

**THE  
LEGAL AID  
SOCIETY**

Justice in Every Borough.

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

***Legal Aid Lauds NYS Senate Passage of No Slavery in New York Act***

***Advocates Call on Assembly to Pass Critical Legislation to End  
Modern-Day Slavery for Incarcerated New Yorkers***

(NEW YORK, NY) – The Legal Aid Society today lauded the New York State Senate for its passage of the [No Slavery in NY Act](#), critical legislation to abolish the prison labor exception that allows for modern-day slavery for people incarcerated in New York’s prisons and jails. Advocates also called on Assembly Speaker Carl Heastie and the New York State Assembly to fully pass the critical legislation and put an end to forced labor for incarcerated New Yorkers.

“All New Yorkers, regardless of whether they are incarcerated, deserve basic protections against forced labor,” said **Jacalyn Goldzweig, Paralegal Casehandler in the Special Litigation Unit at The Legal Aid Society**. “In New York’s prisons, incarcerated individuals — who are disproportionately people of color — have been compelled to provide their labor by force or through threat of punishment for over 200 years. This system has always been an affront to human dignity, and must not be allowed to continue. We applaud the Senate’s passage of legislation to end forced labor for incarcerated New Yorkers and call on Speaker Heastie to bring the No Slavery in NY Act to an immediate floor vote.”

“With today’s vote, the Senate has taken an important step towards ending forced labor in our state’s correctional facilities, and we urge the Assembly to follow suit,” said **Naila Awan, interim co-director of policy at the New York Civil Liberties Union**. “Our state must not only end the practice of forcing people to work under threat of punishment like solitary confinement, delayed parole and loss of family visitation privileges, but it must also end the exploitation of incarcerated New Yorkers. This includes providing incarcerated New Yorkers basic labor protections, a fair wage, and increased pathways to employment post incarceration.”

“We at A Little Piece of Light are grateful to the State Senate for stating loud and clear that our current prison labor system is immoral and unethical,” said **Donna Hylton, Founder & CEO of A Little Piece of Light**. “No human-being is a commodity. The No Slavery in NY Act must next be passed by the Assembly so that we can get one step closer to ending slavery in our state once and for all.”

"We applaud the Senate for again taking this critical and historic step towards ending forced prison labor in New York State," said **Carmela Huang, Senior Attorney at the National Center for Law and Economic Justice**. "This Act acknowledges the basic human dignity of all people, including those who are incarcerated, and guarantees that all New Yorkers have the right to refuse work assignments without fear of physical punishment or other acts of coercion and force. With just days remaining until the end of the 2024 legislative session, we urge the State Assembly to follow the Senate's lead and quickly pass the No Slavery in NY Act to bring us closer towards putting our constitutional amendment as a referendum before voters."

“The Senate has once again shown their commitment to taking steps toward ending the practice of forced labor in prison through passage of the No Slavery in New York Act,” said **Rosemary Rivera, Executive Director of Citizen Action of New York**. “The 13th Amendment allows for the perpetuation of slavery for incarcerated individuals, and it is a long overdue step for New York’s constitution to close this loophole and end the existence of slavery in our state once and for all.”

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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 145 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](http://www.legalaidnyc.org)*