

**\*\*Media Advisory: Tuesday at 11:30am\*\***

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**LAWMAKERS, FORMERLY INCARCERATED MOMS AND MOMS OF INCARCERATED CHILDREN HOLD A MOTHER'S DAY RALLY AT THE CAPITOL TO CALL FOR THE PASSAGE OF SENTENCING REFORM LEGISLATION TO REUNITE FAMILIES**

**WHEN:** Tuesday, May 13th at 11:30am

**WHERE:** Million Dollar Staircase (third floor), Capitol, Albany, NY

- Also available via [Zoom livestream here](#)

**WHAT:** Formerly incarcerated moms, moms of incarcerated children, lawmakers, and the Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Caucus of State Legislators will hold a Mother's Day rally at the State Capitol to call for the passage of sentencing reform legislation to reunite families. Specifically, speakers will call for passage of the [Second Look Act](#) and [Earned Time Act](#) to modernize New York's unjust and outdated sentencing laws before the end of the legislative session. Both bills were [actively discussed](#) during state budget negotiations and are top priorities for lawmakers as common-sense solutions to the humanitarian crisis in New York's prisons.

During the rally, formerly incarcerated women and moms of incarcerated children will speak to the hardship of family separation, the injustices of New York's sentencing laws, and the urgent need to pass the Earned Time Act and Second Look Act.

The bills are supported by the highest levels of New York's judiciary, including the [Chief Judge](#) and [Chief Administrative Judge](#) of New York State, [law enforcement](#), including the former [prison commissioner](#) of the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) and the former New York City [commissioner of corrections and probation](#), the [American Bar Association](#), dozens of [labor unions](#), and [over 200 organizations](#). These bills are also broadly popular with New Yorkers. Recent [polling](#) found that [74% of New Yorkers](#) support the Earned Time Act and [68% of New Yorkers](#) support the Second Look Act.

**WHO:**

- **The Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Caucus of State Legislators**
- **New York State legislators**, including: Senator Julia Salazar, Senator Jeremy Cooney, Assembly Member Demond Meeks, Assembly Member Latrice Walker, Assembly Member Anna Kelles, Assembly Member Catalina Cruz.
- **Formerly incarcerated moms and moms of incarcerated children** from the Center for Community Alternatives (CCA)
  - Shea'honnie Davis
  - Stephanie Reed
  - Latasha Mungeon reading selections from incarcerated women and mothers

**VISUALS:** Hundreds of formerly incarcerated moms and moms of incarcerated children will hold flowers, photos of their loved ones, and signs that say “Most incarcerated women are moms,” “A cage has separated me from my mom for years,” and “Communities Not Cages.”

## **BACKGROUND:**

- Nationally, [three out of four incarcerated women](#) are mothers. In New York, thousands of incarcerated mothers are separated from their children. More than [105,000 children](#) have a parent serving time in a New York jail or prison, which devastates families, and increases the likelihood of a [child's future incarceration](#).
- **With just over a month remaining in the 2025 legislative session, lawmakers have named sentencing reform as a top priority and are calling for the passage of the [Second Look Act](#) and [Earned Time Act](#) before the end of the legislative session.**
- [Governor Hochul and the legislative leaders have all acknowledged](#) the importance of earned time programs as part of a broader solution to the crisis behind bars and these bills are a top priority for lawmakers.
- **These urgent and common-sense reforms have extensive support** from [judges](#), including the [Chief Judge](#) and [Chief Administrative Judge](#) of New York State, [law enforcement](#), including the former [Commissioner](#) of the Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS), the [American Bar Association](#), dozens of [labor unions](#), [business](#), and [over 200 civil rights, legal, and community organizations](#). The bills also have nearly majority support in the state legislature.
- **These bills are broadly popular with New Yorkers.** Recent [polling](#) by EMC Research found that [74% of New Yorkers](#) support the Earned Time Act and [68% of New Yorkers](#) support the Second Look Act.
- **New York's sentencing laws are outdated and archaic**, constructed during the 1970s Rockefeller Drug Law era and the years following the 1994 Crime Bill, and they have disproportionately impacted Black and brown communities. Right now, over 30,000 people are incarcerated in New York's prisons. [Nearly 75% are Black or brown](#).
- **The Second Look Act** would allow judges to review and reconsider excessive sentences. Under current sentencing laws, incarcerated people have no opportunity to demonstrate to a judge that they have transformed while incarcerated or to seek a reconsideration of unjust sentences.
  - [New York's Chief Judge Rowan Wilson](#) and [Chief Administrative Judge Joseph Zayas](#) have urged the legislature to pass the Second Look Act.
  - Judges across the country have spoken out about their inability to address excessive sentences. For example, in 2016, Chief United States District Judge Stefan Underhill wrote in the [New York Times](#) that a 18-year sentence he had handed down was too harsh and lamenting that he was unable to modify it.
  - Nationally, second look bills are gaining momentum with legislation passed in four states and the [District of Columbia](#), and proposed in an additional 22 states. Federally, [U.S. Senator Cory Booker](#) has proposed second look legislation in Congress.
- **The Earned Time Act** would strengthen and expand “good time” and “merit time” programs to encourage incarcerated people to participate in rehabilitative programming.
  - Currently, New York lags far behind states like [Oklahoma and Alabama](#) in providing good time credit incentives, and 80% of people in New York's prisons cannot access merit time (time credits for participation in educational and vocational programming) at all. By expanding earned time credit programs, the Earned Time Act will reduce recidivism, make prisons safer, and save tax dollars.

- National research shows that earned time opportunities help to prepare incarcerated people for reintegration, [reducing recidivism rates and correctional costs](#). [DOCCS data](#) shows that participation in merit time programs reduced recidivism by 8%. Research in [Washington, Kansas, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Maryland](#) also found major reductions in recidivism corresponding to participation in earned time programs.
- [Decades](#) of criminological [research](#) show that robust earned time programs help make prisons safer for staff and incarcerated people by providing incarcerated people with an opportunity to work towards change and reunification with their families.
- New York's Merit Time Program alone saved taxpayers an estimated [\\$384 million](#) in under 10 years, from 1997 to 2006.
- **The Marvin Mayfield Act** would eliminate mandatory minimum sentences, allowing judges to consider the individual factors and mitigating circumstances in a case and addressing the outsize power of prosecutors to coerce plea deals.
  - New York's sentencing laws have eviscerated the constitutional right to trial. Right now, [98% of convictions](#) in New York are the result of guilty pleas, not trials, in part because prosecutors use the threat of lengthy mandatory minimums to extract pleas, undermining fairness and basic constitutional rights.
  - [Judges](#) have spoken out about how mandatory minimum sentences have compelled them to hand down unjust sentences and urged the legislature to eliminate them.
- Instead of excessive sentences, [survivors](#) of crime overwhelmingly prefer investments in the community, by a factor of 15 to 1.
- Mass incarceration is ineffective - and costly. It costs nearly [\\$70,000](#) per year to incarcerate a person in state prison with an annual prison system price tag of [\\$3 billion](#). These are billions of dollars New York State could spend on education, housing, healthcare, community-based anti-violence and restorative justice programs.

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