

CURE-NY

The New York Chapter of National CURE

Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

PO Box 182

Hopewell Junction, NY 12533

Return Service Requested

We are currently doing our annual membership drive and are asking al current members to send in their

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Summer/Fall 2017 Newsletter

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IN MEMORY OF ANGELA JACKSON

There are people who come into your life for a reason. When you first meet you are drawn to that person and you know that there are certain bonds, common interests and goals that you share.

When I first met Angela Jackson in the visiting room of Green Haven Correctional Facility, that is how I felt.

I felt that this woman would be a life long friend and that she has so much to offer CURE-NY. Losing her was devastating to me as much as if I had known her my entire life. She was my right hand, my left hand and

someone I admired for all she had accomplished in her short lifetime.

She was taken from us, her husband Jeff and her family all too soon.

As I write this tribute to my friend and my vice-president of CURE-NY, it is hard to find the words to explain how Flo Martinez, secretary/treasurer of CURE-NY and myself miss her in so many ways. We miss our meetings regarding CURE-NY when we so desperately knew that we needed to keep this organization relevant. We miss our dinners after working on the newsletter, folding, tabbing, labeling and stamping, as we talked of our struggles as family members of loved ones incarcerated and finding hope in each other that we can and would make a difference. We always found time to laugh, make plans and truly enjoy our time well spent.

The tears I've cried do not honor Angela as much as simply saying that I am the one who was and is honored to know her, to spend time with her and to be fortunate enough to have her in my life.

We miss you Angela, we will always miss you. A stronger woman I may never know. I hope you know how much you mean to Flo and I. You will remain in our hearts and thoughts forever.

Till we meet again, my friend.

With Love and Respect

Deb Bozydaj

NEW YORK STATE'S BROKEN PAROLE SYSTEM



In an article recently published on June 5, 2017 in the Village Voice and written by Victoria Law she examines the fact that New York's Parole System Is 'Broken,' but Governor Cuomo Can Help Fix It.

Parole denials based on the nature of the crime are so common that critics have called the parole system "broken."

In the case of Judith Clark, considered a model prisoner, she spent 35 years in Bedford Hills maximum-security prison creating and working on many programs including AIDS counseling, college education and parenting.

Governor Andrew Cuomo felt that the 67-year-old had changed drastically from the 32-year-old who, in 1981, acted as the getaway driver in a Brink's armored car robbery in which a guard and two police officers were killed in Rockland County. She was convicted and sentenced to 75 years to life in prison, and she would not have been eligible for parole until she turned 106 if not for Cuomo commuting her sentence in 2016.

The parole board unanimously denied Clark's request for parole in April, after interviewing her for seven hours over a two-day period.

"We do find that your release at this time is incompatible with the welfare of society as expressed by relevant officials and thousands of its members.

Laura Whitehorn, a formerly incarcerated woman and organizer for the RAPP campaign stated in this article "People think of parole as early release," It's not. It's release after your minimum term is up. If you have a sentence of 25 to life, 25 is the minimum you have to do. Parole doesn't mean you get out early."

Parole board members are appointed by the governor and must be confirmed by the NYS Senate Standing Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correction, the current chairman being Patrick Gallivan, a former commissioner himself who was opposed to Clark's release and collected signatures against her release on his website.

Parole Commissioners serve an unlimited number of six-year terms, must be reappointed and reconfirmed with their qualifications being a college degree and five years' experience in criminal justice, sociology, law, social work, or medicine. The annual salary is over \$100,000.

There are currently twelve commissioners on the parole board but there can be up to nineteen. Four commissioners, three that were appointed by Governor Pataki will have terms ending this summer, with one currently in a "holdover" whose term has ended and is expired but still makes parole decisions.

Candidates are currently being interviewed by Governor Cuomo's office and must be confirmed before June 21.

Average parole hearings last fifteen minutes according to Robert Dennison, a former commissioner and he also states that by law, commissioners must consider not only the crime, but factors such as participation in rehabilitative programs, release plans, and the risk of recidivism. In reality, Dennison said, commissioners feel pressured to deny release to those convicted in the deaths of police officers or other high-profile cases.

Often commissioners are intimidated by other commissioners and he thinks that political pressure “occasionally” plays a role in parole denials.

