

#LessIsMoreNY

MEMBER PROFILE: AVION



Avion, a 34-year-old Suffolk County resident, is a member of Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice. As someone who was wrongfully incarcerated for a crime he did not commit, he knows first hand how unjust and racially biased the criminal justice system is. He also knows of racial disparities within the parole system because he has seen more black and brown folks being incarcerated for technical parole violations.

Avion is currently required to complete two years of post-release supervision and as a result, worries that he can be reincarcerated for a technical parole violation. The parole system, instead of assisting formerly incarcerated people on their journey back into their community, sets rigid regulations designed to set up people on parole to fail. The passage of the Less Is More Act would guarantee that Avion, and people on parole, do not get incarcerated once more for something as minor as being late for curfew. Knowing the harm that was caused to his family when he was first incarcerated was irreparable. For Avion, being incarcerated again for a minor infraction of parole brings no justice and it is simply not an option; as someone who is trying his best to move his life forward and provide for his family, getting off parole is a priority. He believes that people should be given the chance to get off parole when they prove they are not causing any harm and the Less Is More Act offers this chance by providing time off of a parole sentence

New York reincarcerates more people for noncriminal technical violations of parole—like being late for curfew or testing positive for alcohol use—than every other state in the country. Approximately 35,000 people are on parole in New York and they are all daily subject to re-incarceration for technical violations. Today, more than 5,000 people are currently incarcerated in New York State prisons and local jails for technical violations of parole. The vast majority of those re-incarcerated for technical violations of parole are Black and Latino. The #LessIsMoreNY coalition is working to fix this problem by passing the #LessIsMoreNY Act (S.1144 – Benjamin/A.5576 – Forrest).

Thousands of New Yorkers have been harmed by the problems in parole. Now they are sharing their stories.

for the successful completion of periods of parole. He believes that the parole system should provide incentives rather than punishment; and through his interaction with other people on parole he has seen how punitive the parole system is.

A story that struck Avion was that of an older gentleman who was issued a parole violation for having a sheetrock knife required for his job, which was labeled as a weapon by his parole officer. This story was a vivid example of the discretion parole officers have to send people back to prison for perceived violations. While it was determined that Avion's friend did not violate his conditions of parole, he was still incarcerated for months while awaiting a hearing - time from his life that he will never get back.

As a member, Avion has been working hard to raise awareness about Less Is More and advocate for the bill to pass. He believes that public servants and elected officials need to be held to the highest standards to ensure that they do what is right. He knows that it is up to everyone to hold public officials accountable to the needs of people in communities and to take action to stop the cycle of incarceration. However, his main driving force for justice is to save another family from the pain his family has gone through.

More details about the #LessIsMoreNY Act

Developed by people on parole, people currently incarcerated, family members, and community and legal groups, the #LessIsMoreNY Act (S.1144 – Benjamin / A.5576 - Forrest) works by:

- Restricting the use of incarceration for technical violations of parole
- Bolstering due process
- Providing speedy hearings when someone is charged with an alleged violation of parole.
- Providing earned time credits to most people on parole so they get off parole faster

#LessIsMoreNY will bring sensible reform to parole practices, advancing justice, supporting people in reentry and strengthening public safety. That's why it's supported more than 270 community, legal, and faith group, law enforcement leaders, city councils, the NY State Association of Counties, and more. For a full list of supporters, please see the #LessIsMoreNY Support Letter.

For more information, please contact
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