New York Officials and Community Organizations Call for Passage of the Less is More Act
(S.1144 – Benjamin/ A.5576 – Forrest)

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.\(^1\) Of people on parole whom New York sent back to prison in 2018, over 5,700 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.1144) and Assm. Phara Forrest (A.5576). Its provisions include:

- **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.

- **Bolstering due process.** Rather than being automatically detained in local jails, people accused of a technical violation of parole would be issued a written notice of violation with a date to appear in court and would remain at liberty for any hearings. People on parole accused of a new criminal offense would be afforded a recognizance hearing in a local criminal court before they are detained, and the standards of the bail reform statute will apply.

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\(^2\) Id.

\(^3\) Id. The rest were almost all reincarcerated to receive treatment.


● **Providing speedy hearings.** Persons under community supervision shall be afforded a speedy adjudicatory hearing upon an alleged violation of their conditions of release.

● **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.

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.

**Officials and Groups Supporting the Less is More Act**
List in Formation – current as of February 21st, 2021, 7:00 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
● David Clegg, Ulster County District Attorney
● Mimi Rocah, Westchester County District Attorney
● Lucy Lang, former New York County Assistant District Attorney and Executive Director of the Institute for Innovation in Prosecution
● Anne Milgram, Former New Jersey Attorney General and CNN Legal Analyst

**District Attorney Candidates:**
● Alvin Bragg, former Chief Deputy at the Attorney General’s office and Candidate for Manhattan District Attorney
● Tahanie Aboushi, Civil Rights Attorney and Candidate for Manhattan District Attorney

**Sheriffs and Police**
● Craig Apple, Albany County Sheriff
● Timothy B. Howard, Erie County Sheriff
● John Greenan, Erie County Undersheriff
● Derek Osborne, Tompkins County Sheriff
● Peter Volkman, Village of Chatham Police Chief
● Brendan 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
Officials and Groups Supporting the *Less is More Act*

**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
- Denise E O’Donnell, Former U.S. Attorney, Western District of New York; former Director, U.S. Bureau of Justice Assistance

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

**NY Citywide Officials**
- New York City Mayor Bill de Blasio
- New York City Comptroller Scott M. Stringer
- New York City Council Speaker Corey Johnson
- New York City Council

**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 Granson, Tompkins County Legislator
- Rick John, 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
- Rochester City Council
- Eric Adams, Brooklyn Borough President
- Mary T. Kuhn, Onondaga County Legislator
- Rachel Barnhart, Monroe County Legislator
- Ernest Flagler-Michell, Monroe County Legislator
- Sabrina Lamar, Monroe County Legislator
- Frank Keophetlasy, Monroe County Legislator
- Monroe County Black and Asian Democratic Caucus

