

December 10, 2020

Katal Weekly Update

Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice



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NO Delays to #CLOSErikers



Yesterday the news site THE CITY [published an article](#) with new details about prospective delays to New York City's timeline to close Rikers Island Jail Complex. According to THE CITY, as the City and nation struggle with COVID-19 and the impacts on the economy, budget cuts have been made to the City's plan to close Rikers Island Jail Complex, extending the projected timeline to close the notorious jail complex from the initial target date of 2026 to as late as 2028. The delay flies in the face of community demands to close Rikers as quickly as possible.

Directly impacted and community organizations, and advocacy groups, including Katal, issued a release in response to the report. [Read the full release here.](#)

THE CITY article also follows a huge story by The Intercept about people jailed at Rikers over technical parole violations, highlighting our #LessIsMoreNY campaign. [The Intercept article](#) underscores how the COVID-19 pandemic is exposing the absurdities of NY's parole system, with thousands of people imprisoned statewide, and hundreds incarcerated on Rikers, for noncriminal technical violations of parole.

The Intercept notes that our [#LessIsMoreNY Act](#) would 'transform New York's parole system but would merely bring the state in line with what other states are already doing'. With the 2021 Legislative Session quickly approaching as COVID-19 continues to spread, lawmakers and

Governor Cuomo must listen to the demands of their constituents, follow the recommendations of public health officials, and finally pass #LessIsMoreNY.

To learn more about the #LessIsMoreNY campaign, join us for our next campaign update with our partners A Little Piece of Light and Unchained -- Wednesday, December 16th, 2:30 - 3:30 p.m. [Register for the zoom call here.](#)

If you'd like to get involved in our work to pass #LessIsMoreNY and to close Rikers Island Jail Complex, please contact Melanie Dominguez, Community Organizer, mdominguez@katalcenter.org.

As COVID-19 Spreads in CT Prisons and Jails, Katal Demands: #FreeThemNowCT



On Sunday, a tenth incarcerated person in Connecticut passed away due to COVID-19 in the Department of Corrections (DOC), which comes three days after the death of [another incarcerated person on December 4th](#). This tragic death underscores the urgency to develop a comprehensive COVID-19 plan in the Department of Corrections that includes emergency release of incarcerated people.

Readers of our weekly update know we've been holding in-person (socially distanced)protests outside correctional facilities in CT to demand Gov. Lamont to take action to save lives. In response to the death this week, [Katal released a statement](#) by Katal member, Raquel Leiva, who is worried about her husband who is currently incarcerated. [Read our full statement here](#). She also [spoke with FOX61](#) about her concerns, which - along with those of countless families of incarcerated individuals across the state - are being ignored by Lamont. [Watch the full segment on FOX61 here](#).

As we approach the 2021 legislative session, it is clear that Governor Lamont will not act, the Legislature must move swiftly to pass bills requiring preventive measures to release incarcerated individuals and build a comprehensive plan for pandemics like COVID-19 to save lives and keep ALL constituents safe. Without action, there will be more needless deaths.

Katal offers our deepest condolences to the families of the latest victims of COVID-19 in the Connecticut Department of Corrections.

To get involved in our #FreeThemNowCT campaign, tackling COVID-19 in jails and prisons in CT, please contact Lead Organizer Kenyatta M. Thompson - kthompson@katalcenter.org.

Keep practicing social distancing, wear your mask, wash your hands, and check in on your neighbors. If you want to get involved, learn more about our work, or just connect, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Katal works to strengthen the people, policies, institutions, and movements that advance health, equity, and justice for everyone. Join us: web, Twitter, Facebook! Email: info@katalcenter.org. Phone: 646.875.8822.