

## FROM PLATFORM TO POLICY

*The Iowa Democratic Party [Platform](#) is a roadmap that you can and should expect a Democrat running for and elected to office to be guided by when supporting legislation and policies.*

### **Criminal Justice Reform**

#### *Policy*

The Democratic party's stance on solitary confinement is to ban it with very limited exceptions. Iowa law states that if a prisoner is disorderly or willfully destructive then the sheriff may have them placed in solitary confinement for no more than ten days per offense. If the inmate refuses to labor, they are to be placed in confinement and the time spent in this punishment will not be considered part of their sentence. This is modern-day slavery. Psychologists have warned about the damage done by the practice of solitary confinement and we believe that it should only be used as a tool to safeguard the well being of the people around the prisoner, not to be used as an end-all punishment for inmates that guards don't want or know how to deal with.

In 2015, the Obama Administration ordered a Justice Department review on the practice of solitary confinement and in 2016 implemented a new rule to remove it as a punishment for juveniles. Since then, however, the Trump administration has rescinded that guidance. It must be reinstated and extended to adult convicts as well.

Today, 20% of U.S. prisoners are subjected to solitary confinement every year, this equates to 80-100 thousand confined daily in the U.S., according to a report by the [United Nations](#).

#### *Where are we now?*

Incarceration should be a chance for the state to rehabilitate people and address their underlying concerns and needs, not an opportunity to torture. Some states currently follow the [Nelson Mandela Rule](#), in which solitary confinement is a form of torture if suffered for more than 15 days--while other states have no such rule in place.

The Republican party holds no obvious platform on the topic of solitary confinement.