



Judiciary Committee - SB 1301

The Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Washington (JCRC) writes today in support of SB 1301, Correctional facilities; use of isolated confinement. This legislation effectively would end prolonged isolation for both adults and juveniles in Virginia State Prisons. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on Torture has found that isolation of prisoners for even 15 days constitutes torture. Moreover, numerous medical and psychological studies have determined that isolation of this length causes long term harm to both mental and physical health. Despite these clear statements, such isolations inexplicably still occur in the Virginia State Prison System with minimal restriction and oversight.

In addition to the humanitarian offense raised by its use, isolation of prisoners also presents costs not accounted for in the operational assessments as shown in the recent settlement of *Reyes vs. Clarke, et al.* As that case shows, without the regulation and limitations created by SB 1301, isolation has been used to the extreme injury of inmates - and those from minority and impoverished communities are particularly at risk. Correctional authorities must manage behavior without resorting to this costly, damaging and discriminatory practice.

JCRC is honored to present this testimony on behalf of over 100 local synagogues, schools and institutions, including a network of agencies that provide excellent cost-effective social services to the community at-large on a non-sectarian basis. We are guided by Jewish law, history and tradition, which guides us in our advocacy and the pursuit of justice.