



**\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\***

## **DEFENDER ORGANIZATIONS DEMAND AN END TO SOLITARY CONFINEMENT, URGE NYC BOARD OF CORRECTION TO TAKE ACTION**

(New York, NY) -- **Neighborhood Defender Service, Brooklyn Defender Services, The Bronx Defenders, and New York County Defender Services** call on the New York City Board of Correction (BOC) to take action to end the torture of solitary confinement. The Board will hold a special meeting this Thursday (Oct. 31), and is expected to vote on initiating rulemaking. The Defenders urge that the [rule proposed by the Jails Action Coalition and the #HALTsolitary Campaign](#) serve as the basis for the rulemaking process.

The devastating and preventable death of Layleen Polanco in solitary confinement on Rikers Island this June underscored the dangerous conditions for people detained in city jails subjects people in its jails. Her death led to a renewed push for an end to the practice, but the state legislature failed to pass the HALT Solitary Confinement Act in June, leaving local governments to lead the way.

DOC reported in its most recent report to BOC that 117 people were in Punitive Segregation and 78 people were in Enhanced Supervision Housing on July 29, 2019. However, there is infamously an “alphabet soup” of different forms of solitary confinement in New York City jails. In 2018, then-acting BOC Chair Derrick D. Cephas said there were 47 restrictive housing units system wide and 16 types with a total of 450 people in them.

The Board of Correction has indicated since July its intention to move forward a reform proposal for the city, but only released its proposed rule today after months of delay. The Defenders urge the Board to wait no longer to initiate rulemaking so that New Yorkers can weigh in on the urgent need to end the practice. They call for the Board of Correction to ensure that all people held in city jails receive the standard minimum out-of-cell time as well as access to supportive programming, eliminating exceptions that apply to people in long-term isolation.

**The Defenders said:** “Hundreds of people are held in solitary confinement in our city’s jails every year. The torturous conditions devastate the people we serve and the harm extends beyond jail walls and out into the community. The proposed rule put forward by the Board of Corrections this week fails to recognize the urgency of this crisis. We urge them to initiate rulemaking, using the rule language proposed by the Jails Action Coalition and the #HALTsolitary Campaign, immediately so we can bring much needed due process to the jails and finally move forward in ending this barbarous practice.”