

2017 PRIORITIZED PLATFORM FOR CHALLENGING INCARCERATION IN NEW YORK

*The system of incarceration in New York continues to destroy people, families, and communities. Rooted in the ongoing legacy of slavery, Jim Crow segregation, and ghettoization, New York's policing, jails, and prisons are at their core driven by racism, dehumanization, and otherization. Black people in particular are targeted for criminalization, policing, incarceration, and other state violence and torture. These systems also target women, queer, transgender, and gender non-conforming people; Latino, Native American, and Muslim people; poor people of all backgrounds; and other marginalized people. New York State must dismantle this racist and patriarchal incarceration system and reconstruct our State through caring and empowered communities with control over the decisions and resources that affect our own lives. As meaningful steps toward this necessary transformation, we call on New York legislators and the Governor to 1) End Mass Incarceration; 2) Promote Community Empowerment; 3) End State Violence and Torture; and 4) End Structural Racism and all Intersectional Identity-Based Oppression. While we support a fuller platform of policy changes that would be important steps within each of these categories, this year we call upon New York policy-makers to enact and effectively implement **all of the following prioritized measures in 2017.***

1. End Mass Incarceration: reduce number of prisons/jails, people incarcerated & lengths incarcerated: 2017 Priorities:

- i. **Parole Reform:** require the Board to grant release to people who demonstrate their readiness and specify what denied applicants can do to be released, SAFE Parole Act, A. 2930 / S. 1728; and ensure parole decisions are based on risk and rehabilitation, A. 9960.
- ii. **Raise the Age:** raise the age of criminal responsibility from 16 to at least 18 for all children and all crimes, and keep all children out of adult jails and prisons.
- iii. **Bail Reform,** A. 8551 / S. 6061: prohibit setting bail to secure a defendant's attendance at a future court proceeding, establish preference for release on a defendant's own recognizance or release subject to conditions established by the court.
- iv. **Revamp all sentencing:** end life without parole, reduce all prison sentences, stop re-incarceration on technical violations, and expand alternatives to incarceration, diversion, Supervised Injection Facilities, other community resources, and restorative and transformative justice for all people, including people with mental health needs, people who use drugs, and people convicted of the most violent offenses.

2. Promote Community Empowerment, Education, Reconstruction, and Control: 2017 Priorities:

- v. **Voting Rights for All:** provide right to vote for all people incarcerated in prisons and jails, and who are on parole.
- vi. **Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) restoration,** A. 2870 / S. 2975: restore eligibility of people who are incarcerated to receive financial aid to attend college.

3. End State Violence and Torture, and Shift Away from the Punishment Paradigm: 2017 Priorities:

- vii. **HALT Solitary Confinement Act,** A. 4401 / S. 2659: end the torture of solitary confinement and create more humane and effective alternatives.
- viii. **Close Rikers and Attica:** close this abusive jail and prison immediately and permanently, and stop systemic brutality, racism, and abuse in all jails and prisons.

4. End Structural Racism, Ensure a Focus on Women and LGBTI people, and Protect the Human Rights of All People – including Groups Disproportionately Harmed by the Punishment System: 2017 Priorities:

- ix. **Racial Justice:** establish Truth, Justice, and Reconciliation Commission, and reparations, for the harms of mass incarceration, policing, segregation, and slavery; and utilize racial and ethnic impact statements to prohibit any justice policy that would exacerbate racial disparities.
- x. **Domestic Violence Survivors Justice Act (DVSJA),** A. 4409B / S. 2036B: grant judges discretion to sentence domestic violence survivors convicted of offenses caused by that violence to shorter sentences or to alternative-to-incarceration programs instead of prison.