Prisoners Are Not Sentenced To Long Term Solitary Confinement For Their Crime; They Are Assigned By CDCR

CDCR administrators assign prisoners to long term indefinite solitary confinement. In fact, California asserts people isolated in the SHU are neither in solitary, nor being punished.

Long-term indefinite solitary confinement is rarely based on bad behavior. Prisoners assigned to the SHU for acts of violence or rule-breaking receive a maximum 5 years fixed SHU term. Thousands of prisoners are in long-term solitary based on the prison’s determination of prison gang association, not for committing a violent act or breaking a prison rule.

The evidence of gang association can be as trivial as who signed their birthday card, what books they read, the art they draw, or who they say “hi” to. It is often based on general statements of secret witnesses who have provided this information to get out of solitary confinement themselves (“debriefing”). Prisoners who are assigned to the SHU only for their associations often remain in solitary in the SHU for life, even with good behavior.

There is no trial, only a short hearing with no lawyer, no rules of evidence, no impartial hearing officer and no meaningful review.

California Uses Long Term Indefinite Solitary Confinement More Than Any Other Government Entity In The World

(both in absolute numbers and percentage of those incarcerated)

Well over 12,000 adults in California are confined in various forms of extreme isolation. In 2011, at Pelican Bay SHU (Secure Housing Units) alone, 500 men had lived in solitary over 10 years and 78 men for over 20 years.
Severity of Confinement Does Not Increase Prison or Public Safety

Prison violence is not reduced by extreme isolation. However, the 2012 Agreement to End Hostilities issued by a multiracial group of inmate representatives did reduce violence. It stated in part:

“This means from this date on, all racial group hostilities need to be at an end...; do not allow personal, individual issues to escalate into racial group issues.”

If the CDCR was interested in violence reduction, it would have agreed to distributed the Agreement. CDCR refused.

This is not about freeing prisoners; this is about ending torture.

http://prisonerhungerstrikesolidarity.wordpress.com