GREEN LIGHT BILL ADVOCACY INSTRUCTIONS

"While there have been reports circulating indicating that Senators Kaplan, Addabo, and Savino are likely to vote in favor of the Green Light bill (reports I do believe are credible) please note that NONE OF THEM HAVE PUBLICLY CONFIRMED THEIR COMMITMENT TO VOTING FOR IT AND THEY HAVE NOT SIGNED ON AS CO-SPONSORS. We need to continue calling all three of them (especially now, since the opposition will likely double down on them) and to support and encourage them to do the right thing. In any case, we continue to be confident that we have the votes we need to pass the bill in the Senate. Our current call to action:

CALL TO ACTION!

1) Contact your senator to ask them to support Green Light and pass the bill this year. Senate switchboard: (518) 455-2800

2) Contact Majority Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins and urge her to bring the bill to a floor vote. (518) 455-2585

3) Contact the Governor and call on him to do everything in his power to ensure Green Light passes this year. (518) 474-8390

Thank you to our Assembly champions for your courage and for passing our bill! We only have a few days left to get it passed, make the call today.

In addition, the Long Island clergy letter is going live tomorrow, but it shouldn't be a problem to update it as we get more signatories over the next few days.

Emma Kreyche

Green Light Campaign

Governor Cuomo’s Charter Amendments will Weaken Bail Reform Statute

Again, as I said in my previous e-mail, send a note to Anne Rabe to stop Governor Cuomo's Effort to Dial back Cash Bail Reform. Here is what Anne said:

Please sign on to the emergency letter below to Governor Cuomo, and separate letters to Speaker Heastie and Senate Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins strongly opposing the Governor’s proposed Chapter amendments which would weaken the landmark Bail Reform statute. Sign on by sending arabe@nysda.org your name, group name and town/city by 9:30 AM tomorrow, Friday, June 14. Sorry for the short turnaround time, but time is of the essence. And, we do not have time to consider edits, but if you see any typos, please send corrections directly to me. Please spread the word to any other groups you think might sign on. We need A LOT of sign ons to make a strong statement. Please do not hit “reply all” if you have any comments or concerns or questions, just reply directly to Anne. Many thanks.

Anne L. Rabe
Below are the letters to Governor Cuomo, Senate Leader Andrea Stewart Cousins and Speaker Carl Heastie. We also urge you to call the Governor, Senate Leader, and Speaker in addition to signing.

Sign on with your name, organization, and town/city by 9:30 AM Friday, June 14th by emailing arabe@nysda.org

Separate letters will be sent to the three leaders. Pg. 1 and 2 is the letter to the Governor. Pg. 3 and 4 is the letter to be sent to the two Legislative Leaders.

The Honorable Andrew M. Cuomo

Governor of the State of New York

Executive Chamber

The Capitol

Albany, NY 12224

Dear Governor Cuomo:

Thank you for your hard work in passing the historic and landmark bail reform law. This week, while advocates, grassroots organizations and public defenders are in Albany making a final push for criminal justice progressive legislation that New Yorkers deserve, you now seek to undo critical, hard-fought reforms to our bail system—before the reforms have even gone into effect. In a clear capitulation to New York City’s Special Narcotics Prosecutor and private corporate interests, you have confidentially sent to the legislative leadership proposed Chapter amendments to the recently passed bail reform statute that would make all people charged with Class AI and AII drug felonies eligible for cash bail and allow private, for-profit companies to provide electronic monitoring. These proposed Chapter amendments undermine the core values motivating bail reform—to end race- and wealth-based detention and to curb the exploitation of Black and Brown bodies for monetary gain. We strongly oppose your attempt to undermine the will of the people of New York, and we urge you to immediately withdraw your proposal.

You, the Speaker, and the Senate Majority Leader, have all publicly acknowledged the inherently discriminatory harms of money bail and the pretrial detention system. To go back and expand the categories of charges that make people eligible for money bail would further entrench these harms. The list of bail-eligible offenses in the newly approved law was intentional—and the intent was to take a much-needed major first step towards ending mass pretrial incarceration. Creating additional bail-eligible charges is counterproductive to this core goal of bail reform and we reject it. Last-minute efforts to roll back bail reform ignore the lessons we learned from the
failed War on Drugs which the Legislature acknowledged when it reformed New York’s disastrous Rockefeller Drug Laws.

Every year, millions of dollars are transferred from the poorest New Yorkers to private interests that capitalize on people in their most vulnerable moments. Bail bond companies, jail phone call providers, and for-profit electronic monitoring companies prey on poor New Yorkers who have no choice but to use their services. That is why advocates and public defenders have long held that private interests have no place in the criminal legal system, and why the bail law explicitly prohibits passing on the costs of pretrial services to the accused and prevents counties from contracting with for-profit companies to provide pretrial services. A business’s main priority is to make money—not to help people. In the context of the criminal legal system, this creates the very worst of perverse incentives. Yet Governor Cuomo wants to allow private companies to have a financial interest in how many people are subjected to electronic monitoring and for how long, which will undoubtedly lead to mass e-carceration in Black and Brown communities—a peril Michelle Alexander calls “The Newest Jim Crow.”

