

For Immediate Release

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**Advocates Respond to the First COVID Death of an Incarcerated Woman in NYS Prisons
And Governor Cuomo's Plans to Release Some Pregnant Women**

(New York, NY) -- Today, the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, Parole Preparation Project, #HALTsolitary Campaign, VOCAL-NY, Worth Rises, and Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club released the following statement in response to news of the first COVID19 death of an incarcerated woman and Governor Cuomo's plans to release some pregnant woman from prison:

"The Governor's refusal to grant any clemencies led to the first COVID death of an incarcerated woman in New York State prisons. Darlene "Lulu" Benson-Seay was effectively sentenced to death because the Governor didn't care enough about her to protect her from this virus by releasing her.

While we are happy for the few pregnant women who will be released under the Governor's new plan to release pregnant people convicted of non-violent crimes who are within 6 months of their release, Cuomo must do far more for the women, men, and non-binary people in our prison system. Women convicted of violent crimes and pregnant people more than six months away from their release shouldn't be sentenced to death. No one should be sentenced to death. If the Governor believes this too, then he'll immediately grant broad clemencies to New Yorkers in prison. Otherwise, we'll know he is okay with his fellow New Yorkers dying in prison."

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