

Testimony By: James Johnson, DIN: 02A1869
NEW YORK STATE SENATE COMMITTEE ON CRIME, CRIME & CORRECTION
HEARING ON HOW THE ELDER PAROLE AND FAIR & TIMELY PAROLE BILLS
WILL IMPROVE PAROLE RELEASE LAWS AND PUBLIC SAFETY IN NEW YORK
STATE.

I am 47 years old, sentenced 22 years ago to life without parole. I am petitioning for resentencing. My stride towards release is built upon my acceptance of responsibility and my genuine remorse for my actions. The gravity of the anguish I caused cannot be undone. I strive each day for forgiveness through true selflessness and accountability.

I am seeking to bring awareness and support to numerous bills that collectively address all presently incarcerated individuals. Some proposals impact certain incarcerated individuals at a particular time during the course of their incarceration. When you look at the full focus of the criminal justice system specifically, with those who have been sentenced under the discretion of judges and magistrates, many of the reformative bills intertwine collectively. They give a comprehensive view of how we can combat mass incarceration in New York State.

The Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills, and other important pieces of legislation that have been devised by NYS Senators and Assembly Members propose revisions that would allow presently incarcerated individuals to be released based on their exceptional and compelling showing of rehabilitation. I am one of many examples of how and why rehabilitation works. Given the chance, I can show my worth, which is in line with the vision of the lawmakers who seek to understand the application and value of giving a second chance through redemption.

The Elder Parole and Fair & Timely Parole bills, as well as bills that allow for earned good time, re-sentencing applications, sentencing reductions, the repeal of life without parole sentences, and the expansion of sentencing commutations offer second chances to those who are sentenced to virtual life and life without parole sentences, and many others who have changed their lives. This in essence gives all those that have gone to great strides in their rehabilitation, the forum to apply for release, based on their successful accomplishments and preparation to reenter society. It would allow us to give back to the communities many of us once harmed, provide for our families, and improve community safety.

I ask that you please consider the many assets to society that so many of my incarcerated peers and I would provide if only we had a second chance at life. Thank you for the opportunity to testify.

Sincerely,

James Johnson

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