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## Illinois' Anthony Gay Isolated Confinement Reform Bill Passes Committee

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Romanucci & Blandin, LLC and Illinois State Representative LaShawn Ford (D- Chicago, 8th District) together announce that The Anthony Gay Isolated Confinement Restriction Act, Illinois House Bill 3564 (formerly HB 182 in 2020) cleared the House Judiciary – Criminal Committee Friday afternoon after testimony by Anthony Gay and others. The bill was reintroduced by Rep. Ford this month and is now ready for a full vote.

The bill is named for former inmate Anthony Gay who was held in solitary confinement for two decades, including 15 years of a prolonged sentence as a punishment for behavior resulting from his isolation. During his extreme isolation, he was denied appropriate and necessary mental health treatment which made it impossible for Gay to comport with prison rules and regulations, leading him to brutally mutilate himself countless times and endure years of mental and physical torture. The bill was introduced last session but did not make it out of committee before the session concluded. The bill is intended to reform solitary confinement practices in the Illinois Department of Corrections and create greater transparency.

“I am pleased to see the Illinois House Judiciary-Criminal Committee acknowledge the need for change and move this critically important bill on for a full vote. This measure will bring greater transparency to the Illinois Department of Corrections and a greater level of humanity to the system,” said Rep. LaShawn Ford.

“Solitary confinement is domestic terrorism. Solitary confinement is a psychological wasteland. Solitary confinement is torture. Solitary confinement is psychologically darker than an inside of a cow. No human should be allowed to sit and psychologically rot like rotten apples in solitary confinement. This bill has my name on it, but this bill is not about me. This bill is about every prisoner who has been or will be placed in solitary confinement. And I am grateful that the committee allowed this bill to take another step forward towards justice,” said Anthony Gay, former solitary confinement inmate.

“The passage of the Anthony Gay Act will protect at a legislative level the constitutional rights of some of the most vulnerable members of our population. It will provide transparency and accountability in the ways in which Illinois uses solitary confinement. It will prevent needless suffering among the severely mentally ill. It will signal to residents and to the country Illinois’s recognition of the humanity of incarcerated people,” said Attorney Nicolette Ward, Romanucci & Blandin, LLC.

**The Anthony Gay Isolated Confinement Restriction Act, would:**

- Limit a committed person to no more than 10 consecutive days in isolated confinement in a 180-day period.
- Provide that when out of cell, committed persons have access to activities such as group therapy, medical appointments, meals, educational classes, job assignments, visits and exercise, gymnasium or yard time.
- Ensure transparency with quarterly reports by the Illinois Department of Corrections on the use of isolated confinement.

The Isolated Confinement Restriction Act is now with the Illinois House of Representatives Rules Committee and can be read [here](#).

Illinois residents are asked to reach out to their representatives and urge them to support House Bill 182. You can do this by calling or emailing your representatives office. Lawmaker contact information can be found [here](#).

Anthony Gay was released from prison in August of 2018 and has filed a federal lawsuit against former Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) director John Baldwin, current IDOC director Rob Jeffreys, Wexford Health Sources, a private company that provides medical and mental health care to IDOC inmates, the wardens and assistant wardens of institutions at which Anthony Gay was imprisoned, and several employees of IDOC and Wexford.

The lawsuit, filed in the U.S. District Court for the Central District of Illinois, charges the Defendants with torture of Gay, violating the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment, the Americans with Disabilities Act, and the Rehabilitation Act. It also alleges that the Plaintiff's Fourteenth Amendment rights were violated.

The State's treatment of Gay increased his torture and caused him to take erratic and irrational actions, which included extensive sampling of repeated and severe self-mutilation, including cuts to the Plaintiff's scrotum, arms, legs, and eyelids. Rather than providing the necessary and essential psychiatric care, the State pursued criminal charges against Gay, which extended his prison sentence for years and caused his mental condition to deteriorate in a blatant violation of his constitutional rights, the lawsuit states.

Anthony Gay, Rep. Ford, and Attorney Nicolette Ward recently provided comments on the need for change in solitary confinement practices in a video produced by Romanucci & Blandin. The video can be viewed [here](#).