

New York Officials and Community Organizations Call for Passage of the *Less is More Act*

([S.1343B](#) – Benjamin / [A.5493A](#) – Mosley)

New York reincarcerates more people on parole for technical violations like missing an appointment with a parole officer, being late for curfew, or testing positive for alcohol than any state in the country except Illinois.¹ Of people on parole whom New York sent back to prison in 2016, over 6,300 or 65% were reincarcerated for technical parole violations.² Nearly 1/3 of the new admissions to state prisons are due to people reincarcerated for technical violations of parole. Only 14% of people on parole who were reincarcerated were returned to prison because they were convicted of a new crime.³ The racial disparity is stark: Black people are incarcerated in New York City jails for technical parole violations at more than 12 times the rate of whites.⁴

There are approximately 35,000 people under active parole supervision in New York State who at almost any time can see their efforts to successfully rejoin the workforce and reintegrate into their families and their communities disrupted by reincarceration for a technical violation.⁵ This not only harms individual lives and families without commensurate public safety gains, but also drives up the population in the state prisons and local jails, wasting taxpayer money.

The **Less is More: Community Supervision Revocation Reform Act** would fix this problem. Developed by people on parole, people currently incarcerated, family members, and groups across NY, the bill is sponsored by Sen. Brian Benjamin (S.1343B) and Assm. Walter Mosley (A.5493A). Its provisions include:

- **Providing earned time credits.** People under community supervision would be eligible to earn a 30-day “earned time credits” reduction in their community supervision period for every 30-day period in which they do not violate a condition of supervision.
- **Bolstering due process.** Persons under community supervision shall be afforded a recognizance hearing in a local criminal court before they are detained, pending adjudication of an alleged violation of their conditions of release, whether a technical violation or a new criminal charge is alleged.
- **Providing speedy hearings.** Persons under community supervision shall be afforded a speedy adjudicatory hearing upon an alleged violation of their conditions of release.
- **Restricting the use of incarceration for technical violations.** Incarceration would be eliminated as a sanction for most technical violations. Certain technical violations could still result in jail time, but it would be capped at a maximum of 30 days

We, the undersigned, call for swift passage of the *Less is More Community Supervision and Revocation Reform Act* to reduce jail and prison populations; support people who are subject to community supervision in the reentry process; promote safety and justice for families and communities; and save taxpayers money.

¹ United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics, *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2016* (Apr. 2018), Appendix Table 7, available at www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ppus16.pdf#page=22.

² *Id.*

³ *Id.* The rest were almost all reincarcerated to receive treatment.

⁴ Vincent Schiraldi and Jennifer L. Arzu. *Less is More in New York: An Examination of the Impact of State Parole Violations on Prison and Jail Populations*. (2018), available: <https://academiccommons.columbia.edu/doi/10.7916/D8RZOQ06>

⁵ NYS Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, Community Supervision Staffing Legislative Report, available at www.doccs.ny.gov/Research/Reports/2018/Community-Supervision-Staffing-Report-2018.pdf.

Officials and Groups Supporting the *Less is More Act*

List in Formation – current as of May 1, 2019, 5:00 p.m.

District Attorneys:

- Eric Gonzalez, Kings County District Attorney
- David Soares, Albany County District Attorney
- Cy Vance, New York County District Attorney
- Darcel Clark, Bronx County District Attorney
- Matthew Van Houten, Tompkins County District Attorney

Judges

- Jonathan Lippman, Former Chief Justice of the State of New York

Sheriffs and Police

- Craig Apple, Albany County Sheriff
- Derek Osborne, Tompkins County Sheriff
- Peter Volkman, Village of Chatham Police Chief
- Brenden Cox, former Albany Police Chief
- Corey Pegues, Deputy Inspector (Retired), New York Police Department
- Joanne Naughton, Lieutenant (Retired), New York Police Department

Corrections, Parole, and Probation Commissioners

- Michael Jacobson, former NYC Commissioner of Correction, former NYC Commissioner of Probation
- James Payne, former NYC Commissioner of Probation
- Vincent Schiraldi, former NYC Commissioner of Probation
- Vanda Seward, former Statewide Director of Reentry Services for the New York State Division of Parole

Attorneys General

- Karol Mason, former U.S. Assistant Attorney General and President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice
- Robin Baker, former New York Executive Deputy Attorney General for Criminal Justice

