

April 2, 2024

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*****MEDIA ADVISORY*****

On Primary Day, Vote In NYC Jails Coalition to Call on NYC Council to Hold Oversight Hearing on Incarcerated New Yorkers' Access to the Ballot Box

(NEW YORK, NY) - **The Vote in NYC Jails Coalition** will hold a rally on Tuesday, April 2nd, at 11:00 AM outside of the New York City Board of Elections' headquarters in Manhattan calling on the New York City Council to hold an [oversight hearing](#) on efforts made by the City to ensure incarcerated New Yorkers' access to the ballot box.

WHO: The Vote in NYC Jails Coalition including The Legal Aid Society, Latino Justice, The Community Services Society of New York (CSS), Freedom Agenda, The Bronx Defenders, National Action Network, VOCAL-NY, League of Women Voters NYC, Sorensen Center, New York City Public Advocate's Office, PROP (Police Reform Organizing Project), NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Five Boro Defenders, NYC Civic Engagement Commission, Legal Action Center.

WHERE: Sidewalk outside of 32-42 Broadway, New York, NY 10004

WHEN: Tuesday, April 2, 2024, at 11 A.M.

Background:

The [Vote in NYC Jails Coalition](#) is a group of legal service providers, government offices, and community-based organizations dedicated to delivering the full promise of enfranchisement to people currently incarcerated in jails. Members of the VJC routinely register people to vote in jails and provide them with information and education regarding their voting rights. The VJC also works with agencies to ensure robust registration, voter education, and absentee ballot delivery programs. Coalition members include: The Legal Aid Society, Latino Justice, The Community Services Society of New York (CSS), Freedom Agenda, The Bronx Defenders, National Action Network, VOCAL-NY, League of Women Voters NYC, Sorensen Center, New York City Public Advocate's Office, PROP (Police Reform Organizing Project), NAACP Legal Defense Fund, Five Boro Defenders, NYC Civic Engagement Commission, Legal Action Center.

Last month, the Coalition penned a [sign-on letter](#) demanding that the DOC and BOE invest and commit to making sure all people in NYC Jails have their ballots cast and counted. The letter called for:

- the Board of Elections must provide detailed anonymized feedback about their rejections of ballots coming from Rikers Island from the past two years and for future elections and implement measures to meaningfully mitigate the rejection rate;
- the Department of Correction must devote more resources around election season to support voters with registering to vote and requesting, receiving, and returning absentee ballots. This must include working with the Board of Elections to provide voters with the opportunity to cure their ballot before it is rejected;

- the Board of Elections must provide voters at Rikers with the same opportunity to vote in-person via the same mechanism the law provides for nursing home residents. This provision includes appointing election inspectors to preside over portable voting machines on-site at Rikers Island so that registered voters can cast their ballot directly with the Board of Elections, eliminating the need for a logistically complex curing process that the Board must undertake with regard to the absentee ballots of the detainees;
- finally, offering a voter education program and providing non-partisan resources on voting is critical to cultivating an informed and robust voting culture at NYC jails.

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