

****PRESS STATEMENT****

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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ADVOCATES RESPOND TO INCARCERATED PERSON DYING OF COVID-19 AT CLINTON PRISON IN DANNEMORA, NEW YORK

THE NUMBER OF INCARCERATED PEOPLE IN NY STATE PRISONS WHO HAVE TESTED POSITIVE FOR COVID-19 SURPASSES 6,000

NEW YORK -- Yesterday, the NY State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision (DOCCS) reported that yet another incarcerated person—at Clinton Correctional Facility—died of COVID-19. This person represents the 35th known COVID-related death in a New York prison. Since the start of the pandemic, over [6,000 incarcerated people](#) have contracted COVID-19. **In response, Release Aging People in Prison Campaign Community Leader Theresa Grady, whose husband is a currently incarcerated older person, released the following statement:**

“Hearing that another family is mourning the loss of their loved one in prison brings me tremendous fear that my husband, a 66-year-old incarcerated man with many underlying health problems, may soon face the same fate. COVID-19 took this person's life, and it's just one of the many dangers elders face behind bars. This is why New York State lawmakers must pass life-saving COVID-related reforms, including Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole to save countless New York families the devastation of losing their loved ones to needless deaths alone and behind bars.”

BACKGROUND: The New York State prison system reported the 35th death of incarcerated people from COVID-19, this time at Clinton Correctional Facility. The number of incarcerated people who have tested positive for the virus has officially surpassed 6,000.

Through nearly twelve months of the pandemic so far, Governor Andrew Cuomo has granted a total of [ten clemencies](#) to New Yorkers in prison--fewer clemencies than racist and xenophobic former President Donald Trump and governors in [California](#), [Illinois](#), [Oklahoma](#), [Kentucky](#), 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 pandemic. Instead of granting clemencies, Governor Cuomo has condemned thousands to solitary confinement, which [only exacerbates the harm](#) and spread of COVID-19.

There are many thousands of people in New York State prisons who are eligible for parole release, aged 50 and older, or imprisoned on a non-criminal technical parole violation, and/or within a year of their release date:

- 4,786 people who are already eligible for parole release
- 3,305 people held on technical parole violation
- 8,291 people aged 50 and older
- 7,955 within a year of max/conditional release (including 5 incarcerated mothers with infants housed in the Bedford Hills Corr. Facility nursery and one pregnant woman)

Advocates have called for lawmakers in Albany to pass three bills that will uniquely address this pandemic and prevent additional future tragedies:

- [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 and community ready.

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