

**\*\*MEDIA ADVISORY\*\***

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**May 8, 2021**

***COALITION OF ADVOCATES TO HOLD MOTHER'S DAY RALLY AND  
PRESS CONFERENCE FOR WOMEN BEHIND BARS AND THEIR  
FAMILIES***

***THE GROUP WILL CALL FOR THE PASSAGE OF BILLS TO ESTABLISH  
ELDER PAROLE AND FAIR & TIMELY PAROLE, CODIFY IN PERSON  
VISITS, AND SUPPORT MOTHERS DURING DELIVERY***

**What:** A coalition of advocates will rally on Mother's Day Weekend in support of women behind bars and their families. The group will call on NY State lawmakers to pass a series of justice reforms, including bills to establish Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole, a bill to codify in person prison visits, and a bill to support pregnant women at Rikers and Bedford Hills Correctional Facilities. The group will also call for greater COVID-19 vaccination access and education.

**When:** Saturday, May 8, 2021, 11:00AM

**Where:** • Rikers Island Bus Stop: outside 387 Jay Street, Brooklyn, NY:

- Bedford Hills Correctional Facility: 247 Harris Rd., Bedford Hills, NY 10507
- The rallies will be streamed live via zoom: [link here](#)

**Who:** New York State lawmakers, including **Assemblymember Linda Rosenthal (Manhattan)**, **Assemblymember Chris Burdick (Bedford)**, **Senator Julia Salazar (Brooklyn)**, who is the Chair of the Senate Committee on Crime Victims, Crime, and Correction, **NY City Council Member Daniel Dromm**, and other lawmakers, community members impacted by the criminal legal system, and members of the Long Island Social Justice Action Network, New Hour For Women and Children Long Island, Release Aging People in Prison Campaign, Osborne Association, People's Campaign for Parole Justice, and more.

**Background:** New York State prisons and jails keep families apart, mothers away from their children, and often keep people confined well into their older years. In New York State prisons there are 8,000 incarcerated older people, many of whom are mothers and grandmothers who have transformed their lives over years and decades of incarceration. For thousands of incarcerated people the State Parole Board is their only way home. Yet the Parole Board denies release to the majority of people appearing before it, and disproportionately denies release to Black and Latino women, men, and gender-expansive people.

While New York State prisons and jails allow incarcerated people and their families to have in-person visits, there is no law that codifies in-person visits as a right, leaving visits up to the discretion of prison and jail administrators. For incarcerated pregnant women, giving birth behind bars is a traumatic and isolating experience. Once incarcerated people are in labor, they are not able to receive any support from family, friends or loved ones in the outside community.

They can only rely on prison staff and healthcare providers, who often provide apathetic, often subpar, neglectful, and abusive care.

The Fair and Timely Parole Act (S1415/A4231) would reform the parole release process in New York State to ensure that incarcerated people appearing before the Parole Board are assessed for a chance at release based on their rehabilitation and current readiness for release. The Elder Parole bill (S15/A3475) would allow incarcerated people aged 55 and older who have already served 15 consecutive years in prison a chance to appear before the Parole Board for an individualized assessment at release consideration. Advocates will also call for the passage of a bill to support incarcerated pregnant people during labor and delivery (S401/A211), and Protect In-Person Visiting (S2841A/A4250A), which calls for codify in-person visits in jails and prisons across New York State.

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