

# COMMUNITIES NOT CAGES

We must end mass incarceration in New York.

Every day, over 30,000 New Yorkers languish in state prisons. **75% are Black or brown.**

New York's commitment to mass incarceration helps fuel America's shameful standing as the largest cager of human life in the world, with more than two million people detained in prisons, jails, and immigrant detention facilities throughout the country.

## Mass incarceration does not deliver justice, safety, or healing.

It tears at the fabric of families and communities who lose loved ones, breadwinners, and caretakers to New York State prisons.

## New York's sentencing laws are fundamentally racist and harmful.

The Rockefeller Drug Laws—which introduced mandatory minimum sentences and dramatically increased prison sentences—were driven by a wave of anti-Black racism that New York exported across the country.

Much of this system remains today. New York continues to incarcerate people at a rate more than double that of the mid 1970s.

## A system of coerced plea deals has replaced the constitutional right to trial.

Prosecutors use the threat of outrageously long mandatory minimums to coerce people into taking guilty pleas. 98% of convictions in our state are the result of guilty pleas—not trials—in large part due to New York's draconian sentencing laws.

This undermines fundamental fairness and our basic constitutional rights.

## Mass incarceration is ineffective—and costly.

It costs nearly \$70,000 per year to cage a person in state prison. The result is that New York spends over \$3 billion every year on a cruel, counterproductive prison system—billions that could instead be spent on education, housing, healthcare, community-based anti-violence and restorative justice programs.

**Communities Not Cages is a statewide campaign building the power of people and families impacted by mass incarceration to overhaul New York's racist and draconian sentencing laws.**

# COMMUNITIES NOT CAGES

## Together, we call on New York to:

### Abolish mandatory minimums and two-and three-strikes laws.

Mandatory minimum sentences drive mass incarceration, strip judges of discretion, and grant outsized power to prosecutors to coerce guilty pleas.

### Allow judges to review and reconsider excessive sentences.

New York has the third largest number of people serving life sentences in the country. Thousands of people are currently serving sentences of a decade or more.

Under current sentencing laws, most incarcerated people have no opportunity to demonstrate to a judge that they have changed or to ask for excessive or extreme sentences to be reconsidered to account for new laws and norms.

### Support transformation and bring our loved ones home.

Following the federal 1994 Crime Bill, New York State slashed programs for incarcerated people and dramatically limited the time people could earn time off their sentences.

New York must strengthen “good time” and “merit time” laws to support personal transformation in prison and reunite families.

  **COMMUNITIES\_NY**

**CommunitiesNotCagesNY.org**

Want to get involved?  
Email Marvin Mayfield at  
[mmayfield@communityalternatives.org](mailto:mmayfield@communityalternatives.org).



# Our Coalition

- #HALTsolitary Campaign
- A Little Piece Of Light
- ALAA - UAW 2325
- Albany Social Justice Center
- Alliance of Communities Transforming Syracuse (ACTS)
- Appellate Advocates
- Attica Improvement and Memorial Project
- Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Long Island
- Black Lives Matter (BLM) - Hudson Valley
- Bronx Defenders
- Brooklyn Defender Services
- Brooklyn Law School Criminal Defense & Advocacy Clinic
- Call BlackLine
- Capital Area Against Mass Incarceration
- Capitol Area Relief & Liberation
- Center for Appellate Litigation
- Center for Community Alternatives
- Center for Employment Opportunities
- Center for Justice at Columbia University
- Center for Law and Justice
- Children's Defense Fund-New York
- Chinese-American Planning Council (CPC)
- Churches United for Fair Housing
- Citizen Action of New York
- College & Community Fellowship
- Color Of Change
- Common Justice
- Community Voices Heard/ Community Voices Heard Power
- Congregation Beit Simchat Torah
- CUNY Law School Defenders Clinic
- Drug Policy Alliance
- Dutchess County Progressive Action Alliance (DCPAA)
- Elias Foundation
- Empowerment Collaborative of Long Island (ECLI)
- EndQINY
- ENJAN Poughkeepsie
- Envision Freedom Fund (formerly Brooklyn Community Bail Fund)
- Equitable Future, Inc.
- Exodus Transitional Community
- For the Many
- Free the People WNY
- Freedom Agenda
- fwd.us
- Gender Equality New York, Inc.
- GOSO – Getting Out & Staying Out
- Health and Incarceration Connection / URMC
- Hour Children
- Hour Children
- Hudson Link for Higher Education in Prison
- Human Rights Watch
- Incarcerated Nation Network INC
- Incarcerated Nation Network, Inc.
- Ithaca Prisoner Justice Network
- Jews for Racial & Economic Justice
- Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club
- John Jay College Institute for Justice and Opportunity
- Judson Memorial Church
- LatinoJustice PRLDEF
- Layleen's Nurturing Nest
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- Legal Action Center
- Legal Aid Bureau of Buffalo, Inc.
- Legal Aid Society
- LIFE Progressive Services Group Inc
- Long Island Progressive Coalition
- Long Island Social Justice Action Network
- Main Street Legal Services of CUNY Law School
- MEN TALK
- Monroe County Public Defender's Office
- Mothers On the Inside
- NAMI NYS Criminal Justice
- National Action Network (NAN) - Syracuse
- National Action Network NYC Chapter Second Chance Committee
- National Alliance on Mental Illness - Queens
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Rockland County
- National Alliance on Mental Illness of Rockland County, Inc.
- National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Huntington
- National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) - NYS Criminal Justice
- National Association on Mental Illness (NAMI) - Orange County
- Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem
- New Hour for Women & Children - LI
- New York Civil Liberties Union
- New York Communities for Change
- New York County Defender Services
- New York Immigration Coalition
- New York State Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers (NYSACDL)
- Newburgh LGBTQAI+ Center
- NY Returning Citizens Empowerment Political Club
- Office of the Appellate Defender
- OGs Against Gun Violence
- Partnership for the Public Good
- REJI Organizing Coalition
- Release Aging People in Prison
- Rise And Resist NYC
- Rise Up Kingston
- Rochester Decarceration Research Initiative
- S.T.O.P. - The Surveillance Technology Oversight Project
- S.T.R.O.N.G. Youth, Inc.
- Survivors Justice Project
- The Correctional Association of New York
- The Gathering for Justice
- The Peacekeepers
- The Sentencing Project
- Troy for Black Lives
- Turning Points Resource Center
- United Christian Leadership Ministry
- United Voices of Cortland
- UnLocal
- Uptown Progressive Action
- VOCAL-NY
- VOICE Buffalo
- Wayne County Public Defender
- We Got Us Now
- WESPAC Foundation, Inc.
- Westchester for Change
- Westchester for Change
- Women & Justice Project
- Women's Community Justice Association
- Working Families Party - New York
- Youth Anti-Prison Project
- Youth Represent