

The Resolution

I hereby propose the foregoing Resolution to be committed to the Standing Committee on

RESOLUTIONS OF THIS COUNTY COMMITTEE RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT

OF PROPOSITION 1: CALLING ON THE NEW YORK STATE LEGISLATURE TO PASS THE ELDER PAROLE BILL AND THE FAIR & TIMELY PAROLE ACT.

WHEREAS, The population of roughly 32,000 New Yorkers in state prison is getting older and sicker year by year; and

WHEREAS, The investigations by the New York Times, the Albany Times Union and, most recently, the Center on Race, Inequality & the Law at NYU's School of Law documented sharp racial disparities in parole release determinations, with Black and Latino/a people far less likely to get released, when controlling for all factors, even relative to the racial disparities in the overall prison population; and

WHEREAS, The NYU Law report specifically found that, if Black and Latino/a New Yorkers were granted parole release at the same rate as white New Yorkers, there would have been 4,152 more grants of release since the state began tracking this data in 2016; and

WHEREAS, An analysis of parole hearing transcripts conducted by the nonpartisan Vera Institute of Justice found that a majority of denials (60%) were based solely on the one thing a person can never change, namely the nature of the applicant's conviction, with no regard for their self-rehabilitation and transformation behind bars; and

WHEREAS, the Nearly one-in-five (18%) of Brooklyn residents in NY State prisons are age 55 or older. Many were locked up as young people but lack pathways to be fairly considered for release, no matter how much they have matured and transformed themselves; and

WHEREAS, 40% of Brooklyn residents in prison are serving life sentences, the highest rate of any county; and;

WHEREAS, 73% of Brooklyn residents currently incarcerated in New York State prisons are Black people and 95% are People of Color, yet 50% of Brooklyn residents overall are white; and

WHEREAS,, the average age of death due to so-called "natural causes" behind bars in New York is only 58, likely because of the stress of the prison environment, separation from loved ones, unhealthy and spoiled food, and lack of quality health care.

WHEREAS, the New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervisions's data reveals that people died in state prison once every 2.5 days in 2024; and

WHEREAS, A report by the Center for Justice and Columbia University found more people have died in our state's prisons in just the last 10 years than the total number of people executed during the 364 years in which New York applied the death penalty, with deaths of people over 55, in particular, skyrocketing; and

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I hereby propose the foregoing Resolution to be committed to the Standing Committee on Resolutions of this County Committee Resolution in Support of the Elder Parole bill and the Fair & Timely Parole Act.

WHEREAS, The report called long sentences & racially-biased parole denials “New York’s new death penalty”; and

WHEREAS, this Committee opposes the death penalty in light of its brutality and disparate impacts on Black people and othepeople of color, and likewise opposes condemning people to die in prison without any hope for redemption; and

WHEREAS, this Committee recognizes that aging and death behind bars impacts entire families, with an estimated 80,000 children of incarcerated parents across New York State; and

WHEREAS, this Body believes that providing community-driven and transformed people behind bars a real chance to be considered for release and an opportunity to serve as mentors, non-profit leaders & drug counselors for young people in their home communities can improve safety for all; and

WHEREAS, The Elder Parole bill (S454/A514) would allow incarcerated New Yorkers classified as older adults who have already served 15 or more years on their current sentence to appear before the Parole Board for case-by-case consideration for parole release; and

WHEREAS, The Fair & Timely Parole Act (S159/A127) would restore parole release determinations to their original purpose of evaluating people’s readiness for release based on their rehabilitation and current risk to public safety; and

WHEREAS, Both bills are supported by New York State’s largest racial justice organizations and advocates for victims and survivors of crime, including the NAACP of New York State and the National Act Network, as well as the New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault and the Crime Victims Treatment Center, along with faith leaders, advocates for older adults, re-entry organizations and public defense organizations and prosecutors like District Attorney Eric Gonzalez alike; and

WHEREAS, Unlocking Billions, another Columbia University Center for Justice report, found passage of Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole would save \$522 million dollars annually, money that could be invested in expanding community-based, public health-centered violence prevention programs, services for crime survivors, quality mental health care, education, and more; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Kings County Democratic Committee calls on the New York State Legislature to pass and the Governor to sign the Elder Parole bill and the Fair & Timely Parole Act.