

****MEDIA ADVISORY****

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***Justice Advocates Hold Press Conference to
End 24-Hour Demonstration Laying Body Bags
on State Capitol Steps***

*The Group Will Place Responsibility of Prison
Deaths on Lawmakers and Demand They Pass
HALT Solitary Confinement, Elder Parole, and Fair
and Timely Parole Bills This Week to Prevent More
Deaths in Prison*

WHEN: Tuesday, July 21, 10AM

WHERE: West Capitol Park (State Street side) in front of the
State Capitol in Albany.

WHO: Formerly incarcerated community leaders, people
with incarcerated family members, and representatives from
the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign,
#HALTsolitary Campaign, VOCAL-NY, Parole Preparation
Project, Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration, and other
community groups.

WHAT: Community leaders and advocates will host a press
conference to end their 24-hour demonstration in Albany
laying body bags on the steps of the New York State Capitol.
The group will place responsibility of New York's state prison
deaths on lawmakers and demand they pass HALT Solitary
Confinement, Elder Parole, and Fair and Timely Parole Bills
this week to prevent more deaths in prison.

BACKGROUND: The latest instances of police violence and racism in New York and across the United States come as there has been a sharp rise in deaths with vast racial disparities in New York State prisons. This continues a longstanding “scourge of racial bias” in New York State prisons -- from violent interpersonal racism by staff to the use of solitary confinement to parole denials that enforce death by incarceration. It also comes in the midst of a surge in suicide and self-harm in New York State prisons, with solitary confinement as a primary driver.

Elder Parole would allow the State Board of Parole to provide an evaluation for potential parole release to incarcerated people aged 55 and older who have already served 15 or more years, including some of the state’s oldest and sickest incarcerated people. Fair and Timely Parole would provide more meaningful parole reviews for incarcerated people who are already parole eligible. The Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act would end the torture of prolonged solitary confinement and replace it with more humane and effective alternatives while still allowing for true medical isolation as needed. The bill has more official legislative co-sponsors than the number of the votes needed to pass, and has been awaiting a full floor vote for more than a year. These measures would save lives and begin to reverse some of the damaging policies that have upheld systemic racism and fueled mass incarceration in New York State.

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