When the pretrial reform package passed as part of the budget bill in April, you and the Legislature took a major step towards creating a fairer criminal legal system for all New Yorkers. That progress did not happen overnight. Legislators, grassroots organizations, impacted communities, public defenders, legal advocates, and concerned citizens have spent years demanding reforms. Now, when the ink is barely dry on those hard-fought advances, you seek to undo the most basic and fundamental aspects of the reform. The bail reform law still leaves many people eligible for detention on money bail. But it was a huge first step in the right direction.

Your proposed Chapter amendments represent a major step backwards. If enacted, it would be a vote to continue, rather than end, our reliance on pretrial detention and all its disastrous consequences, and we call on you to withdraw this damaging proposal immediately.

Please do not undo this major reform and immediately withdraw your dangerous chapter amendments—for justice and for the thousands of victims who will be harmed by your proposed Chapter amendments.

Sincerely,

[Group names listed in alphabetical order]

Name

Group Name

Town/City

The Honorable Andrea Stewart-Cousins

New York State Senate Majority Leader

Legislative Office Building
Dear

Thank you for your hard work in passing the historic and landmark bail reform law. This week, while advocates, grassroots organizations and public defenders are in Albany making a final push for criminal justice progressive legislation that New Yorkers deserve, Governor Cuomo now seeks to undo critical, hard-fought reforms to our bail system—before the reforms have even gone into effect. In a clear capitulation to New York City’s Special Narcotics Prosecutor and private corporate interests, the Governor has confidentially sent you proposed Chapter amendments to the recently passed bail reform statute that would make all people charged with Class AI and AII drug felonies eligible for cash bail and allow private, for-profit companies to provide electronic monitoring. These proposed Chapter amendments undermine the core values motivating bail reform—to end race- and wealth-based detention and to curb the exploitation of Black and Brown bodies for monetary gain. We strongly reject this attempt to undermine the will of the people of New York, and we urge you to reject it too.

You, the Senate Majority Leader, [will change for Senate Maj. Leader letter] and the Governor, have all publicly acknowledged the inherently discriminatory harms of money bail and the pretrial detention system. To go back and expand the categories of charges that make people eligible for money bail would further entrench these harms. The list of bail-eligible offenses in the newly approved law was intentional—and the intent was to take a much-needed major first step towards ending mass pretrial incarceration. Creating additional bail-eligible charges is counterproductive to this core goal of bail reform and we strongly reject it. Last-minute efforts to roll back bail reform ignore the lessons we learned from the failed War on Drugs which the Legislature acknowledged when it reformed New York’s disastrous Rockefeller Drug Laws.

Every year, millions of dollars are transferred from the poorest New Yorkers to private interests that capitalize on people in their most vulnerable moments. Bail bond companies, jail phone call providers, and for-profit electronic monitoring companies prey on poor New Yorkers who have no choice but to use their services. That is why advocates and public defenders have long held that private interests have no place in the criminal legal system, and why the bail law explicitly prohibits passing on the costs of pretrial services to the accused and prevents counties from contracting with for-profit companies to provide pretrial services. A business’s main priority is to make money—not to help people. In the context of the criminal legal system, this creates the very worst of perverse incentives. Yet Governor Cuomo wants to allow private companies to have a financial interest in how many people are subjected to electronic monitoring and for how long, which will undoubtedly lead to mass e-carceration in Black and Brown communities—a peril Michelle Alexander calls “The Newest Jim Crow.”
When the pretrial reform package passed as part of the budget bill in April, you and the Senate Majority Leader [will change for Sen Maj Leader letter] and the Governor took a major step towards creating a fairer criminal legal system for all New Yorkers. That progress did not happen overnight. Legislators, grassroots organizations, impacted communities, public defenders, legal advocates, and concerned citizens have spent years demanding reforms. Now, when the ink is barely dry on those hard-fought advances, the Governor seeks to undo the most basic and fundamental aspects of the reform. The bail reform law still leaves many people eligible for detention on money bail. But it was a huge first step in the right direction.

The Governor’s proposed Chapter amendments represent a major step backwards. If enacted, it would be a vote to continue, rather than end, our reliance on pretrial detention and all its disastrous consequences, and we call on you to reject this damaging proposal immediately.

Please do not allow the Governor to undo this major reform with his dangerous chapter amendments. Please hold the line for justice and for the thousands of victims who will be harmed by his proposal. Thank you.

Sincerely,

[Group names listed in alphabetical order]

Name

Group Name

Town/City

In faith,

Peter Cook

Executive Director

New York State Council of Churches