



2019 POLICY PRIORITIES

CPR is a statewide family-driven organization dedicated to elevating the voices of families in prison reform. The following priorities were adopted by CPR's Board as some of the most impactful ways to strengthen family connection, improve prison safety, and reduce reoffending at no or low cost to taxpayers. Changes to these policies and practices would result in better and safer outcomes for inmates, staff, families and communities.

❖ **Establish a formal MDOC Family Advisory Board**

- A pilot Family Advisory Board (FAB) has been working with MDOC Administration since 2015. The board meets quarterly to address general issues that affect numerous families and prisoners. The Board currently meets at the pleasure of MDOC.
- In 2017, Senator (then-Representative) Stephanie Chang introduced House Bill 4677 which would establish, by law, a FAB. She plans to reintroduce this bill in the Senate.
- Modeled after that in California, a formal FAB will give MDOC valuable feedback from all stakeholders and contribute to the mission of safety, rehabilitation and family support.

❖ **Limit solitary confinement to 15 days at a time and only for cases of a serious disciplinary violation**

- Colorado, which adopted this policy in 2017, has seen a reduction of assaults, forced cell entries, and the use of heavy restraints decline by 40 percent. The results of these reforms have been positive for both staff and prisoners.¹
- Research has shown that housing someone in a cell the size of a parking space for 22 or more hours per day for extended periods of time damages them both mentally and physically. Since most people who go to prison — 97 percent — return to their community, that means we were releasing people back into their communities in worse shape than when they arrived.¹

❖ **Remove restrictions on visits as punishment for misconducts**

- Administrative Rules allow the MDOC Director to restrict visits as a form of punishment. Visitor restrictions for misconduct unrelated to a visit is not supporting family reunification. *Administrative Rule (R. 791.6609 Rule 609 (11) (d) and R. 791.6614 Rule 614 (d))*
- Numerous studies show that family and community support is critical to success in prison and upon reentry. Taking visits for misconduct unrelated to visits is counterproductive. Denying visits punishes innocent children, families and community mentors and impedes reentry.

Citizens for Prison Reform

P.O. Box 80414 Lansing, MI 48908 Ph: 269-339-0606

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¹ Rick Raemisch, Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Corrections. (December 8, 2018). "Why I ended the horror of long-term solitary confinement in Colorado's prisons." Accessed: <https://www.greeleytribune.com/opinion/rick-raemisch-why-i-ended-the-horror-of-long-term-solitary-in-colorados-prisons/>