

**DISTRICT OFFICE**  
244 UNION AVE  
BROOKLYN, NY 11211  
TEL: (718) 963-3141

**CITY HALL OFFICE**  
250 BROADWAY, SUITE 1740  
NEW YORK, NY 10007  
TEL: (212) 788-7095



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**ANTONIO REYNOSO**

COUNCIL MEMBER, 34<sup>th</sup> DISTRICT, BROOKLYN & QUEENS

Good morning to the members of the Board, my name is Council Member Antonio Reynoso and I represent the 34<sup>th</sup> district, covering Williamsburg and Bushwick in Brooklyn and Ridgewood in Queens. I am also a member of the Council's progressive caucus, which along with the Women's caucus, came out this year in support of ending solitary confinement and extreme isolation as a form punishment. It is my belief that solitary confinement constitutes cruel and unusual punishment and is unconstitutional. To put a finer point on it, solitary confinement is a torturous and barbaric practice that can cause irreparable psychological harm and should've been resigned to the dustbin of history a long time ago.

I want to thank the HALT Solitary and Jails Action coalitions for their work on putting together a blueprint to end the practice of solitary confinement and add some points to the conversation. One of the most problematic issues is that solitary, or punitive segregation as it is known by DOC, can take a number of different forms that don't technically fall under this header. This is outrageous when one considers that isolation practices that are not technically considered punitive segregation are subject to no clear oversight and accountability measures. To address these issues, I'm endorsing the coalition's recommendation that minimum standards be applied to all detainees across the board. This includes 14 hours of out-of-cell time for every detainee in City jails and removing any exceptions to standards for punitive segregation, enhanced supervision housing, and other forms of restrictive housing.

I am aware that DOC personnel have raised concerns about officer safety and I want to be clear, we don't want to do anything that would jeopardize the safety of corrections officers. However, placing detainees in solitary only serves to worsen the conditions that led to destructive behavior in the first place. We must distinguish between delivering consequences and falling into outright vindictiveness against our incarcerated brothers and sisters. It is critical that we implement programming that gets to the root causes of violent behavior, rather than reinforcing a system that simply perpetuates it. New York City must be a leader on criminal justice reform – Cook County jail has already ended solitary confinement, there is no reason we can't as well. I urge the Board to restrict the use of punitive segregation to the greatest extent possible and I hope the next time I have the opportunity to testify before you we're talking about eliminating this horrific practice entirely. Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Antonio Reynoso".

Antonio Reynoso  
Council Member, 34<sup>th</sup> District