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

***LEADING ADVOCATES FROM ACROSS NEW YORK STATE PEN JOINT
LETTER URGING TOP STATE LAWMAKERS TO ADOPT PLAN FOR
COMMUNITY SAFETY & PRETRIAL JUSTICE***

(New York) - Today, more than 85 of New York State's leading justice, victim advocacy, housing, mental health, civil rights, and faith groups sent a [joint letter](#) to New York State Governor Kathy Hochul and legislative leaders urging them to prioritize investing in community safety and justice. Ongoing efforts to pit safety and justice against each other jeopardize New York's progress toward true community safety and distract from critical efforts to meet the urgent needs of New Yorkers. In the letter, co-signers urge the top lawmakers to commit to specific evidence-based investments and policy reforms that will improve community safety and pretrial justice. The letter's co-signers, including VOICE Buffalo, The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Westchester for Change, the Long Island Social Justice Action Network, United Voices of Cortland, the NYCLU, and many others, made clear that New York must stop divesting from the very people and communities who have too long been offered a false choice on safety — to either accept mass criminalization that terrorizes and targets them or to feel unsafe.

Notably, in April 2022, New York City released the largest-ever survey of residents, conducted in 11 languages. [People's top two public safety priorities](#) were affordable housing & reducing homelessness, and sending mental health first responders instead of police to people in crisis.

NY Senator Julia Salazar, Chair of the Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Committee, said: “We know the safest communities have the greatest resources, not the highest arrest and incarceration rates. In the Brooklyn and Queens neighborhoods of my district alone, which includes neighborhoods with some of the highest arrest rates in the city and others with low crime and arrest rates, this is crystal clear. While the opposing party is obsessed with locking up more Black and brown people as a political strategy, we as lawmakers must be focused on actually delivering public safety. That means, at a minimum, making the investments and policy reforms laid out in this letter. I thank these organizations for putting forward these recommendations and I know my colleagues and I will take them seriously as we look forward to state budget negotiations in the months ahead.”

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