NY County Officials

- Martha Robertson, Chair, Tompkins County Legislature
- Shawna Black, Vice Chair, Tompkins County Legislature
- Richard John, Chair, Tompkins County Legislature Public Safety Committee
- Amanda Champion, Tompkins County Legislator
- Deborah Dawson, Tompkins County Legislator
- Henry Granison, Tompkins County Legislator
- Rick John, Tompkins County Legislator
- Anna Kellers, Tompkins County Legislator
- Anne Korman, Tompkins County Legislator
- Mike Lane, Tompkins County Legislator
- David McKenna, Tompkins County Legislator
- David Sanders, Tompkins County Criminal Justice Coordinator

- Lance Salisbury, Director, Tompkins County Assigned Counsel Program

Organizations (listed alphabetically):

1. Alliance of Families for Justice (statewide)
2. Antioch Baptist Church (Harlem)
3. Association of Legal Aid Attorneys (UAW Local 2325)
4. Auburn Seminary (NYC)
5. Black Lives Matter - Syracuse
6. Black Public Relations Society-New York, Inc
7. Brooklyn Defenders
8. Bronx Clergy Criminal Justice Roundtable Inc.
9. Bronx Christian Fellowship Church
10. Bronx Defenders
11. Brownsville Think Tank Matters Inc.
12. Candles for Clemency
13. Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)
14. Center for Community Alternatives (statewide)
15. Center for Employment Opportunities (national)
16. Center for Law and Justice (Albany)
17. Center for NuLeadership (NYC)
18. Central New York Solidarity Coalition
19. Circle for Justice Innovations (CJI Fund - national)
20. Citizens Against Recidivism (statewide)
21. College and Community Fellowship (statewide, national)
22. Community Service Society
23. Correctional Association of New York (statewide)
24. Democratic Socialists of America – Syracuse chapter
25. Drug Policy Alliance (statewide, national)
26. Doe Fund (NYC)
27. Educate Don't Incarcerate, LLC (NYC)
28. Exodus Transitional Community (NYC)
29. Exponents (NYC)
30. Fair and Just Prosecution (national)
31. Fines and Fees Justice Center (statewide)
32. First Corinthian Baptist Church (Harlem)
33. Fortune Society (NYC)
34. Friends of Island Academy (NYC)
35. Friends of Recovery (FOR) NY
36. FWD.us (national)
37. Getting Out Staying Out (NYC)
38. Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood
39. Greenburger Center (statewide)
40. H.O.L.L.A. (Brooklyn)
41. Immanual & First Spanish Church
42. Incarcerated Nation (NYC)
43. Incorrigibles (national)
44. Institute for the Black World (statewide, national)
45. It Could Happen to You (statewide)
46. Jail Ministry – Syracuse
47. Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club (Manhattan)
48. JustLeadershipUSA (NY, National)

49. Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice (NYC, Albany, Hudson)
50. Kite's Nest (Hudson)
51. Law Enforcement Action Partnership (national)
52. Legal Action Center (NY, national)
53. Legal Aid Society (NYC)
54. LIFE Camp, Inc. (Queens)
55. New York State Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers (ASAP)
56. New York State Association of Counties
57. New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
58. New York State Defenders Association
59. New York City Clergy Roundtable
60. New York Civil Liberties Union
61. New York State Council of Churches
62. NY Justice League
63. Office of the Appellate Defender (NYC)
64. Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources (Tompkins County)
65. Osborne Association (NYC)
66. Our Wellness Collective (Capitol Region)
67. Partnership for the Public Good (Buffalo)
68. Peaceprints of Western New York
69. Plymouth Church (Brooklyn)
70. Recess (Brooklyn)
71. ReEntry Columbia (Hudson)
72. REFORM Alliance (National)
73. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
74. Sankofa (national)
75. Second Chance Reentry, Inc (Nassau)
76. St. Luke Baptist Church (Harlem)
77. St. Matthews Baptist Church (Harlem)
78. STEPS to End Family Violence - Rising Ground (NYC)
79. Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network
80. Syracuse Peace Council
81. Trellis Community Development (Brooklyn)
82. Truth Pharm (Binghamton)
83. Unchained (Syracuse)
84. United Christian Leadership Ministry (UCLM) of Western New York, Inc.
85. Voices of Community Activists and Leaders (VOCAL-NY)
86. Witness to Mass Incarceration (NYC)
87. Workers' Center of Central New York

To endorse this letter, to participate in the campaign, or if you have questions, please contact:

Cedric Fulton, Katal: cfulton@katalcenter.org | (518) 406-8226

Donna Hylton, Katal: dhylton@katalcenter.org | (424) 272.1724

Emily NaPier Singletary, Unchained: emily@weareunchained.org | (315) 243.5135

**The #LessIsMoreNY Campaign is coordinated by
Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice (NYC, Capitol Region)
and Unchained (Syracuse)**