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*****PRESS RELEASE*****

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**ON FINAL DAY OF LEGISLATIVE SESSION,
LAWMAKERS AND ADVOCATES MAKE
CLEAR: PAROLE REFORM ISN'T DONE
WITHOUT ELDER PAROLE AND FAIR &
TIMELY PAROLE BILLS**

*ON THIRD DAY OF CAMPOUT PROTEST,
SPEAKERS CALL ON ALBANY LAWMAKERS TO
ADDRESS RACIALLY BIASED PAROLE BOARD AND
CRISIS OF AGING IN PRISON BEFORE SESSION
ENDS*

(Albany, NY) -- Today, on the final day of the New York State legislative session, advocates and lawmakers held a press conference beside the Capitol to make clear that parole reform is not done for the year without passage of the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills. In the wake of State lawmakers agreeing to a deal to pass legislation to address technical parole violations, the group called on Albany lawmakers to pass these bills to address New York's racially biased Parole Board and create a parole system that centers redemption over permanent punishment.

TeAna Taylor, Policy and Communications Associate with the People's Campaign for Parole Justice and the daughter of an incarcerated New Yorker, said: "We're here to say that we're going to continue fighting no matter what to pass these bills and to

save our family members. We will never stop fighting for them and lawmakers must pass them.”

Jose Saldana, Director of the Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, said: “When we launched this campaign we knew on the last day of session that two things would happen: Either we would win, or we would keep fighting. We will never, never acknowledge defeat. We will always keep fighting, and we will pass these bills.”

Janette Colon, a RAPP Leader, said: “I’m the wife of one of many incarcerated people who has redeemed himself. When will my daughter have an opportunity to be with her dad? We’re not giving up on our loved ones. We’re never giving up. Lawmakers must pass Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole.”

Donna Robinson, a RAPP Leader, said: “Elder parole and Fair & Timely Parole are a matter of life in death. I don’t know how many times I have to say it. We’re not going anywhere. We need our loved ones home. These bills give people a second chance. Do the right thing.”

Assembly Member Jessica Gonzalez-Rojas (Queens) said: “I stand here for Juan Mosquero. I stand here for Stephen Allen. I stand here for all the lives lost behind bars. It is inhumane and we must change this system. We are fighting for the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills.”

Assembly Member Chris Burdick (Westchester) said: “We live in a racist society. Black and brown communities are disproportionately impacted this system that we must change. This is a matter of social justice, economic justice, and racial justice. It’s the right thing to do. We will not stop.”

Assembly Member Zohran Kwame Mamdani said: “This is an issue of morality and of constituent services for me. I have constituents from my district who cannot come home because of the system of parole we have today. I stand firmly in support of Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole.”

BACKGROUND:

- Dr. Hazel Dukes and the NAACP New York State Conference of Branches [announced their support](#) for the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills, joining a broad coalition of Members of Congress like [Rep. Jamaal Bowman](#), [Rep. Adriano Espaillat](#), [Rep. Jerry Nadler](#), and unions like 1199 SEIU, the Working Families Party, and celebrities such as [Chelsea Clinton](#).
- The Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills are supported by more than 300 organizations across New York State, including some of the largest crime victims and survivor advocacy groups due to [the connections between parole justice and justice for victims and survivors of crime](#): The New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault, Crime Victims Treatment Center, The Working Families Party, 1199 SEIU, CWA District 1, VOCAL-NY, Citizen Action, New Hour for Women and Children, LiveOn NY, JASA, the Brookdale Center for Healthy Aging, NY Communities for Change, Center for Community Alternatives, Osborne Association, NYCLU, [FWD.us](#), the #HALTsolitary Campaign, Legal Aid Society, Center for Justice at Columbia, and NYU Law's Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law.
- There is a crisis of aging and dying for New Yorkers in prison and their families because of decades of extreme sentencing and blanket denials of parole release by a racially biased Parole Board.
- 55% of the roughly 30,000 people currently incarcerated in New York State prisons are Black people, despite the fact that only 18% of the overall population in the state is Black. 77% are People of Color.
- According to a [Times Union analysis](#) of the nearly 19,000 parole board decisions over the last two years, racial bias infects parole release determinations and disparities have only widened in recent years. The data, which spans October 2018 through October 2020, shows the Parole Board granted parole release to 41 percent of white people, compared to 34 percent of Black people and 33 percent of Latinx people.
- Nearly 1-in-4 (24%) people in New York State prisons are

- serving life or virtual life sentences.
- 4,704 people in prison are defined by NYS DOCCS as older adults, meaning they are 55 or older.
 - Without reforms to expand access to parole release and make the process more fair in New York State, New Yorkers, especially those who are Black and Latinx, will continue to age without dignity, get sick, and die in prison regardless of their transformation and potential benefits to the outside community.
 - The People's Campaign for Parole Justice is calling on lawmakers in Albany to pass two bills that, together, will ensure that people in prison have meaningful opportunities for individualized consideration for parole release based on who they are today, what they have done to change, and whether they pose a risk if released:
 - [Elder Parole \(S.15A/A.3475A\)](#) would allow the State Board of Parole to conduct 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 \(S.1415A/A.4231A\)](#) would provide more meaningful parole reviews for incarcerated people who are already parole eligible.

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