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*****FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*****

Today, in response to the legislature agreeing to pass legislation to help address problems associated with technical parole violations, Jose Saldana of the People's Campaign for Parole Justice released the following statement:

“Addressing the unfair and flawed parole supervision system is critical, and the legislature must pass legislation to address the troublingly high number of people who are reincarcerated for technical parole violations each year. However, the parole problem in New York is two-fold: thousands of people are routinely denied parole or never make it to their first hearing alive, and thousands more are reincarcerated for technical parole violations.

Lawmakers can't declare victory on parole reform until they address a Parole Board that disproportionately denies release to Black and Latinx people. They can't declare victory on parole reform as long as our system of parole leaves people to grow old, sick, and die in prison for no reason. They can't declare victory until they create a system that centers redemption over permanent punishment. In order to do that, they must pass the Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills this session.”

Background:

- Recently, 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 from members of Congress like [Rep. Jamaal Bowman](#), [Rep. Adriano Espaillat](#), [Rep. Jerry Nadler](#), and, big unions like 1199 SEIU, political parties like 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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