



NEW YORK STATE BLACK, PUERTO RICAN, HISPANIC, AND ASIAN LEGISLATIVE CAUCUS

LEGISLATIVE OFFICE BUILDING • ROOM 442-A, ALBANY, NY 12248
(518) 455-5347 • BPHACAUCUS@NYASSEMBLY.GOV



EXECUTIVE OFFICERS

Assemblyman N. Nick Perry
Chairman

Assemblywoman Michaele Solages
First Vice-Chair

Assemblyman Luis Sepulveda
Second Vice-Chair

Assemblyman Victor Pichardo
Secretary

Assemblywoman Latoya Joyner
Treasurer

Assemblywoman Yuh-Line Niou
Parliamentarian

Assemblywoman Latrice M. Walker
Chaplain

ASSEMBLYMEMBERS

Carl Heastie, Speaker
Carmen E. Arroyo
Jeffrion L. Aubry
Charles Barron
Rodneyse Bichotte
Michael A. Blake
Vivian E. Cook
Marcos Crespo
Maritza Davila
Carmen De La Rosa
Inez E. Dickens
Erik Martin Dilan
David F. Gantt
Earlene Hooper
Pamela J. Hunter
Alicia L. Hyndman
Kimberly Jean-Pierre
Ron Kim
Walter Mosley
Felix Ortiz
Crystal D. Peoples-Stokes
J. Gary Pretlow
Philip Ramos
Diana C. Richardson
Jose Rivera
Robert J. Rodriguez
Nily Rozic
Al Taylor
Michele R. Titus
Clyde Vanel
Jaime Williams
Tremaine Wright

SENATORS

Andrea Stewart-Cousins, Leader
Marisol Alcantara
Jamaal Bailey
Brian A. Benjamin
Leroy Comrie
Martin M. Dilan
Jesse Hamilton III
Velmanette Montgomery
Kevin S. Parker
Jose R. Peralta
Roxanne Persaud
Gustavo Rivera
James Sanders, Jr.
Jose M. Serrano

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Kyle H. Ishmael, Esq.

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CAUCUS LEGISLATORS SUPPORT PAROLE BOARD'S DECISION TO RELEASE HERMAN BELL

ALBANY, NY (April 17, 2018) – The Members of the New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus support the diligent and thoughtful work of the New York State Board of Parole in their determination that Herman Bell, 70, after serving over 40 years of a 25-years-to-life sentence, has served his time and should be granted release from prison.

The Members of the Caucus are aware of the egregious nature of Bell's crimes—for which he was convicted, sentenced and served over 40 years. We understand and share the feelings of the families of the brave officers; their loss is a void that can never be filled. Our position is not in disregard of their justified grief and even anger; but in our accepted process for dealing with members of our society who have committed crimes, we believe in a corrections system that is not just punitive but rehabilitative.

The Caucus has consistently worked towards ensuring that justice in our state is applied evenly. Far too often, we are witness to outcomes in our criminal justice system that range from questionable, to unfair, to shocking symptoms of bias and institutional racism. At every opportunity, it is our role as legislators to mold the law in a way that creates an even playing field for all; and to work towards reasonable policies and procedures that are free from bias and discrimination.

The process of obtaining parole in New York State is one such system in which the implementation of reasonable procedures should provide for an outcome void of any bias. However, we are concerned that—in the case of Herman Bell—the current questioning and politicization of the parole board's decision undermines the very foundation of our justice system.

To believe in our criminal justice system, we are asked to trust New York's finest, place our life and liberty in the hands of zealous legal representation, trust in a jury of our peers, accept the wisdom and independence of the judiciary, and believe in one's ability to rehabilitate. Mr. Bell, in seven appearances before the parole board, has met their standards for release.

The diligence and wisdom of the board must be respected. We lend our voices in support of the Board of Parole's work, and call on our colleagues in government and advocacy to constructively work together towards a fair and equitable justice system.

--

The New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic, and Asian Legislative Caucus is a fifty-three member body of state legislators representing a quarter of residents across the State of New York from Long Island, the metro New York City area, and upstate.