

October 7, 2021

Katal New York Update

Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice



In this issue:

- **Defending #LessIsMoreNY**
- **Demanding DA's Decarcerate and Stop Requesting Bail**
- **NY Statewide Criminal Justice Reform Call**

#LessIsMoreNY Coalition Rallies at Bridge to Rikers to Confront Union & Defender the Less Is More Act



Katal and our allies today at the action confronting the parole officers union outside Rikers, 10/7/2021

Today, the union representing parole officers in New York held a press conference at Rikers calling for the repeal of the Less is More Act.

So we organized a protest to disrupt it.

The New York State Public Employees Federation (PEF) is actively spreading falsehoods and outright lies about the Less is More Act. The union is pushing to maintain mass incarceration and demanding that even *more* people be incarcerated -- including at

Rikers Island -- even in the midst of an unprecedented crisis where 12 people have died this year alone.

We turned out to confront the union and to say - NO. We are not going backward in New York. With our partners and allies -- including **A Little Piece of Light, Exodus, Good Call, Brotherhood Sister Sol, Queens Defenders**, and more -- we pushed back against the union's fear-mongering and scare tactics.

“I am completely disgusted,” said Katal member **Jasmine Bracy**, who joined the action today. “Our community has been fighting for human rights for all New Yorkers. People should not be punished for the rest of their days when they have served their time and are genuinely trying to come back home. The truth is, politicians and unions alike, are lining their pockets on the backs of our loved ones. We should be using the \$680 million of taxpayer money that is saved through Less Is More NY to fund social programs like housing, and mental health services. Our community will not allow Less Is More NY to be repealed. Our community will not allow another person to die on Rikers Island because of the interest of politicians.”

[Click here to see the full press release](#) from today's protest. To see pictures, check out our [Twitter posts](#) and for videos go to [our Instagram](#).

To learn more about the fight to defend and fully implement #LessIsMoreNY, [sign up to receive our updates and alerts about the bill](#).

If you have any questions about the #LessIsMoreNY Campaign Update call, please contact Melanie Dominguez at Melanie@katalcenter.org.

Decarcerate Rikers - Holding DA's Accountable



Katal member Henry Robinson speaking at Press Conference outside of Manhattan DA's Office on Wednesday 10/6/2021

On Wednesday, we joined community groups, public defenders, and elected officials for a press conference to call on District Attorney's to stop seeking unaffordable cash bail. This practice is one of the main drivers of the ongoing humanitarian crisis at the Rikers Island jail complex. This year, 12 people have died in DOC custody alone, due to the dilapidation and degradation of conditions on Rikers Island. This crisis on Rikers is spurred by the exploiting jail population on Rikers, from a low of 3,800 in April 2020 to over 6,00 last month. A majority of people on Rikers are there pretrial. All these individuals could be free and in the community, while their case is going on if not for the unaffordable cash that the District Attorney's requested and judges set. Here is our member Henry's statement from the press conference:

“Growing up there were many kids in my home and we didn't have any money to spare. So when I found myself behind bars because of the conditions in which I grew up in and the lack of access to mental health, I always felt stuck. In 2005, I was sent to Rikers with a bail of \$250,000 dollars. Another time my bail was \$75,000. I couldn't post bail either of those times and spent months at Rikers Island in the horrible conditions that we still see to this day. While at Rikers, I did not receive the proper medical attention I needed. I did not receive adequate

access to mental health. It is unreasonable that NYC District Attorney's subject people to unaffordable bail but this is the reality we live in. 12 people have passed away at Rikers this year alone and this should be enough of a reason for the DA's to stop sending people to Rikers and end pre-trial detention. It is time to decarcerate and close the Rikers Island Jail Complex once and for all!"

To learn more about the press conference [click here](#) and go to [Katal's Instagram](#) to see a video of the event.