**Organizations** (listed alphabetically):
1. A Little Piece of Light
2. A More Just NYC
3. Albany 518 SNUG
4. Allegany County Public Defender
5. Alliance of Families for Justice (statewide)
6. American Friends Service Committee
7. Antioch Baptist Church (Harlem)
8. Anti-Defamation League New York/New Jersey
9. Appellate Advocates
10. Association of Legal Aid Attorneys (UAW Local 2325)
11. Auburn Seminary (NYC)
12. Avodah
13. Beacon Prison Action
14. Black Lives Matter - Syracuse
15. Black Public Relations Society-New York, Inc
16. Brennan Center for Justice at NYU Law School
17. Brooklyn Community Bail Fund
18. Brooklyn Defenders
19. Broome County Public Defender’s Office
20. Bronx Clergy Criminal Justice Roundtable Inc.
21. Bronx Christian Fellowship Church
22. Bronx Defenders
23. Bronx Freedom Fund
24. Brotherhood Synagogue
25. Brownsville Think Tank Matters Inc.
26. B’nai Jeshurun
27. Call To Action (CTA) Metro NY
28. Candles for Clemency
29. Can’t Buy Respect Agency, LLC (NYC/Los Angeles)
30. Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)
31. Center for Appellate Litigation
32. Center for Community Alternatives (statewide)
33. Center for Employment Opportunities (national)
34. Center for Family Representation
35. Center for Law and Justice (Albany)
36. Center for NuLeadership (NYC)
37. Central New York Solidarity Coalition
38. Central Synagogue
39. Certain Days
40. Chief Defenders Association of New York
41. Circle for Justice Innovations (CJI Fund - national)
42. Citizens Against Recidivism (statewide)
43. Close Rosie’s
44. Coalition for Behavioral Health
45. College and Community Fellowship (statewide, national)
46. Columbia Justice Lab
47. Community Voices Heard
48. Community Votes
49. Community Service Society
50. Congregation Beit Simchat Torah
51. Congregation Beth Elohim
52. Congregation Kol Ami
53. Corporation for Supportive Housing
54. Correctional Association of New York (statewide)
55. Dismantling Racism Team of Congregation Beth Elohim
56. Democratic Socialists of America – Syracuse chapter
57. Deskovic Foundation
58. Destination Tomorrow
59. Doula 4 a Queen (Syracuse)
60. Drug Policy Alliance (statewide, national)
61. Doe Fund (NYC)
62. East House Corporation
63. Educate Don’t Incarcerate, LLC (NYC)
64. Emergency Release Fund
65. Exodus Transitional Community (NYC)
66. Exponents (NYC)
67. Fair and Just Prosecution (national)
68. Families and Friends of the Wrongfully Convicted, Inc.
69. Families for Sensible Drug Policy
70. Family Services
71. Fines and Fees Justice Center (statewide)
72. First Corinthian Baptist Church (Harlem)
73. First Presbyterian Church of Brooklyn
74. Fortune Society (NYC)
75. Free Black Mamas Syracuse Collective
76. Freedom Agenda
77. Friends of Island Academy (NYC)
78. Friends of Recovery (FOR) NY
79. Friends of Tamika Mapp 2021
80. FWD.us (national)
81. Genesee County Public Defender Office
82. Getting Out Staying Out (NYC)
83. Good Call
84. Greater Hudson Promise Neighborhood
85. Greenburger Center (statewide)
86. Harm Reduction Coalition
87. Hebrew Institute of Riverdale Social Action Committee
88. Hiscock Legal Aid Society (Syracuse)
89. H.O.L.L.A. (Brooklyn)
90. Housing Works
91. Hudson/Catskill Housing Coalition
92. Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison
93. Human Rights Watch
94. Human Services Council (HSC)
95. Immanuel & First Spanish Church
96. Incarcerated Nation (NYC)
97. Incorrigibles (national)
98. Institute for Innovation in Prosecution
99. Institute for the Black World (statewide, national)
100. It Could Happen to You (statewide)
101. Ithaca Prisoner Justice Network
102. It Takes A Village Action Organization, Inc.
103. Jail Ministry – Syracuse
104. Jails Action Coalition
105. JCC Harlem
106. Jewish Coalition on Criminal Justice Reform
107. Jewish Council for Public Affairs (JCPA)
108. Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
109. Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
110. John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity
111. Justice for Women Task Force
112. Justice Strategies
113. JustLeadershipUSA (NY, National)
114. Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice (NYC and Albany)
115. Kite’s Nest (Hudson)
116. Lafayette Avenue Presbyterian Church
117. Law Enforcement Action Partnership (national)
118. League of Women Voters (NYC)
119. Legal Action Center (NY, national)
120. Legal Aid Society (NYC)
121. LIFE Camp, Inc. (Queens)
122. MADRE
123. Make The Road NY
