

#LessIsMoreNY

MEMBER PROFILE: MICHAEL



Michael, a 54-year-old Rochester resident, a single father of five children, is an Army veteran who served three combat tours in Iraq. He experienced first-hand the destructive nature of being reincarcerated for a technical parole violation. He spent a year in prison for a non-criminal technical parole violation. It completely disrupted his entire life. It took him away from his family, home, and career.

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-A, Benjamin \ A.5576-A, Forrest).

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

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

to be “reeled in.” Michael had to spend a year in prison because of this person and found himself behind bars at the height of the pandemic. At any moment, he could have contracted COVID-19 all because of this minor infraction of his parole.

As a member of the Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice, Michael has been working tirelessly to change the same parole policies that led to his re-incarceration. He wants to ensure that others do not go through what he experienced. These mass incarceration techniques have ruined so many lives, and it needs to be put to a stop. He has been a strong advocate of parole reform and has been pushing this change by meeting with legislators and doing info-sessions. He continues to fight daily for the passage of #LessIsMoreNY, a bill that would help him and the thousands like him in New York.

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-A, Benjamin \ A.5576-A, 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 220 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
Melanie Dominguez, Community Organizer
mdominguez@katalcenter.org | (516) 588-0127
www.lessismoreny.org

