

July 23, 2020

Katal Weekly Update

Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice

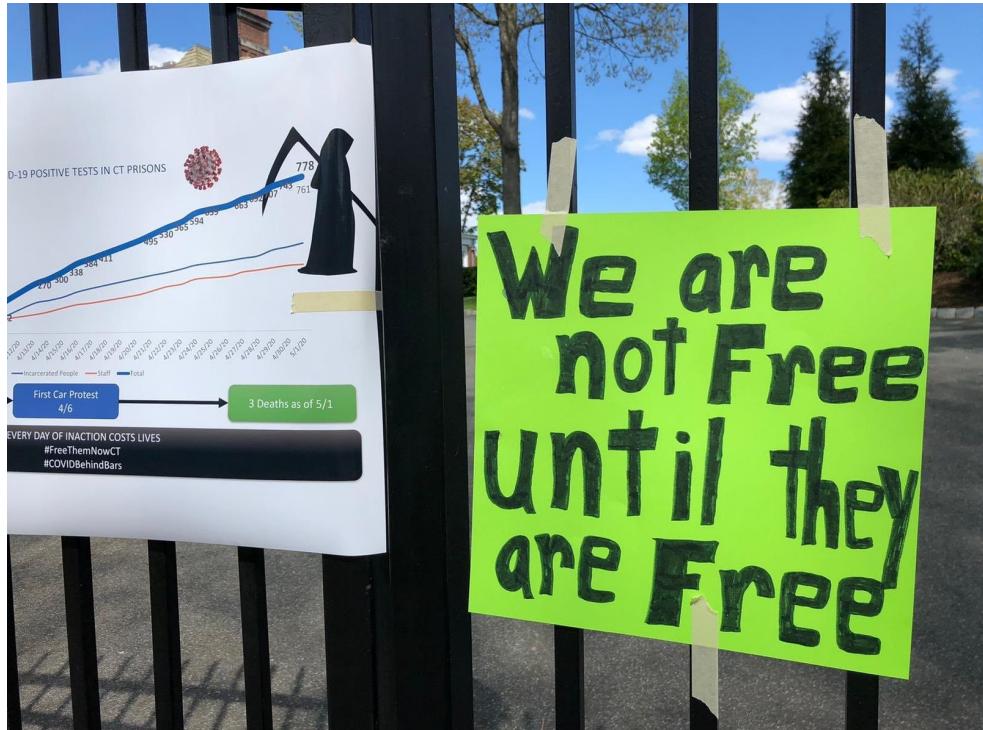


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Special Session Begins in CT, Lawmakers Fail to Include Plan to Address #COVIDBehindBars



Special session began this week in Connecticut, and the general assembly is taking up a number of bills, including, in the wake of protests against the killing of George Floyd and systemic racism, measures for police accountability. But glaringly missing from the agenda is any plan or proposal to address COVID-19 in state prisons and jails. Without addressing this urgent problem, Governor Lamont and the legislature are failing Black constituents. No politician can claim to defend Black lives while allowing our incarcerated loved ones to suffer unnecessarily.

"Making sure somebody gets an extra bar of soap is good, but after they finish washing their hands, what's gonna happen? Their lives are in danger."

- Andre McGuire, a pastor and Katal member

Performative gestures, like declaring racism a public health issue or introducing legislation that has proven to be inadequate in curbing police violence, is woefully insufficient to legitimately dismantle racism and oppression for Black people. This week we released a press statement by Katal members, [featured in the CT Mirror](#), calling for the General Assembly to divest from the carceral system, invest in our communities, and pass laws that concretely support Black lives.

[**Read our full statement at this link.**](#)

CT residents can take action today to demand Gov. Lamont and lawmakers free as many people as possible from jails and prisons across the state to save lives. [Use our action tool](#) to tell lawmakers: We cannot leave people behind during the COVID-19 public health crisis.

Incarcerated people are still your constituents. You must act and the time to decarcerate is now -- #FreeThemNOWCT!

Join us Tuesday, July 28th for our #LessIsMoreNY Info Session: A Conversation on Parole Reform in NYS



This week, lawmakers are back in Albany for a special session where they are taking up several criminal justice bills in their committees. However, many important criminal justice reform bills that community members have been pushing for are not on the agenda for a vote, including our #LessIsMoreNY Act. As more New Yorkers continue to be locked up for minor technical parole violations even as the pandemic rages on, it is imperative that the legislature pass #LessIsMoreNY immediately to save lives.

On Tuesday, July 28 from 5:00-6:00 pm, please join us for a **#LessIsMoreNY Info Session**. During the session, Katal members and staff will share about the #LessIsMoreNY parole reform bill, discuss the next steps to pass the legislation and provide details on how to

take action and get involved. The Info Session is open to all community members, and will be held virtually via Zoom. [**Register for the #LessIsMoreNY Info Session here.**](#)

Here's more updates about #LessIsMoreNY and the Special Session in NYS:

- Last week, Katal along with our partners in **the #LessIsMoreNY campaign issued a press release** calling on the legislature to include the #LessIsMoreNY Act on the agenda for the special session. [**Read the press release here.**](#)
- **TAKE ACTION** for #LessIsMoreNY: The Legislature *must* take up the Less Is More Act in the special session. This week alone community members have sent over 1000 emails to lawmakers demanding passage! Let's keep the pressure on the legislature and Gov. Cuomo to pass this transformative piece of legislation. [**New York residents can join us in taking action here.**](#)
- **Join us for our NYS Monthly Criminal Justice Reform Call Thursday, July 30th from 12-1pm.** We normally reconvene these calls in the fall, however, due to the special session convening in Albany this week, on this call we'll receive a detailed lobbyist report about the session, updates from organizers & advocates working to get bills taken up in this special session and more. [**Register for the call here.**](#)

For more information on #LessIsMoreNY, contact Lead Organizer Kenyatta Thompson at kthompson@katalcenter.org.

Keep practicing social distancing, wear your mask, wash your hands, and check in on your neighbors. If you want to get involved, learn more about our work, or just connect, please don't hesitate to reach out - we're online and on socials via [@katalcenter](#).

**Katal works to strengthen the people, policies, institutions, and movements that advance health, equity, and justice for everyone. Join us: web, Twitter, Facebook! Email:info@katalcenter.org.
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