



CITY OF PROVIDENCE

Jorge O. Elorza, Mayor

May 24, 2021

The Honorable Evan P. Shanley
Chair, House State Government and Elections Committee
Rhode Island State House
82 Smith Street
Providence, RI 02903

Honorable Chairperson and Committee Members

I would like to offer my support for House bill [5740](#), The Restrictive Housing Act. In recent fiscal years, the Rhode Island Department of Corrections has reported that nearly 1/3 people released from the Adult Correctional Institutions each year are returning back to their homes in the city of Providence. We know that low income, and communities of color are over-represented in restrictive housing settings.

It is vital that we move away from inhumane correctional practices such as the use of indefinite solitary confinement, the impacts of which cause significant mental health disorders like paranoia, depression, anxiety, PTSD, and others. Restrictive housing also carries an immense fiscal cost to our state. For each person kept in the High Security Center it costs state taxpayers just under [\\$200,000](#) per year, more than [12 times](#) what we spend on the public education of our youth per pupil per year.

This bill would reduce the amount of time prisoners can be subjected to solitary confinement for, reserve use for incidents of serious violence or attempted escape only, and promote greater access to mental and behavioral health services and programs at the ACI. If our intention is to create healthier and more productive communities, we must pass the Restrictive Housing Act. This is a crucial step in moving towards a brighter future for the people of Providence, and Rhode Island as a whole. I urge the committee to pass this bill.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be "J. Elorza".

Jorge O. Elorza

Mayor, City of Providence