



December 8, 2020

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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Following Report on New York's Broken Parole System, Legal Aid Calls for Comprehensive Reform

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society, in response to [reporting](#) in *The Intercept*, called on Governor Cuomo and the Legislature to enact comprehensive reform to overhaul New York's broken, racially discriminatory parole system. Today's report specifically examines New York's practice of jailing people for technical parole violations, including being late for curfew, missing appointments with parole staff, or failing to update contact information. New York reincarcerates more people for technical parole violations than any other state in the country except Illinois. For years now, despite New York City's declining jail population, people incarcerated for technical violations continues to increase. Lastly, like many other facets of New York's criminal legal system, these violations overwhelmingly affect New Yorkers of color.

"New York's draconian parole system is seriously broken and, despite its purported purpose to facilitate New Yorkers' successful reentry to society, it needlessly fuels incarceration, particularly in Black and Latinx communities," said **Tina Luongo, Attorney-in-Charge of the Criminal Defense Practice at The Legal Aid Society**. "Especially in the era of COVID-19, where jails and prisons have become virus hotspots, lawmakers should prioritize measures that center decarceration and keep our clients safe in their communities. We call on Albany to enact these critical reform measures - Less is More, Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole - immediately when session convenes shortly next month."

Less is More - (S.1343C - Benjamin / A.5493B - Mosley):

There are approximately 35,000 people under active parole supervision in New York State who are at constant risk of seeing their efforts to reenter society undermined by unnecessary technical violations of parole. The Less is More Act significantly restricts the use of incarceration for technical violations, capping jail sentences for non-criminal offenses at 30 days. It creates an earned credit system for those fulfilling their conditions of release. And, it provides bail as an option for those accused of violating parole, so they can maintain employment and family ties while resolving their parole matter.

Elder Parole - (S.2144 - Hoylman / A.9040 - De La Rosa):

Older incarcerated people who have served long sentences present the lowest possible risk of recidivism. Elder parole permits the Board of Parole to evaluate all incarcerated people over the age of 55 who have served at least 15 years in prison for possible parole release. It does not mandate release, but allows the Board to make a public safety assessment to see whether an elderly incarcerated person is appropriate for release to parole supervision even if he or she has not completed his or her minimum sentence and gives the Board the discretion to grant such release.

Fair & Timely Parole - (S.497A - Rivera / A.4346A - Weprin):

Fair and Timely Parole would amend the standards used by the Board of Parole to make release determinations based on a person's rehabilitation and current public safety risk and would curtail the Board's discretion to make racially discriminatory parole decisions, a practice that the Board has perpetuated for decades. The Board's failure to grant parole to low risk incarcerated individuals results in expensive, prolonged, and unnecessary incarceration of middle-aged and older incarcerated individuals who have a very low probability of recidivism and who are very expensive to incarcerate because of increased medical costs. This bill would require the Board of Parole to release people to community supervision when their minimum period of incarceration has been served, unless there is a clearly articulated current public safety reason to keep them in prison.

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The Legal Aid Society exists for one simple yet powerful reason: to ensure that New Yorkers are not denied their right to equal justice because of poverty. For over 140 years, we have protected, defended, and advocated for those who have struggled in silence for far too long. Every day, in every borough, The Legal Aid Society changes the lives of our clients and helps improve our communities. www.legalaidnyc.org