

**Written Comments of The Bronx Defenders
New York City Board of Corrections
Proposed: Enhanced Supervision Housing Rule Change
December 19, 2014**

Good morning, and thank you to the board for the opportunity to testify. My name is Angel Garrido and I am a member of the Organizing Project at The Bronx Defenders. The Bronx Defenders Organizing Project brings together clients, former clients, and community members to fight for justice and fairness in the South Bronx and beyond. We equip members of the Bronx Community with the information, resources, and training to fight for their rights. And we build political power through voter registration and engagement, lobbying politicians, direct action, Know Your Rights workshops, and community events.

I am here today because when I was 18 years old, I was sentenced to 20 years in jail for *tried to* retaliating against the men who murdered ~~my~~ *and threaten other family member* younger brother, The first year in prison was very difficult for me; I was constantly anxious and looking over my shoulder all the time. This fear made me get into fights just so I could be sent to the box. While serving my sentence I was placed in solitary confinement 8 to 10 times. The first time I landed in the box I was in Sing Sing. I had recently bought food and tooth paste and was robbed as I exited the commissary. In 1984, there were no cameras in jails, so when Correction Officers asked me why I had bruises on my face, my reply was: I fell down. The officers kept interrogating me and when I did not cooperate they gave me 90 days in the box. That was my first time in solitary confinement.

Solitary confinement gave me some comfort and safety at first. This comfort would come with a high prize. After spending numerous times in the box I began suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Syndrome. While in solitary confinement, I would scream and yell at the top of my lungs to fill the silence in the cell. I spent countless hours day dreaming and talking to myself

– it felt like I was losing my mind. I began to act up, by throwing my food on the floor just to get human interaction from the correction officers. The officers would punish me and take away my shower and recreation privileges. Towards the end of my sentence, I began to hear voices in my head, but I refused to take medication and thank god I am fine today.

Solitary confinement is not the only form of punishment being used by correction officers in prisons. I was in Attica state prison, when my cell mate and I were being disciplined for fighting with two other prisoners. My cell mate and I were each sat on a chair facing each other, and hand-cuffed to the chair by our arms and legs. My cell mate was repeatedly hit on the legs right in front of me and till this day he suffers from a limp in his walk. A wet towel was placed around my head and a correction officer placed his baton through a knot in the back and began to apply pressure to my head until I was unconscious. After our punishment was finished, we were rewarded with more time in solitary confinement.

As a person who has firsthand experience with solitary confinement I can tell you that it is human torture. You need to set a 15 day time limit to any isolation, so that people don't have to suffer for 60 days like I did. If I would have been given at least 4 hours of programs or services a day, I would not have PTSD today. My first ticket in the box was for 90 days. If I would have been given my due process it could have eliminated or reduced my sentence. It took 60 days in the box before anyone cared to review my case. Improve due process requirements, so the torture of incarcerated people can end. Thank you for your time and I hope my words help you make the best humane-centered possible decision.