

**MEDIA ADVISORY FOR:**

Thursday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2019, Albany, NY

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***Advocates and State Lawmakers Make Final Push to Fully Staff New York State Parole Board***

***The Group Will Call on Gov. Cuomo to Appoint Social Workers, Psychologists and Others Who Embrace Redemption Before End of Legislative Session***

**WHEN:** Wednesday, June 5, 2019 at 12PM

**WHERE:** New York State Legislative Office Building Room 130, Albany, NY

**WHO:** Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP Campaign, Parole Preparation Project, New York State Lawmakers, Formerly Incarcerated People, Family Members & Concerned New Yorkers.

**WHAT:** Criminal justice advocates, state lawmakers, formerly incarcerated people and community leaders will gather at the state capital to call on Gov. Cuomo to fully staff the Parole Board with Commissioners from diverse therapeutic backgrounds who embrace redemption. While the law allows for 19 parole commissioners, the Board has operated with 12 for most of the year. The coalition will call on the Governor to ensure that the appointment and confirmation process of prospective parole commissioners is fair, thorough, and well in advance of the end of this year's state legislative session.

**BACKGROUND:** The NYS Parole Board has been understaffed for the entirety of Gov. Cuomo's administration. Understaffing has devastating consequences for people in prison and their families. The Board remains at a record low of 12 Commissioners who are tasked with interviewing roughly 12,000 parole applicants every year. Such understaffing leads to shorter parole interviews, postponements of parole applicants, and an overall threat to basic fairness and due process. It also leaves a strain on parole commissioners and means that two-person parole panels are now the norm.

In March 2019, The New York State Black, Puerto Rican, Hispanic and Asian Caucus—made up of more than 60 NYS lawmakers—sent a [statement](#) to Gov. Cuomo. Since then, advocates held rallies [outside Cuomo's NYC office](#) and [in Albany](#) calling on him to fully staff the Parole Board with qualified Commissioners. The initiative now has [bi-partisan support](#) from members of the Senate. The Cuomo administration has yet to publicly say who they will appoint the Board and when. For more background, see a detailed report on the Board's understaffing entitled: [The New York State Parole Board: Failures in Staffing and Performance](#).

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