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## **Hundreds March in NYC to Demand Albany Pass 5 Key Bills to Dismantle Systems of State Violence that Have Targeted Black Communities**

*Marchers Demand Legislature Pass Parole, Solitary, Walking While Trans and Protect Our Courts Bills in Next Week's Session*

**NEW YORK--** On Tuesday evening hundreds marched in New York City to demand the State Senate and Assembly pass vital bills when they meet next week that will help dismantle the systems of state violence targeting black communities.

New Yorkers joined Kalief Browder's brother Akeem Browder and Layleen Polanco's sister Melania Brown, and survivors of solitary confinement and the brutality of New York's jails, prisons and detention centers in a march from Union Square to Governor Cuomo's New York City office.

New Yorkers marching on Tuesday called on the legislature to pass five key pieces of legislation when they meet next week that will begin to reduce the number of people subject to the inherent violence of New York's jails, prisons, and detention centers. [Elder Parole](#) would ensure the Parole Board gives incarcerated older people who have already served decades in prison a fair chance at release and end prison sentences that amount to a death sentence; [Fair and Timely Parole](#) would provide a meaningful parole review focused on who a person is today; the [Humane Alternatives to Long-Term \(HALT\) Solitary Confinement Act](#) would end the torture of solitary confinement; [Repealing the Walking While Trans Ban](#) would end racist and transphobic criminalization of trans New Yorkers being arrested for just walking down the street; and the [Protect our Courts Act](#) would end the xenophobic and racist practice of allowing ICE to prey on immigrant New Yorkers within and around our state's courts.

The Repeal of Walking While Trans Ban, HALT Solitary Act, and Protect our Courts Act all have majority support in the legislature.

These bills would not only prevent COVID-19 from creating disaster in courts, jails, prisons, and detention facilities, but would also begin to reverse many of the damaging policies that have fueled mass criminalization, mass incarceration, and death by incarceration.

“A people’s movement has swept the nation demanding racial and social justice. It is an insult to think this movement will be content with cosmetic reforms in policing, while ignoring the systemic racism in prosecutions, sentencing and imprisonment,” said **Jose Hamza Saldana, Director of Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP**. “We can no longer allow White supremacist policies to define Justice as perpetual punishment, revenge, and permanent family separation. Justice must provide the opportunity for redemption and transformation and return to family and community. The passage of the Elder Parole Bill (S.2144) and Fair & Timely Parole Act (S.497A), are first steps in correcting the egregious injustice that Black and Latinx families and communities had suffered for decades and will ensure that future generations will not inherit the same inter-generational racist injustice. We demand that elected leaders support a Black Lives Matter legislative agenda, instead of White Supremist legislative agenda. Incarcerated Black Lives Matter.”

"Governor Cuomo and New York State legislators have the power and responsibility to save lives today," said **Zoë Adel, Advocacy and Communications Manager of the Brooklyn Community Bail Fund**. "Passing these five pieces of legislation will begin to address the crisis of racist state violence - a crisis highlighted by the uprisings against police violence and systemic racism, and coming off the heels of the expansion of law enforcement's power to inflict violence on thousands more Black and brown people through increased pretrial jailing and surveillance. The fight for an end to systemic racism and brutality extends behind bars, to our jails, prisons and ICE detention centers. Prosecutors, judges, ICE agents, and corrections officers are all law enforcement. They all work to uphold the deeply intertwined, racist, oppressive, violent criminal punishment and immigration systems, which have killed thousands of BIPOC, immigrants, TGNC, and other marginalized people, and traumatized countless more. It's time the Governor and NYS Legislature put our communities first."

“For decades, New York’s criminal legal system has locked our communities in a cycle of racial profiling, racist state violence and mass incarceration,” said **Anu Joshi, Vice President of Policy, New York Immigration Coalition**. “We cannot hope to transform this system with merely talk of justice and equity. Albany must put their money where their mouth is by prioritizing people over punishment and ensuring all New Yorkers have access to justice by keeping ICE out of our courts.”

“Our racist punitive carceral system has cost countless lives of our fellow human beings placed in solitary confinement,” said **Victor Pate, Statewide Organizer for The #HALTSolitary Confinement Campaign**. “For years the #The HALTSolitary confinement campaign has been advocating for the passage of a bill that creates alternative, humane and transformative treatment for people who may need to be separated from the general prison population to address behavioral or other issues. Torture is not the answer to helping people to get better. With a majority of co-sponsors in both the Senate and Assembly and many more legislators committed to voting for the bill, the leadership should not continue to block the bill from being voted on. Pass HALT now!”

“New York’s legislature must not lose sight of the devastation wrought on Black New Yorkers by the full system of mass criminalization and state violence from policing to courts, jails and prisons,” said **Marvin Mayfield, Statewide Organizer at Center for Community Alternatives**. “In our fight to defend Black lives, we demand that they pass the HALT Solitary Confinement Act to end this torture behind bars, pass Elder Parole and Fair and Timely Parole to end death-by-incarceration of Black elders, repeal the “Walking While Trans Ban” to protect Black and brown trans women from harassment by the police, and pass the Protect Our Courts Act to protect Black and brown immigrants from the terror of ICE arrests in and around courthouses. We mourn the death of Kalief Browder, Layleen Polanco, Leonard Carter and all those who have died at the hands of racist state violence behind jail or prison walls. In their names, we commit to the struggle to dismantle the carceral state and build the power of our communities. We call on New York’s legislature to do the same.”

"Imagine walking as a human being, getting stopped and frisked by the police due to identity or the color of your skin and suspected of loitering for the purpose of prostitution, thrown into solitary confinement, or being arrested for being an undocumented immigrant, or being an older person during this epidemic and incarcerated” said **TS Candii lead organizer of the Repeal Walking While Trans Ban Coalition**. New Yorkers have marched, protested, and rallied in support of black lives. It is time for the legislature to pass Free and Timely Parole, the HALT Solitary Confinement Act, the Protect Our Courts Act and to Repeal the Walking While Trans Ban bill. People are dying and we must stand against the violence that killed Layleen Polanco, George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Tony McDade and more. The time to act is now."

“The five bills we are marching for are connected, through systems with shared aims to oppress and control Black and brown communities,” said **Mizue Aizeki, Deputy Director of the Immigrant Defense Project**. “The police departments profile and harass trans people for being

trans, are the same police who put people on ICE's radar. ICE then patrols courthouses to stalk, trap, arrest, and detain immigrants, and coordinates with the prison system to deport people as soon as they are released to go home. Many people are never released because they are effectively sentenced to die in prison, or die due to the torture of solitary confinement. Albany has clear steps it can take to reduce the harms of these systems on people of color by passing 5 bills with strong support in the legislature. Failing to do so is to be complicit in the pain, suffering, and preventable loss of life in communities of color every day."

The march was organized by Release Aging People from Prison Campaign; Center for Community Alternatives; the #HALTsolitary Campaign; Immigrant Defense Project; VOCAL-NY; Make the Road NY; the New York Immigration Coalition; GMHC; Brooklyn Community Bail Fund; Black Youth Project (BYP) 100, and the Walking While Trans Coalition.

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