

Winston Files Class Action Lawsuit on Behalf of Prisoners Sentenced to Solitary Confinement

JUNE 24, 2015

On June 24, 2015, Winston & Strawn and Uptown People’s Law Center (UPLC), a nonprofit legal services organization, filed a class action lawsuit on behalf of thousands of prisoners against the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) for its overuse and misuse of solitary confinement in Illinois prisons.

Filed on behalf of three inmates, but seeking class action status for thousands of prisoners, the suit claims that the Illinois prison system is excessively and inappropriately using the restrictive housing for inmates. Approximately 2,500 prisoners are in solitary confinement in Illinois at any given time, many placed there for even slight infractions.

According to UPLC – which specializes in prisoners’ rights, Social Security disability, and tenants’ rights and eviction defense – once released, prisoners who have been subjected to prolonged solitary confinement are often too traumatized to work and must collect Social Security income.

The federal lawsuit states the IDOC alleged overuse of solitary confinement is unconstitutionally “cruel, inhumane, offensive to basic human decency.”

Winston’s team includes partner Kimball Anderson and associates Alyssa Ramirez and Reid Smith. Coverage of the suit was reported in various media outlets, including Bloomberg and CBS Chicago.

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