

MEDIA ADVISORY

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In Wake of More New COVID Prison Deaths, Advocates Hold Two Day Vigil Outside Fishkill Correctional Facility and Prison's Burial Grounds To Mourn Incarcerated People Lost to COVID-19 And Call for Gov. Cuomo to Grant Mass Clemencies

The Groups Will Uplift the Message: Prisons + COVID-19 = Death and Call for the Immediate Release of Vulnerable New Yorkers in Prison

WHEN: Thursday, May 7 at 3pm

WHERE: Outside Fishkill Correctional Facility, which has more COVID cases than any other state prison in New York, and next to the prison's burial grounds, where people who have died while incarcerated across the state are buried. The virtual press conference will be available for press and the public through Zoom: <https://bit.ly/FishkillVigil>

WHO: Formerly incarcerated people, family members of incarcerated people, community leaders, faith leaders, and criminal justice advocates from the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, Parole Preparation Beacon Prison Action Coalition and other groups.

WHAT: A coalition of advocates and community members will host a socially-distanced demonstration, car caravan, virtual press conference, and two-day vigil outside Fishkill Correctional Facility to honor the lives of those we have lost to COVID-19 behind bars and call on Governor Cuomo to grant immediate clemencies to incarcerated New Yorkers vulnerable to COVID-19. The press conference will feature speakers impacted by Fishkill and other state prisons, especially those which house high numbers of older and pregnant people, and others who are vulnerable to COVID-19.

SCHEDULE:

Thursday, May 7

2-3: Car Caravan

3-4: Press Conference, accessible via Zoom: <https://bit.ly/FishkillVigil>

4-6: Graveside Vigil

Friday, May 8

9am-6pm: Graveside Vigil

Background: On March 30, Juan Mosquero died in isolation at Sing Sing Correctional Facility--he was the first incarcerated person to die in New York State prisons with COVID-19. Since Mr. Mosquero's death, at least fourteen other New Yorkers incarcerated in the state prison system have died with the virus. [To date, at least 415 incarcerated people and 1143 staff in the state prison system have tested positive for the virus.](#) Fishkill Correctional Facilities has more COVID

infections and COVID deaths than any other prison in New York State--94 incarcerated people have contracted the virus and 5 have died. Incarcerated people and their family members report that Fishkill is isolating people with COVID symptoms in solitary confinement units that amount to torture, don't supply incarcerated people with proper personal protective equipment, and have even run out of food.

Despite calls from [advocates, attorneys, family members of people in prison, public health experts, Members of Congress, district attorneys and philanthropists](#), and [high profile celebrities](#) for the state to release large numbers of people from prison in response to the virus, the Governor has yet to issue a single clemency since the pandemic began. New York State's prison system has identified a small number of incarcerated [older people within 90 days of the end of their sentence](#) for early release, as well as a small group of pregnant people convicted of [nonviolent offenses within six months of their release date](#). Advocates opposed these measures, saying they [don't go nearly far enough](#).