Gary Flakes

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RE: Solitary Confinement

Dear Chairman Durbin and Ranking Member Graham,

 My name is, Gary Flakes and from the age of sixteen until twenty-nine I was incarcerated in the Colorado Department of Corrections. I was held in solitary confinement in the state of Mississippi because Colorado sent their inmates out there to a private prison. Being in ad-seg can be very depressing, demoralizing and is not suitable for a human being for a significant amount of time. In Colorado we are only allowed one hour out a day, we can only have two books in our cell, we have to send out all of our possessions that we own, we are not allowed grease for our hair and lotion is not allowed which in time damages our skin and hair. We are not allowed outside for a significant amount of time to get sunlight which has been shown to be healthy scientifically. Colorado held juveniles in solitary confinement that were charged as adults until the Colorado Juvenile Defender Coalition which I was a part of passed a bill this year eliminated that possibility unless circumstances showed that it was necessary. I would agree that sometime solitary is necessary for disruptive individuals but that should not give the Department of Correction unfettered power to keep the voice less in solitary confinement for two to twenty years at a time there need to be oversight. Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Gary L. Flakes