The right to a speedy trial is enshrined in the Sixth Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. In New York State, it is implemented through Criminal Procedure Law 30.30. However, CPL 30.30 contains loopholes that, when compounded by severe court backlogs, lead to unreasonable delays for people who have been charged with but not convicted of a crime.

The result is that in New York individuals are being forced to spend extra months, or even years, in pre-trial detention as they await their day in court.

One recent and tragic case made the problem abundantly clear. In 2010, 16-year-old Kalief Browder was arrested for allegedly stealing a backpack. His family could not afford to pay his bail, and Kalief was held for three years at Rikers Island. Kalief was taken from jail to court 33 times; each time, the case wasn't “ready,” so he was returned to Rikers. Kalief refused to plead “guilty” to a crime he did not commit, and despite dozens of times in court, his real “day in court” – a trial – never happened, because the case was dismissed, and Kalief was released. Kalief fought to recover his life and bring justice to the system which harmed him, but the traumatic experience had taken its toll, and Kalief committed suicide in 2015, at the age of 22.

Kalief’s Law, S1998-A / A3055-A introduced by Senator Daniel Squadron and Assemblymember Jeffrion Aubry, would fix New York’s speedy trial statute to improve the effectiveness of New York’s criminal justice system and ensure that people are not unjustly and unnecessarily held in pre-trial detention.

We, the undersigned, urge the New York State legislature to pass Kalief’s Law S1998-A (Squadron) / A3055-A (Aubry) and ensure the right to a speedy trial.
Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice

1199 SEIU

32BJ SEIU

5 Borough Defenders

Alliance for Quality Education

Anti-Racist Alliance

Beth Elohim Hebrew Congregation

BronxConnect

The Bronx Defenders

Bronx Freedom Fund

Brooklyn Community Bail Fund

Brooklyn Defender Services

Brooklyn Movement Center

CASES

Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement

Center for Community Alternatives

Center for Law and Justice

Chairman NAN NYC

Chapter Second Chance Committee

College and Community Fellowship

Community Service Society of New York

Congregation Beth Elohim

Corporation for Supportive Housing of New York

Cre8tive YouTH*ink

DUECES

Drive Change

Drug Policy Alliance

Enlace

The Fortune Society

Grand St. Settlement

Green Party of New York

Harm Reduction Coalition

Housing Works

I Am My Community

Immigrant Defense Project

The Incarcerated Nation Corporation

Innocence Project

Jewish Voices for Peace – New York City

LatinoJustice PRLDEF

Legal Action Center

Legal Aid Society of New York

Mekong NYC

Milk Not Jails

National Association of Social Workers – New York City Chapter
Fixing New York’s Speedy Trial Law

Kalief’s Law S1998-A (Squadron) / A3055-A (Aubry)

National Association of Social Workers – New York State Chapter

Neighborhood Benches

New York Academy of Medicine

New York Civil Liberties Union (NYCLU)

New York Communities for Change

New York State Defenders Association

New York Working Families Organization

One Thousand Arms

The Osborne Association

Policing and Social Justice Project, Brooklyn College

Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights

Queer Detainee Empowerment Project

St. Ann’s Corner of Harm Reduction

Staten Island Against Racism and Police Brutality

STEPS to End Family Violence

Students for Sensible Drug Policy

SURJ NYC

Theater of the Oppressed

Urban Justice Center

VOCAL-NY

Washington Heights CORNER Project

Women and Justice Project

Women’s Prison Association

Youth Represent