

#LessIsMoreNY

MEMBER PROFILE:

CHRISTOPHER WHITE



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.

Christopher White, a 38-year-old Syracuse resident and a father of one child, is a member of Unchained. He is a Residential Aide Supervisor at Freedom Commons through the Center for Community Alternatives. In November 2001, Mr. White was sentenced to 10 years of incarceration in the New York State prison system. Upon being released, he was subjected to a two and half year term of Post Release Supervision. One of his fears upon being released, was returning to prison and losing the rest of his adult life to incarceration. In 2013, White violated the terms of his parole by incurring a DUI charge. Instead of being sent back to prison on a parole violation, Chris was permitted to enter a 90-day rehab facility where he was able to get the support he needed to move forward and rebuild his life. Chris strongly believes that had it not been for the support of his father and community members who were able to advocate for him, he would have been sent back to prison. His life would be drastically different than it currently is.

Since Chris was provided the opportunity to continue on his path of rehabilitation outside of the New York State prison system, he was able to successfully complete the terms of

his postrelease community supervision. In 2015, Chris became a father, obtained an Associate's degree in Human Services from Onondaga Community College, and has served as a mentor for youth who have faced similar challenges. As a member of Unchained, Chris would like legislators to understand just how important community support and intervention can have a lasting impact on those completing parole sentences. He believes the policy changes orchestrated by #LessIsMoreNY Act can give hope to accomplish their life goals despite their past mistakes.

From March of 2015 to March of 2018, Michael was incarcerated at a New York State prison. Upon being released, he was subjected to a term of Post Release Supervision. Over a year later, his parole officer incarcerated him for merely having a picture of his children. It was an incredibly hostile situation, and his parole officer was looking for any reason to put him back in jail. At one point, his parole officer said to him "that he was too successful, making too much money, and was living too well for someone on parole." He proceeded to say that he needed

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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