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\*\*\*STATEMENT FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*

## ADVOCATES RESPOND TO BRUTAL DEATH OF INCARCERATED PERSON AT METROPOLITAN DETENTION CENTER

(New York, NY) The Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, Parole Preparation Project, #HALTsolitary Campaign and Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club released the following statement in response the death of Jamel Floyd, who was reportedly pepper sprayed by guards and suffered a fatal heart attack:

“We are outraged by the killing of Jamel Floyd and devastated for his family and loved ones. While police maliciously use pepper spray to suppress nationwide protests for Black people’s safety and freedom in the streets, jail guards reportedly used it against Jamel Floyd in what amounted to a deadly use of force. Racist state violence occurs daily in local jails and state prisons, just as it does in federal facilities. Lawmakers cannot respond to centuries of injustice and the ongoing mass uprising with empty gestures when they return to Albany next week. We continue to demand Governor Cuomo and the Legislature take action to address racist state violence in all its forms, both in the streets and behind bars.”

**Background:** Advocates are calling on lawmakers to pass the Humane Alternatives to Long-Term (HALT) Solitary Confinement Act, Elder Parole, Fair and Timely Parole, and legislation to [fully repeal Civil Rights Law 50-A](#), also known as the police secrecy law. The latest instances of police violence and racism in New York and across the United States come as there has been a [sharp rise in deaths with vast racial disparities](#) in New York State prisons. This continues a longstanding “[scourge of racial bias](#)” in New York State prisons -- from violent interpersonal racism by staff to the use of solitary confinement to parole denials that enforce death by incarceration. It also comes in the midst of a [surge](#) in suicide and self-harm in New York State prisons, with solitary confinement as a primary driver.

[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. The [Humane Alternatives to Long-Term \(HALT\) Solitary Confinement Act](#) would end the torture of prolonged solitary confinement and replace it with more humane and effective alternatives while still allowing for true medical isolation as needed. The bill has more official legislative co-sponsors than the number of the votes needed to pass, and has been awaiting a full floor vote for more than a year. These measures would save lives and begin to reverse some of the damaging policies that have upheld systemic racism and fueled mass incarceration in New York State.

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