124. Marlene Meyerson JCC Manhattan
125. Mental Health Association of Westchester
126. Micah Institute
127. Monroe County Public Defender’s Office
128. Mott Haven Church
129. National Association of Social Workers – NYS Chapter
130. National Council for Incarcerated and Formerly Incarcerated Women and Girls
131. National Council of Jewish Women NY
132. Neighborhood Defender Service
133. Neighbors Against White Supremacy (NAWS) Central Queens
134. New Hour for Women and Children (Long Island)
135. New York City Bar Association
136. New York City Clergy Roundtable
137. New York City Department of Aging
138. New York City Jericho Movem
139. New York City Metro Raging Grannies
140. New York Civil Liberties Union
141. New York County Defender Services
142. New York Faith Leaders for Criminal Justice Reform Coalition
143. New York Immigration Coalition
144. New York Jewish Agenda
145. New York Lawyers for the Public Interest
146. New York State Association of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse Providers (ASAP)
147. New York State Association of Counties
148. New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers
149. New York State Defenders Association
150. New York State Council for Community Behavioral Healthcare
151. New York State Council of Churches
152. North Bronx Racial Justice
153. NY Justice League
154. NYU Black Allied Law Students Association (BALSA)
155. Office of the Appellate Defender (NYC)
156. Omo Obatala Egbe, Inc.
157. Onondaga County Bar Association Assigned Counsel Program
158. Ontario County Office of the Conflict Defender
159. Ontario County Public Defender’s Office
160. Opportunities, Alternatives & Resources (Tompkins County)
161. Osborne Association (NYC)
162. Our Wellness Collective (Capitol Region)
163. Partnership for the Public Good (Buffalo)
164. Party for Socialism and Liberation - Syracuse
165. Party for Socialism and Liberation - Geneva
166. Peaceprints of Western New York
167. Plymouth Church (Brooklyn)
168. Police Reform Organizing Project (PROP)
169. Presbytery of New York City
170. Prison Families Anonymous
171. Progressives Educating New Yorkers, Inc.
172. Recess (Brooklyn)
173. ReEntry Columbia (Hudson)
174. REFORM Alliance (National)
175. Religious Action Center (RAC) NY
176. Repair the World
177. Repeal #WalkingWhile Trans Coalition
178. Rikers Debate Project
179. Riverside Church
180. Robert F. Kennedy Human Rights
181. Rochester-Monroe Anti-Poverty Initiative
182. Rockland Coalition to End the New Jim Crow
183. S.O.U.L. Sisters Leadership Collective
184. SAJ – Judaism That Stands for All (NYC)
185. Sankofa (national)
186. Second Chance Educational Alliance, Inc.
187. Second Chance Reentry, Inc (Nassau)
188. Southern Tier Independence Center
189. St. Ann’s Corner of Harm Reduction
190. St. Luke Baptist Church (Harlem)
191. St. Matthews Baptist Church (Harlem)
192. STEPS to End Family Violence - Rising Ground (NYC)
193. Strategies for Black Lives
194. Syracuse Immigrant and Refugee Defense Network
195. Syracuse Peace Council
196. Tompkins County Assigned Counsel Program
197. Trellis Community Development (Brooklyn)
198. Trinity Church Wall Street
199. Truth Pharm (Binghamton)
200. T’ruah: The Rabbinic Call for Human Rights
201. Unchained (Syracuse)
203. United Freedom Coalition
204. United Neighborhood Houses
205. United Voices of Cortland
206. Union Settlement
207. Uptown Progressive Action
208. Urban Justice Center
209. Urban Youth Alliance International, Inc/Bronx Connect
210. Uri L’Tzedek
211. VDAY Until The Violence Stops
212. Voices of Community Activists and Leaders (VOCAL-NY)
213. Wayne County Public Defender’s Office
214. Washington County Public Defender’s Office
215. Welcome Home Circle (Akwasasnee Nation)
216. WESPAC
217. West End Synagogue
218. West Harlem Progressive Democratic Club
219. Westchester Coalition for Police Reform
220. Westchester for Change
221. Witness to Mass Incarceration (NYC)
222. Women’s Community Justice Association
223. Woodhull Freedom Foundation
224. Workers’ Center of Central New York
225. Worth Rises
226. Wyoming County Public Defender
227. Yonkers Writing Group
228. Youth Represent
229. Zioness Movement

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

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The #LessIsMoreNY Campaign is coordinated by Unchained (Syracuse), A Little Piece of Light (NYC), and Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice (NYC, Capitol Region).