Join us for the next NY Statewide Criminal Justice Reform Call



We're one week away from our October [NY Statewide Criminal Justice Reform Call!](#) If you're interested in learning more about what's happening with criminal justice reform in New York, then you don't want to miss this call. Every month we're joined by organizers, advocates, and community members working on every aspect of criminal

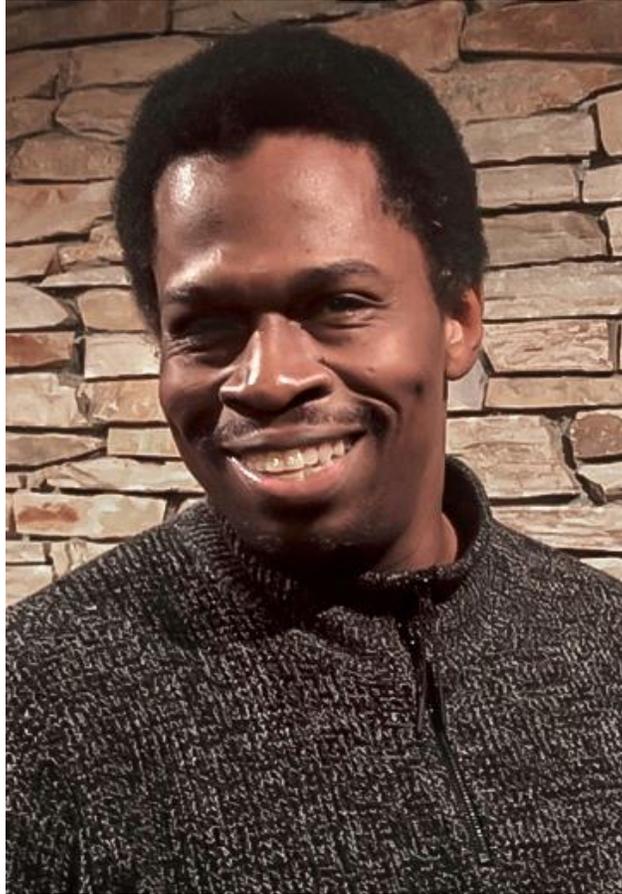
justice reform in the state -- and each call starts with an insider report from the lobbyist, about what's happening behind the scenes. [Register here to join us on Thursday, October 14 from 12:00 p.m. - 1:00 p.m.](#)

We hold these calls on the second Thursday of every month. The goals of the NY Statewide Criminal Justice Reform Call are to:

- **Highlight** issues, campaigns, and projects that groups are working on to advance statewide reform;
- **Identify** ways to align, coordinate, and support each other in the work to end mass incarceration in Connecticut;
- **Strengthen** community organizing and advocacy organizations to build movement in Connecticut.

If you have any questions about the statewide call or would like to be a presenter, call, please contact Yonah at yonah@katalcenter.org.

Happy 50th Birthday Lorenzo Jones



Our Co-Founder and Co-Executive Director Lorenzo Jones turns 50 today! We are grateful for his leadership, humor, and most importantly his commitment to developing people, particularly Black and brown women organizers.

Check out these wonderful birthday shout-outs from our [Community Organizer, Melanie Dominguez](#), and our [Director of Organizing, Kenyatta Muzzanni](#). Please join us in showing Lorenzo with love! You can respond to this email, tag Lorenzo on Facebook or Twitter, or [consider making a contribution in his honor to support our work!](#)

Katal Quotes of the Week

These are some of the quotes we're thinking about this week.

"There is no tactical theory so neat that a revolutionary struggle for a share of power can be won merely by pressing a row of buttons. Human beings with all their faults and strengths constitute the mechanism of a social movement. They must make mistakes

and learn from them, make more mistakes and learn anew." --**Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.**

"Organizations are not movements. But organizations can institutionalize and legalize the gains won through disruptive mobilization." --**Frances Fox Piven**

Sign up for the Katal Connecticut Update

Interested to receive updates about our work in Connecticut? [Click here to sign up for the Katal Connecticut Update!](#)

Be safe as possible out there, and get vaccinated as soon as you can. If you want to get involved, learn more about our work, or just connect, please don't hesitate to reach out.

**Katal works to strengthen the people, policies, institutions, and movements that advance equity, health, and justice. Join us: web, Twitter, Facebook!
Email: info@katalcenter.org. Phone: 646.875.8822.**