

2024 Legislative Priorities

Osborne's 2024 legislative priorities advance our vision and mission. We envision a world that invests in healing-centered, community-based responses to harm and law breaking; that is equitable and inclusive, and committed to acknowledging and undoing the current and historical harms of racism; that believes and invests in communities, and treats everyone with dignity and respect.

To achieve this, we work to:

- ▶ Reduce the number of people in jail and prison through pre-trial reforms, expand alternatives to detention and incarceration, close Rikers, and improve the parole process;
- ▶ Enact, protect, and expand policies and practices that maintain relationships while individuals are incarcerated;
- ▶ Improve conditions for those who live in, work in, and visit correctional facilities;
- ▶ Increase reentry housing and reduce reentry barriers.

STATE-LEVEL

Pass the Protect In-Person Visits [Bill](#), S3318/A6488 (Senator Sepulveda/Assemblymember Weprin)

This bill protects in-person visits at State and local correctional facilities, ensuring that video conferencing cannot replace in-person visits—an alarming trend sweeping the country that is encouraged by for-profit companies. The pandemic led to a reliance on video conferencing that set a concerning precedent in New York. Legislation is needed to restore in-person visiting to its pre-pandemic levels and require facilities to offer weekend and/or evening visiting hours so that children and families do not have to miss school or work. The Senate passed this bill the past four years and we urge the Legislature to pass it immediately.

Pass the Fair & Timely Parole [Bill](#), S307/A162 (Senator Salazar/Assemblymember Weprin)

The Fair and Timely Parole Bill requires the State to show that an individual poses a current and unreasonable risk of violating the law and a threat to public safety in order to deny parole release once they have reached their minimum sentence. The bill also requires the New York State Board of Parole to consider all evidence of rehabilitation and, when determining unreasonable risk to public safety, to not solely and primarily rely on the seriousness of the crime, correcting the current injustice of prioritizing the nature of the original crime to determine release.

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STATE-LEVEL *cont.*

Pass the Elder Parole [Bill](#), S2423/A2035 (Senator Hoylman-Sigal/Assemblymember Davila)

The Elder Parole Bill would allow individuals 55 years of age and older who have served 15 years or more a chance to go before the New York State Board of Parole, even though they have not yet reached their minimum sentence or would not otherwise be parole eligible. At great expense to taxpayers and the State, one in four incarcerated individuals is now aged 50 and older, representing a four-fold increase in the past 10 years. Incarcerating older people does not make us safer (recidivism rates for those over 60 for new offenses are close to zero¹) and deprives their community of wisdom, contributions, and leadership.

Pass the NYS Housing Access Voucher [Bill](#), S568 (Senator Kavanagh), which dramatically expands rental assistance at fair market rent levels for those who are unhoused or face an imminent threat of housing instability.

Increase capital and operating funding for transitional and permanent supportive reentry housing and include dedicated funding for the reentry population within larger funding allocations, including and as part of Governor Hochul's [age-friendly NY](#).

FEDERAL-LEVEL

Pass the [FAMILIES Act](#) (Representative Jayapal/Senator Wyden)

The Finding Alternatives to Mass Incarceration: Lives Improved by Ending Separation (FAMILIES) Act would allow federal judges to divert parents and caregivers from incarceration into diversion programs that meet a families' unique needs. It would also establish a diversion program that includes education, employment services, parenting skills, and mental health and substance use services.



Amend HUD's definition of "homeless" or "chronically homeless" to include the time spent incarcerated by people who would otherwise have been unhoused, so they qualify as eligible for government-sponsored supportive housing programs.

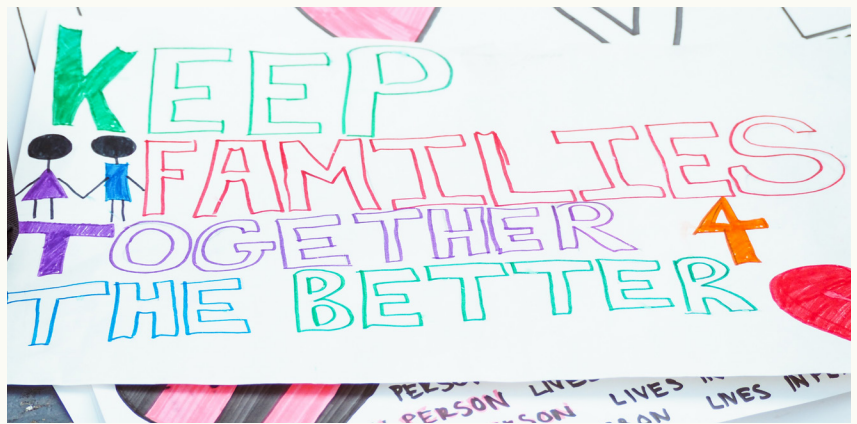
1. Vera Institute of Justice (December 2017), [Aging Out - Using Compassionate Release to Address the Growth of Aging and Infirm Prison Populations](#).



MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION

Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents Policies and Training Statewide

New York State's approximately 575 law enforcement agencies should adopt a written protocol and train all personnel on preventing and minimizing trauma to children who are present when a parent or caregiver is arrested. On June 15, 2023, the Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) issued a new accreditation standard requiring the 168 accredited agencies to adopt a Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents policy. We urge DCJS to ensure that accredited agencies offer substantive training developed with input from an outside entity with expertise in child development and child trauma.



Safeguarding Children of Arrested Parents in NYC

The 2019 NYC law requires the New York City Police Department (NYPD) to develop guidance for officers to minimize trauma to children present at a parent's or caregiver's arrest; to provide training to officers who interact with the public; and to report on referrals made for post-arrest support. To fully implement this law and its intention, we urge the NYPD to:

- ▶ Offer substantive training to all 36,000 uniformed members of service;
- ▶ Implement a long-term sustainable plan for training recruits;
- ▶ Collect data on the number of children present when a parent is arrested;
- ▶ When planning and executing warrants, consider the children present, taking steps to minimize trauma and ideally executing warrants when children are not present.

Fully Staff the Parole Board and Ensure Commissioners have the Tools they Need

The New York State Board of Parole has the authority to seat 19 commissioners, appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the State Senate, for terms of up to 6 years. There are currently 16 commissioners in place, 10 of whom have expired terms, some for as long as 3 or 4 years. The Board of Parole conducted 6,400 parole interviews last year (a dramatic decrease from pre-pandemic numbers), often with only 2 commissioners participating instead of 3 (with tie decisions resulting in denials), and most happening only by video. An antiquated paper and non-digitized parole system makes it additionally difficult to fairly review the applications of the thousands of people who come before the Board of Parole each year. We call on the Governor to fill the 4 vacant seats with individuals who believe in rehabilitation and transformation.



MONITORING IMPLEMENTATION *cont.*

NYC Fair Chance for Housing Act

Passed by the City Council in December 2023 with a veto-proof majority, the **Fair Chance for Housing Act** ([Intro 632](#)) limits landlords and their agents from conducting criminal background checks for those applying for housing and rejecting applicants for housing based on conviction histories.

Banning Solitary Confinement in NYC Jails

Also passed by the City Council in December 2023 with a veto-proof majority, the Ending Solitary Confinement in New York City Jails Act ([Intro 549](#)) bans solitary confinement in NYC jails and replaces it with alternative forms of separation proven to better enhance safety, health, and well-being for all, including establishing standards for the use of restrictive housing and emergency lock-ins.



WE ALSO CALL FOR PASSAGE OF THE FOLLOWING:

- ▶ [Justice Roadmap](#), a legislative agenda endorsed by more than 200 organizations and legislators, which addresses the harms caused by the entangled criminal legal and immigration systems. This includes: **Youth Justice and Opportunities Act**; **Treatment Not Jails**; **Freedom from Forced Labor**; **Voting Rights for Incarcerated People**; **Gender Identity Respect, Dignity and Safety Act**; and **Connecting Families**, among many other important bills.
- ▶ The [Youth Justice Platform](#), including the [Right2RemainSilent](#) Bill.
- ▶ The **Communities Not Cages platform**, which includes the **Eliminate Mandatory Minimums Act**, **Second Look Act**, and the **Earned Time Act**.
- ▶ **CARE ACT**: Care and Reproductive Equity for Mothers and Infants, [A730/S7132](#).
- ▶ NY State **Rights Behind Bars** Bill, [A8364/S7772](#), protects the rights of people in prisons, jails, and forensic facilities; limits the use of cell or segregated confinement; and grants access to tablets, visiting, and certain items.