

To the New York State Legislature:

For years, New York has been complicit in the incarceration of immigrants, resulting in the separation of families and terrorizing of communities. Our state must stop its collaboration with ICE and pass the [Dignity Not Detention Act](#) to end immigration detention contracts between ICE and county jails, correctional facilities & all government facilities across the state.

The undersigned organizations support passage of this Act as a critical step toward ending immigration detention in New York State and nationwide. If passed, the bill would prohibit localities within New York State from entering into new or expanding existing contracts with the federal government for the purposes of immigration detention and require localities with existing contracts to execute their termination clauses - getting New York out of the business of immigration detention.

The facilities currently used to detain immigrants in New York state include Orange County Correctional Facility, Clinton Correctional Facility, Rensselaer County Correctional Facility, and Chautauqua County Jail, in addition to the Buffalo Federal Detention Center. However, there are 76 jails, detention centers, and other facilities across New York State where ICE is permitted to detain immigrants. In September 2019, the daily detention average in New York immigration detention facilities was 826 people. As of May 2021, the daily average has dropped to 327 immigrants.

In October 2020, [ICE issued a Request for Information](#) seeking to add detention sites in New York within a 60-mile radius of the ICE New York City Field Office. As more vaccines are distributed, and as the COVID-19 pandemic subsides, it is critical that we act now to prevent large-scale ICE enforcement operations in our state. As long as immigration enforcement continues, ICE will seek to expand its detention apparatus within New York.

While conditions in immigration detention have always been inhumane, the COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated the dangers of ICE detention, as well as within the incarceration system more broadly. As of March 17, 2021, ICE has reported 10,131 positive cases among detained people out of a total of 113,297 individuals who had been tested. 2020 was the deadliest year in ICE detention since 2005, with 21 confirmed deaths in custody, eight from COVID-19. However, advocates fear that the true death toll from COVID-19 in detention is higher than publicly reported. This is due to absence of information on the fate of people who contracted the virus in detention and were then deported or released while very ill.

People held in ICE detention in New York state report widespread failure by facility staff to adhere to basic public health protocols. People detained at Orange County Jail reported that guards frequently did not wear gloves or masks, and that they have inadequate access to hygienic materials, like soap and clean water. At the same time, ICE and jails have created quarantine protocols that not only limit access to legal resources and visits from friends and family, but that also keep people locked in cells for 23.5 hours a day — essentially solitary confinement. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, people held in ICE detention in New York

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systematically raised concerns about rotten food, lack of heat, and medical neglect - conditions which have persisted throughout the pandemic. Such conditions are endemic to incarceration and detention facilities.

Despite President Biden's promises to make fundamental changes to federal immigration policy and reduce detentions and deportations, immigration enforcement continues across the country, including in New York State. [As of May 20, 2021](#), the Biden Administration has deported & expelled 484,962 people since taking office, and will likely continue mass detention and deportations. Absent federal action, local communities and state governments must step up to curtail the targeting, criminalization, and abuse of immigrants.

In many ways, New York is a leader in protecting and defending immigrants' rights. However, we are falling behind on the issue of ICE detention contracts. Legislation to end ICE contracts has passed in California ([SB 29, AB 103](#)), Washington ([SB 5497](#)), and Illinois ([HB 2040](#)). A similar bill has now passed in Maryland ([SB 478](#)) and another was recently introduced in New Jersey ([A5207](#)). These state initiatives are accompanied by calls from federal law makers for the Biden administration to use executive authorities to terminate ICE contracts with private prison companies as well as states and localities. It is past time for New York to join the movement to end immigration detention.

Assembly Member Karines Reyes (AD-87) and State Senator Julia Salazar (SD-18) are introducing the Dignity Not Detention Act to prohibit New York governmental entities from entering into or renewing, immigration detention contracts, and require them to end existing detention contracts with ICE.

We, the undersigned organizations, urge the New York State legislature to pass the Dignity Not Detention Act, and end immigration detention contracts between ICE and New York county jails, correctional facilities & all government facilities across the state. We urge you to vote in favor of the Dignity Not Detention Act.

