quieter. When programming was available, recidivism diminished. But RMAS wants to construct new punitive and isolating units, which will simply add to the cost in both human terms and financial ones.

I recognise that both the BOC and COs are afraid of changes. People are always afraid of change. Do the BOC recommendations really change solitary? Who benefits from the current system or from the RMAS changes? Do people who are kept in solitary become socially responsible human beings? Does dehumanising people by shackling them and chaining them, keeping them in isolation with no programs reduce their anger or help their mental illness? Does it reduce violence? Prison terms are extraordinarily long for non-violent crimes. Will keeping people like zoo animals in cages in front of their cells for ten hours a day be any better than the present system? Would it not be better to try and change people to be better citizens by encouraging social intercourse for at least 14 hours out of cell every day with access to meaningful occupation or programs?

I hope these BOC recommendations will not be implemented. The COs would also benefit from a system with more humanity, as we have seen how brutalised they are in Rikers under the present system.

Richenda Kramer