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## New Video Supports Illinois Solitary Confinement Reform Bill with Personal Story of Former Inmate Anthony Gay

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Romanucci & Blandin, LLC and Illinois State Representative La Shawn Ford (D- Chicago, 8th District) together announce the release of a new video intended to build public awareness and legislative support for a bill to reform the Illinois Department of Corrections practice of solitary confinement for inmates. The Anthony Gay Isolated Confinement Restriction Act, Illinois House Bill 182, introduced by Rep. Ford, 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 video features remarks from Anthony Gay, Rep. Ford, and Attorney Nicolette Ward of Romanucci & Blandin, who represents Mr. Gay in civil litigation. The video can be viewed at: <https://bit.ly/39YiVXt>.

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 Judiciary-Criminal Committee and can be read here:

“The Anthony Gay Solitary Reform Bill is desperately needed to bring humane and civilized standards to the practice of isolating inmates in Illinois and to bring about much needed transparency to the system so that Corrections officials are accountable for the conditions and public officials and citizens can understand what transpires behind prison walls,” said Rep. LaShawn Ford. “We call on Illinois lawmakers and Governor J.B. Pritzker and lawmakers to

support this effort and create a more humane environment and end this devastating and unconstitutional practice.”

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 at: <https://www.ilga.gov/house/>.

“Solitary confinement is an extremely dark place and my time in isolation was devastating for me because I was denied the medical attention I desperately needed,” said former solitary confinement inmate Anthony Gay. “I am dedicated to helping change the system for the people who are currently in solitary confinement and so that no one endures what I did ever again.”

“This new video conveys a powerful message about the treatment of Mr. Gay by the Illinois Department of Corrections, and illustrates the path forward to change,” said Gay’s attorney, Nicolette Ward at Romanucci & Blandin, LLC. “We hope for reform through the Anthony Gay Isolated Confinement Restriction Act while we also pursue justice in the civil courts.”

Anthony Gay was released 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.