After John Mackenzie’s tenth parole denial at 70 years old and 41 years in prison those denials led to his despair and ultimately his death by suicide.

Last year in June of 2016, Governor Cuomo nominated five new commissioners, but the senate committee never held their confirmation hearings. Now he can appoint seven new people with more commissioners terms nearing expiration.

On June 6, 2017 there was a call to action to make phone calls to Governor Cuomo and Senator Jamaal Bailey, the ranking member of the Senate Committee that confirms commissioners, demanding not to re-appoint Commissioners William Smith, James Ferguson, G. Kevin Ludlow, Julie Smith and Otis Cruse, the most punitive commissioners whose terms are set to expire, three of whom were appointed in the Pataki era and have handed down unjust decisions for decades. They have been on the board too long and it is time to end the era of excessive punishment and appoint a racially, geographically, and professionally diverse board! Let us hope our voices have been heard.

Deb Bozydaj, President CURE-NY

Robert Gangi Announces Candidacy for Mayor of New York

Robert Gangi has spent much of his life as an advocate for liberal policies on prisons and the police and is offering an unusual challenge to Mayor de Blasio.

Bob Gangi served as Executive Director of the Correctional Association (CA) of New York for 29 years. Concerned about the incidence of abusive and discriminatory policing, he co-founded the Police Reform Organizing Project (PROP) in 2011.



For over 50 years Gangi has been an activist, community organizer, and public policy advocate in New York City. He is a recognized expert on criminal justice and law enforcement issues with a particular focus on police and prison concerns.

Gangi was the 2012 recipient of the American Ethical Union's prestigious Elliott-Black Award, acknowledging his dedication to the rights of vulnerable people in the criminal justice system. Below is Robert Gangi's platform on his run for mayor of New York City.

"A deep & wide racial caste system persists in our city. It undermines the quality of life for all NYers, but especially for low-income residents of color. Government policies under Bill deBlasio have done little to relieve this harsh reality; in fact, in some ways, his policies have reinforced it."

Here are just some relevant facts supporting my points:

- ** NYC schools are the 3rd most segregated public education system in the country.
- ** Nearly three out of four black students in New York City attend intensely segregated schools, where less than 10% of children are white.
- ** Black, Latino and low-income students are far more likely than white and middle class children to go to schools with crumbling facilities, lower-paid teachers, high suspension rates and metal detectors.
- ** About 90% of the city's more than 60,000 homeless people are African-American & Latino.
- ** About 90% of the incarcerated population on Rikers Island is African-American & Latino.
- ** Under the NYPD's "broken windows" practices, over 85% of misdemeanor arrests involve NYers of color.
- ** 94.9% of juvenile arrests in NYC involve African-American or Latino young people.
- ** About 92% of fare evasion arrests, the 2nd most common NYPD arrest & an arrest that criminalizes

poverty, involve NYers of color.

** About 90% of NYPD marijuana possession arrests involve NYers of color, despite research showing that white people use & sell the drug in equal or greater proportions to African/Americans & Latinos.

Our campaign promises to take specific steps to plunge a dagger into the dark heart of the racial caste beast. We will:

** End "broken windows" policing & focus our officers on addressing serious felonies

** Reduce the city's incarcerated population & close the jails on Rikers Island next year

** Work directly & primarily with experienced community-based groups to renovate, build, & maintain new housing that is truly affordable for the families living in the neighborhoods where the housing is being built

** Initiate an aggressive plan to have small classes in schools throughout the city & to integrate student bodies

** Provide free fares for low-income NYers using our subways & buses

Through these & related measures, & with your help, we will end the biases & injustices that have inflicted daily harm & hardship on low-income NYers of color for far too long --a terrible human cost that de Blasio's government has mostly ignored or aggravated. With your help, we will create a better city for all NYers, a more affordable, safe, fair, & inclusive city.

Please feel free to have your loved ones contact Bob Gangi with questions/comments/suggestions.

Onward,

Bob Gangi

Mayoral Candidate

168 West 86th Street

NYC, NY 10024

Oppose Assembly Bill A2350A: Lorraine's Law

In February of 2017 members of the victim's rights community and other victim advocates gave a presentation to the NYS Board of Parole. During this presentation Danielle Sered, the Director of the Vera Institute's Common Justice Program, Leading Victim's Rights Advocate and Member of the Downstate Coalition for Crime Victims discussed the importance of reframing our concept of "victims" and those who commit harm. She explained the likelihood that every person who has caused violence has, at some point been a victim of violence. She encouraged the Parole Board members to recognize that victims and those who harm them are often seeking the same thing: Safety and Justice.