Sincerely,

#IamNegrx - Troy, New York
Abolish ICE New York-New Jersey
Appellate Advocates - NYC
Association of Legal Aid Attorneys - UAW Local 2325 - NYC
Bend the Arc: Jewish Action Long Island - Long Island
Brandworkers - NYC
Brooklyn Community Bail Fund - Brooklyn
Brooklyn Community Pride Center - Brooklyn
Brooklyn Defenders Services - Brooklyn
Campaign for Alternatives to Isolated Confinement (CAIC) - New York State
Catholic Migration Services - NYC

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Center for Constitutional Rights - NYC
Center for Popular Democracy - NY and National
Central American Legal Assistance - Brooklyn
Centro Corona - Corona, Queens
Centro Legal de la Raza
Columbia County Sanctuary Movement - NY's Capital Region (Columbia County)
Cornell Law School Asylum and Convention Against Torture Appellate Clinic - Ithaca
Critical Resistance - NYC, Oakland, Los Angeles, and Portland
Decolonize This Place - NYC
Desis Rising Up & Moving (DRUM) - NYC
Emerald Isle Immigration Center - Woodside, Queens
Families for Freedom - NYC
FLX Rapid Response Network - Geneva
Freedom For Immigrants - National and New York
GOSO - Getting Out & Staying Out - NYC
Grace! An Episcopal Mission - Lyons
Granny Peace Brigade - NYC
Greece Ubuntu - Rochester
Haltsolitary - NYC
Human Impact Partners (HIP) - National with headquarters in Oakland, CA
Immigration Advocates Network - National
Incarcerated Nation Network- NYC
Ithaca Democratic Socialists of America - Ithaca
Justice for Migrant Families WNY - Western New York
Justice Strategies - Brooklyn, NY
LatinoJustice PRLDEF - NYC, & Long Islan
Legal Action Center - NYC
Legal Services Staff Association, NOLSW/UAW 2320- NYC
Long Island Social Justice Action Network - Long Island
Mixteca Organization, Inc. - NYC
MPower Change - NYC
National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum (NAPAWF) NYC - New York
New Immigrant Community Empowerment - Queens
New Sanctuary Coalition - NYC
New York Lawyers for the Public Interest (NYLPI) - NYC
New York Legal Assistance Group (NYLAG)- NYC
New York State Youth Leadership Council (NYSYLC) - NYC
Nobody Leaves Mid-Hudson - Hudson Valley
NYC Democratic Socialists of America - NYC
NYU Law Immigrant Rights Clinic - NYC
Papeles Para Todos - NYC
Port Chester Immigrant Defense (PCID) - Westchester
Prison Families Anonymous - Long Island
Progressive Doctors - National

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Queer Detainee Empowerment Project- NYC
Rapid Defense Network (RDN)- NYC
Release Aging People in Prison/RAPP - New York State
Revolutionizing Asian American Immigrant Stories on the East Coast (RAISE)- NYC
Ridgewood Tenants Union - Ridgewood, Queens
Rochester Rapid Response Network - Rochester, NY and surrounding areas
Rural & Migrant Ministry - Cornwall On Hudson
Safe Horizon - New York
Sanctuary Troy Campaign - Troy
Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) NYC - NYC
Street Vendor Project, Urban Justice Center - NYC
Suffolk County Legal Aid Attorneys Association - Suffolk County
SURJ Westchester - Westchester County
Survived & Punished New York - New York
Survivors of the System - NYC
The Bronx Defenders - Bronx, NY
The Bronx Defenders Union - Bronx
The Legal Aid Society - NYC
The Policing and Social Justice Project at Brooklyn College - Brooklyn
Tompkins County Immigrant Rights Coalition - Ithaca
Troy Sanctuary Campaign - Troy
UnLocal, Inc. - NYC
Worker's Justice Project - Brooklyn
Workers Center of Central New York - Syracuse

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