

ASSEMBLY, No. 5529

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

221st LEGISLATURE

INTRODUCED APRIL 10, 2025

Sponsored by:
Assemblywoman YVONNE LOPEZ
District 19 (Middlesex)

SYNOPSIS

Requires DOC to report incidents of suicide and self-harm among inmates housed in prison Restorative Housing Units.

CURRENT VERSION OF TEXT

As introduced.



1 AN ACT concerning data about certain prison inmates and amending
2 P.L.2019, c.160.

3
4 **BE IT ENACTED** *by the Senate and General Assembly of the State*
5 *of New Jersey:*

6
7 1. Section 7 of P.L.2019, c.160 (C.30:4-82.11) is amended to
8 read as follows:

9 7. In accordance with the "Administrative Procedure Act,"
10 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), the commissioner shall
11 promulgate regulations to effectuate the provisions of **[this act]**
12 P.L.2019, c.160 (C.30:4-82.5 et seq.). The regulations shall include
13 but not be limited to:

14 a. establishing less restrictive interventions to isolated
15 confinement, including separation from other inmates; transfer to
16 other correctional facilities; and any non-isolated confinement
17 sanction authorized by Department of Corrections regulations;
18 restrictions on religious, mail, and telephone privileges, visit
19 contacts, or outdoor and recreation access shall only be imposed as
20 is necessary for the safety of the inmate or others, but shall not
21 restrict access to food, basic necessities, or legal access;

22 b. requiring training of disciplinary staff and all staff working
23 with inmates in isolated confinement and requiring that this training
24 include:

25 (1) assistance from appropriate professionals to periodically
26 train all staff working with inmates in isolated confinement;

27 (2) standards for isolated confinement, including that it shall be
28 limited to when an inmate commits an offense involving violence,
29 escapes or attempts to escape, or poses a threat to institutional
30 safety; that the maximum penalties for each offense shall be based
31 on the seriousness of the offense; and available less restrictive
32 interventions; and

33 (3) the identification of developmental disabilities, and the
34 symptoms of mental illness, including trauma disorders, and
35 methods of safe responses to people in distress;

36 c. requiring documentation of all decisions, procedures, and
37 reviews of inmates placed in isolated confinement;

38 d. requiring monitoring of compliance with all rules governing
39 cells, units, and other places where inmates are placed in isolated
40 confinement;

41 e. requiring posting on the official website of the Department
42 of Corrections of quarterly reports on the use of isolated
43 confinement or confinement in a Restorative Housing Unit, without
44 revealing any personal identifying information, by age, sex, gender
45 identity, ethnicity, incidence of mental illness, and type of

EXPLANATION – Matter enclosed in bold-faced brackets **[thus]** in the above bill is
not enacted and is intended to be omitted in the law.

Matter underlined thus is new matter.

1 confinement status, at each facility, including a county correctional
2 facility; these reports shall include the population on the last day of
3 each quarter and a non-duplicative cumulative count of people
4 exposed to isolated confinement or confinement in a Restorative
5 Housing Unit for each fiscal year. These inmate reports also shall
6 include the incidence of emergency confinement, self-harm, suicide,
7 and assault in any isolated confinement unit or confinement in a
8 Restorative Housing Unit. These reports shall not include
9 personally identifiable information regarding any inmate; and

10 f. modifying the New Jersey Administrative Code for
11 consistency with the provisions of **【this act】** P.L.2019, c.160
12 (C.30:4-82.5 et seq.) and to require appropriate alternative
13 placements for vulnerable populations in county correctional
14 facilities.

15 (cf: P.L.2019, c.160, s.7)

16
17 2. The Department of Corrections shall adopt rules and
18 regulations pursuant to the “Administrative Procedure Act,”
19 P.L.1968, c.410 (C.52:14B-1 et seq.), to effectuate the purposes of
20 sections 1 and 2 of this act.

21
22 3. This act shall take effect on the 90th day following enactment.
23
24

25 STATEMENT

26
27 This bill would require the Department of Corrections to publicly
28 report data concerning acts of self-harm or suicide by inmates
29 housed in Restorative Housing Units (RHUs).

30 RHUs house prison inmates who have been removed from the
31 prison’s general population as a disciplinary measure. This bill
32 embodies an October 2024 recommendation by the Office of the
33 Corrections Ombudsperson.