A majority of crime victims and survivors want rehabilitative reform. 2 in 1 victims prefer a criminal justice system that will focus more on rehabilitating people rather than punishing them. 6 in 10 victims prefer shorter prison sentences and more spending on prevention and rehabilitation

Although some families may want retribution and long term prison sentences, the majority, including those who have lost loved ones to homicide, want shorter sentences with a greater focus on rehabilitation and accountability. Crime victim's Advocates want to expand Parole, not reduce it.

Danielle Sered calls for expanded use of parole and good time to give incentive to incarcerated individuals who are engaging in transforming themselves. Lorraine's Law does just the opposite, by reducing parole release and the incentive to work towards it. The impact of this will increase the lengthy sentences of New York State's longest serving people guaranteeing that they will grow old and die in prison which is tragic for the incarcerated individual, their children, families and communities and all that would benefit from their contributions to society.

Assembly Member Thiele (D) is leading legislation with bi-partisan support that is rapidly moving through the legislature. "Lorraine's Law," named for a victim of homicide, increases the time between Parole Board hearings from 2 years to up to 5 years for the roughly 6,000 people convicted of the most serious crimes (Murder 1 and 2 and Aggravated Murder). Lorraine's Law will not bring healing, but will expand the prison population. If this policy initiative were truly about victims, then these legislators would seek to reform the procedure by which victims testify before the Parole Board.

UPDATE ON LORRAINE'S LAW AS OF 6/20/17

Lorraine's Law was narrowly defeated due to the efforts of criminal justice advocates, although this bill will be on the agenda in the next legislative session beginning in January of 2018 so the pressure must be kept on our legislators. Please advise your family members to continue calling, writing, emailing their legislators in opposition to this devastating bill.





"Simple beauties among the struggle"

Having a spouse or loved one, who is incarcerated can be all consuming at times, but I would like to remind you of the importance of seeing the beauty in simple things as you interface with the New York State prison system. Though, the system appears rigid and oppressive, there are opportunities to find fulfillment and joy as you interact with your loved ones, other families and even staff at these facilities. Attending Festivals, participating in Family Reunion visits/program, making visits on visiting floors - are all opportunities to reflect and smile. Beauties & joys in life can be experienced by - looking at fish in the ponds at Otisville CF; feeling the grass between your toes on "trailer visits " & festivals with your husband/family members or observing the dignify ways in which the men, who are incarcerated conduct themselves as they serve meals to families (and play music). This is further evident in the officers, who take the time to learn your name or those who, fully listen as you address your concerns. Yes, there is simple beauty and humanity in all of us, which brighten our day and ease the stress of not having our loved ones home. All acts of kindness matter. They are the moments that make our hearts sing.

Respectfully, A. Petersen, CURE-NY Board Member



Successful CURE Conference in Costa Rica

On April 25-29, 2017 close to fifty CURE representatives from fourteen different countries convened at the Courtyard Marriott San Jose Airport Alajuela, Costa Rica for the 7th International CURE Conference on Human Rights and Prison Reform. For three days conference delegates shared with each other their widely varied experiences in panel on subjects from Restorative Justice, Restorative treatment programs and Family and Children issues to Medical programs, Human Rights and Reentry concerns. The high point of the conference was a moving visit to a Female Correctional Facility originally called "The Good Shepherd" in the outskirts of Costa Rica with 480 women.

CURE goes to Rwanda

The 8th International CURE conference is scheduled for the city of Kigali in the African Republic of Rwanda, May 21-25, 2018. Rwanda is recognized globally for its victim/offender reconciliation efforts implemented to heal some of the scars of the racial genocide in the nineties.



CURE International at the United Nations

In February of this year Cure together with the International Prison Chaplains Association was invited to host a Side event at the UN New York headquarter on the subject of the Poverty and Imprisonment relationship. The panel included speakers from John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Fordham University, New York Theological Seminary and Charles Sullivan of CURE International. About 70 invited guest joined the event.

Hans Hallundbaek, CURE-NY Auxiliary Board Advisor

