

: College Athletes

EDITORIAL  
The O'Bannon Ruling: 'Student-Athlete' Is HistoryCHARLES M. BLOW  
Michael Brown and Black MenGAIL COLLINS  
What's Next With Hil

AGES | EDITORIAL

## Model for Juvenile Detention Reform

LEADERBOARD JUNE 8, 2014

States are sending fewer and fewer children to juvenile correctional facilities, partly in response to research showing that locking up young people increases the risk that they will eventually drop out of school and become permanently entangled with the justice system.

This is all to the good. But dealing with low-risk children through community-guidance programs leaves behind a population of severely troubled children who often wind up in solitary confinement instead of receiving the special help they need.

The Justice Department, which has already required several jurisdictions to improve the care of children in custody, underscored that point last month when [it settled a long-running lawsuit](#) against the State of Ohio. Under the new agreement, Ohio will sharply reduce and eventually end solitary confinement. It will also ensure that young people receive individual mental health treatment and educational services with the aim of preventing the disruptive behaviors that led to the confinement in the first place.

Solitary confinement, which can lead to mental problems for adults, is especially damaging for children, who are more fragile emotionally. [A 2002 Justice Department investigation](#) showed that young people experience symptoms of paranoia, anxiety and depression even after very short periods of isolation. Extended isolation can lead to suicide. According to one national study, half the suicides reported in juvenile facilities were committed by young people in isolation, and in nearly two-thirds of the cases there was some history of solitary confinement.

The conditions of mentally ill or disabled children, who have poor impulse control to begin with, are made far worse when they spend 23 hours in isolation without therapeutic services. Not surprisingly, they emerge angrier and more troubled than when they entered, which means they act out and are shut away yet again.

The Justice Department's settlement with Ohio puts states on notice that solitary policies need to change. If adopted nationally, the

Advertisement



principles in that settlement would go a long way toward humanizing juvenile detention.

[Meet The New York Times's Editorial Board »](#)

A version of this editorial appears in print on June 9, 2014, on page A18 of the New York edition with the headline: A Model for Juvenile Detention Reform. [Order Reprints](#) | [Today's Paper](#) | [Subscribe](#)

MOST EMAILED

1. [Maureen Dowd: It's the Loyalty, Stupid](#) 
2. [Opinion: Hit the Reset Button in Your Brain](#) 
3. [Critic On the Road: Las Vegas, Off the Eaten Path](#) 
4. [Lauren Bacall Dies at 89; in a Bygone Hollywood, She Purred Every Word](#) 
5. [36 Hours in Madrid](#) 
6. [Op-Ed Contributor: The South's Lesson for the Tea Party](#) 
7. [Busy Working, Robin Williams Fought Demons](#) 
8. [Books of The Times: The Lower Ambitions of Higher Education](#) 
9. [36 Hours in Nice, France](#) 
10. [Essay: A Fan Visits From Afar, and the Royals Come Alive](#) 

[View Complete List »](#)



**SITE INDEX**

<a href="#">NEWS</a>	<a href="#">OPINION</a>	<a href="#">ARTS</a>	<a href="#">LIVING</a>	<a href="#">LISTINGS &amp; MORE</a>
<a href="#">World</a>	<a href="#">Today's Opinion</a>	<a href="#">Today's Arts</a>	<a href="#">Automobiles</a>	<a href="#">Classifieds</a>
<a href="#">U.S.</a>	<a href="#">Op-Ed Columnists</a>	<a href="#">Art &amp; Design</a>	<a href="#">Crosswords</a>	<a href="#">Tools &amp; Services</a>
<a href="#">Politics</a>	<a href="#">Editorials</a>	<a href="#">ArtsBeat</a>	<a href="#">Dining &amp; Wine</a>	<a href="#">Times Topics</a>

New York	Contributing Writers	Books	Education	Public Editor
Business	Op-Ed Contributors	Dance	Fashion & Style	N.Y.C. Events Guide
Technology	Opinionator	Movies	Health	TV Listings
Science	Letters	Music	Home & Garden	Blogs
Health	Sunday Review	N.Y.C. Events Guide	Jobs	Cartoons
Sports	Taking Note	Television	Magazine	Multimedia
Education	Room for Debate	Theater	N.Y.C. Events Guide	Photography
Obituaries	Public Editor	Video Games	Real Estate	Video
Today's Paper	Video: Opinion	Video: Arts	T Magazine	NYT Store
Corrections			Travel	Times Journeys
			Weddings & Celebrations	Subscribe
				Manage My Account

---

[SUBSCRIBE](#)  [Times Premier](#)  [Home Delivery](#)  [Digital Subscriptions](#)

 [NYT Now](#)  [NYT Opinion](#)

[Email Newsletters](#) [Alerts](#) [Crosswords](#) [Gift Subscriptions](#) [Corporate Subscriptions](#) [Education Rate](#)

[Mobile Applications](#) [Replica Edition](#) [International New York Times](#)

---

© 2014 The New York Times Company | [Privacy](#) | [Terms of Service](#)

[Site Map](#) | [Help](#) | [Site Feedback](#)