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AHEAD OF CHRISTMAS AND AMIDST COVID-19 PRISON SURGE, COALITION OF ADVOCATES RALLY TO CALL ON GOV. CUOMO TO GRANT CLEMENCY TO INCARCERATED NEW YORKERS

Full [recording of the rally here](#)

DeAnna Tucker, 10 year-old Queens resident calls on Gov. Cuomo to release her father, who has spent 32 years in prison

December 22, 2020 (New York, NY) —Tonight, roughly 75 New Yorkers with family members in prison, formerly incarcerated people, and advocates held a socially distant rally to call on Governor Andrew Cuomo to grant clemencies to New Yorkers in prison and reunite families ahead of Christmas, and amid a surge of COVID-19 across the state prison system.

New York State prisons are currently experiencing a second wave of COVID-19. In the last three weeks, 668 people incarcerated in the New York's State prisons have tested positive for the virus. Two people with the virus have died. There are currently outbreaks at Attica, Bedford Hills, Bare Hill, Clinton, Woodbourne, Groveland, Cayuga, and Walsh Correctional Facilities.

Amid the pandemic, Governor Andrew Cuomo has granted [three total clemencies](#) to New Yorkers in prison--fewer clemencies than [President Donald Trump](#), and governors in [California](#), [Illinois](#), and other states across the country. Cuomo has refused to take action despite calls from [advocates](#), [attorneys](#), [family members of people in prison](#), [public health experts](#), [Members of Congress](#), [district attorneys](#) and [philanthropists](#), [editorial boards](#), and [high profile celebrities](#) for him to grant wide-sweeping clemencies to people in prison in response to the virus.

During his nearly 10-year tenure as governor, Cuomo has granted 24 total clemencies--fewer than governors in republican states such as [Oklahoma](#) and [Kentucky](#), and democratic states such as California. Since 2016, [more than 6,400 incarcerated people in New York State prisons have submitted clemency applications](#). Thousands of applications have gone unanswered for years.

The New York State constitution explicitly permits Governor Andrew M. Cuomo to grant clemency to anyone in the New York State prison system. There are currently roughly 36,000 people incarcerated in New York State prisons--nearly 9,000 are elderly people and roughly 8,600 are serving life sentences.

Speakers at the rally said the following:

Stanley Bellamy, who has spent the last 34 years in prison and called into the rally from Green Haven Correctional Facility, said, “On behalf of the men at Green Haven prison, I want to offer an apology for the pain that we have caused. We ask that you give us a chance to be assets to our communities.”

Nawanna Tucker, a Queens resident and Community Leader with the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, said, “My husband has been incarcerated for 32 years. He was wrongfully convicted. But that's too long for anyone. Let them go. Our loved ones are dying. All Governor Cuomo has to do is use his pen. He came to us with a new program for clemency. But he has done nothing.”

Emma Pierre, a Brooklyn resident and Community Leader with the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, said, “When will our loved ones be reunited? When Governor Cuomo signs on the dotted line. Winter, spring, summer or fall, we will be here. We will advocate for our loved ones whenever we can. Cuomo shows no mercy. People are suffering and dying with COVID in prison.”

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