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# Katal Weekly Update

Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice



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# Connecticut Becomes Third State in the Country to Implement Evidence-Based Treatment in Jails and Prisons



**Katal team and members, Kathryn, Jerry, and Erin Corbett at the State House talking with Connecticut legislators about our opposition to HB 5524.**

We are excited to share news of a great victory in the fight for the rights of people incarcerated in jails and prisons across Connecticut! In a significant step toward addressing the overdose crisis in the state, Governor Ned Lamont [signed his first state budget](#) that includes \$8 million in new funding to implement jail and prison-based treatment programs that use medications proven effective in treating opioid use disorder. Similar programs in Vermont and Rhode Island have shown success in reducing fatal overdoses and recidivism while improving access to, and retention in care for individuals receiving treatment. The Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice provided testimony in support of this effort. We believe this program, properly implemented, will save lives. Other states – including New York – should follow suit.

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While much of our efforts aim to reduce the number of people arrested, jailed, and incarcerated for drug-related offenses, we must also address the needs of individuals who still enter and cycle through the criminal justice system. We know that providing medication treatment while in jail and prison works and we applaud Governor Lamont for following the evidence and including this lifesaving intervention in the state budget.

Read our full statement [here](#).

## In Albany: 2019 Session Comes to a Close with Crucial Justice Reform Legislation Left Undone



**Katal members and leaders walk the halls of the Capitol in Albany during our June 18th Lobby Day on #LessIsMoreNY.**

Last week marked the close of New York's 2019 Legislative Session. While lawmakers passed some notable criminal justice reforms earlier this year, they ended the session without completing the job. Leaders failed to deliver on a number of critically important reforms including our parole reform bill, [Less Is More: Community Supervision Revocation Reform Act](#)

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*(S1343b/A5493a)* – a bill critically important to the effort of closing Rikers Island, yet lawmakers let it die, potentially prolonging the time it takes to close the notorious facility.

While some progress was made earlier this session through the passage of historic pretrial justice reforms – including bail reform – we are a long way from ending mass incarceration in New York. We are not giving up. We will continue the work to make sure Albany passes #LessIsMoreNY and the slate of reform bills that will advance the cause of justice and equity in our state. We are doubling down on our organizing, and we will hold state lawmakers accountable in their districts this summer and fall, and we will be back in Albany next session.

Read our full statement [here](#).

## **In Hartford: Join Us for Our Next Healthy & Just CT Coalition Meeting**



We invite groups and advocates across the Criminal Justice Reform field to join us Thursday, July 11th from 11am-12:30pm at our Hartford Office for our next Healthy & Just CT Statewide Coalition meeting.

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**The goals of this coalition are to:**

- *Strengthen* the field of criminal justice reform by facilitating intersectional collaborations;
- *Identify* and discuss resources for collective action on criminal justice reform;
- *Coordinate* work that increases the role and leadership of people directly impacted.

**Details and RSVP [here](#).**

*To learn more about our work in Connecticut and to RSVP for our next Healthy & Just CT Coalition Meeting, contact our Community Organizer, [Kenyatta Thompson](#) at [ktompson@katalcenter.org](mailto:ktompson@katalcenter.org) or 860.937.6094. We hope that we'll see you there!*

## **In Case You Missed It: Imagining Effective Systemic Change**

In May, our Co-ED Lorenzo Jones was a featured panelist alongside New York City based criminal justice experts and Pen America's Writing for Justice Fellows at the World Voices Festival. The [panel](#), "*A Question of Justice*" explored how public sentiment can lead to effective systemic changes.

Be sure to watch [A Question of Justice](#) now available via YouTube. We thank the Pen America team for supporting and uplifting our work, and we hope that much can be taken and implemented from this discussion from our colleagues across the field working towards a more equitable and racially just system for all.

**Katal works to strengthen the people, policies, institutions, and movements that advance health, equity, and justice for everyone.**

Visit our website at [www.katalcenter.org](http://www.katalcenter.org) to learn more about our work and how you can get involved. Be sure to follow us across social media @katalcenter and stay in touch!

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