



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **NEW POLL FROM NEW YORKERS UNITED FOR JUSTICE AND HARRISX FINDS SWEEPING SUPPORT FOR CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM ACROSS NEW YORK**

*Elimination of Cash Bail, Access to Speedy Trial,  
Discovery Reform, Parole Reform and  
Expungement of Low-Level, Non-Violent Offenses  
Popular Among Democrats, Republicans, And Independents*

*Support for These Reforms Cuts Across Cities, Rural NY –  
and the Suburban Electoral Battleground*

*NYUJ Launched Major Initiatives on Further Reforms  
Including Clemency This Month*

**(NEW YORK)** – As New York leaders look to rebuild the state’s criminal justice system into a model of safety and fairness, [New Yorkers United for Justice](#) (NYUJ) and HarrisX today revealed the findings of a first-ever statewide poll showing New York voters strongly approve of criminal justice reform (see end of memo for full question wording). From the suburbs of Long Island to metro and rural communities across the state, a supermajority of New Yorkers expresses support for the right to a speedy trial (**82 percent**), discovery reform (**77 percent**), eliminating cash bail (**66 percent**) - all reforms passed this year by the New York State Legislature. Additionally, the survey shows strong support for the expungement of low-level offenses (**74 percent**). This past July, the state enacted expungement for marijuana possession.

Led by Khalil A. Cumberbatch and Topeka K. Sam, two formerly incarcerated New Yorkers, New Yorkers United for Justice is a statewide, bipartisan coalition of local and national groups advocating for necessary fixes to a flawed system. The group was a major driver behind pre-trial

and sentencing reforms enacted earlier this year, launching a nearly \$1 million public education effort in the New York City suburbs.

In the upcoming legislative session, New Yorkers United for Justice will prioritize comprehensive parole reform and automatic record sealing and expungement, among other ongoing criminal justice reforms. A full **68 percent** of New Yorkers approve of key parole reforms, specifically allowing hearings before reincarceration for technical violations and shortening the length of supervision terms for demonstrated good behavior (both have **68 percent** support). In addition, an overwhelming **74 percent** of New Yorkers support “clean slate” policies that allow for the sealing or expungement of criminal records for low-level, non-violent offenders after they have served their sentences and remained crime free for a period of time.

“Criminal justice reform is overwhelmingly popular across the state,” said **New Yorkers United for Justice Chief Strategist Khalil A. Cumberbatch**. “We hope legislators take note of this support, as shown by our poll, and continue to enact smart policies like parole reform and ‘clean slate’ to add to pretrial and sentencing reforms already passed. Advocates will continue to fight to protect our progress and push for further changes— knowing that a majority of voters are on our side. Also, we are encouraged that our internal polling strongly suggests over two-thirds of voters have comfort with steps around clemency when used in exceptional cases or after thorough vetting.”

NYUJ has launched a [major push](#) to encourage Governor Cuomo to enhance use of executive clemency powers.

“Our coalition is built upon the reality that criminal justice reform is a statewide issue,” said **New Yorkers United for Justice senior advisor Topeka K. Sam**. “This poll confirms that voters of every political background, from the suburbs to the cities, support criminal justice reform and are more likely to support elected officials who do as well. We’ve taken historic steps to address the injustices in our system this year. We are here for the long haul and we must continue to pass reforms to make our state safer and more just next session.”

Registered voters also voiced support for both past and future reforms regardless of party or geographic area.

#### **Support for Criminal Justice Reforms: by Party Support**

- **Right to a Speedy Trial:** 84 percent of Democratic voters, 83 percent of Republican voters, and 77 percent of undecided voters
- **Discovery Reform:** 81 percent of Democratic voters, 76 percent of Republican voters, and 68 percent of undecided voters
- **Ending Cash Bail:** 75 percent of Democratic voters, 56 percent of Republican voters, and 57 percent of undecided voters
- **Expungement/Sealing Record for Low-Level Offenses:** 83 percent Democratic voters, 63 percent Republican voters, and 63 percent of undecided voters

- **Hearing for Technical Parole Violations:** 73 percent Democratic voters, 62 percent Republican voters, and 62 percent undecided voters
- **Revised Parole/Probation Terms:** 75 percent Democratic voters, 57 percent Republican voters, and 60 percent undecided voters

#### **Support for Criminal Justice Reforms: by Region**

- **Right to a Speedy Trial:** 82 percent New York City, 79 percent Long Island, 84 percent Northern Suburbs, 84 percent Upstate New York.
- **Discovery Reform:** 79 percent New York City, 67 percent Long Island, 79 percent Northern Suburbs, 78 percent Upstate New York.
- **Ending Cash Bail:** 68 percent New York City, 69 percent Long Island, 70 percent Northern Suburbs, 63 percent Upstate New York.
- **Expungement/Sealing Record for Low-Level Offenses:** 76 percent New York City, 70 percent Long Island, 73 percent Northern Suburbs, 72 percent Upstate New York.
- **Hearing for Technical Parole Violations:** 74 percent New York City, 68 percent Long Island, 58 percent Northern Suburbs, 64 percent Upstate New York.
- **Revised Parole/Probation Terms:** 71 percent New York City, 68 percent Long Island, 71 percent Northern Suburbs, 63 percent Upstate New York.

This survey was conducted online and via phone (landline and cell) within the state of New York from August 23-28, 2019 among 1,358 New York registered voters by HarrisX. The sampling margin of error of this poll is plus or minus 2.66 percentage points. This includes an oversample of 601 voters from Long Island. The results reflect a representative sample of New York registered voters. Results were weighted for age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, education, and political party where necessary to align them with their actual proportions in the population. For crosstabs of the poll, commissioned by New Yorkers United for Justice and implemented by the HarrisX poll, please contact Melissa Mansfield ([mmansfield@skdknick.com](mailto:mmansfield@skdknick.com)).

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#### **About HarrisX:**

HarrisX is a leading opinion research company that specializes in online polling, mixed-mode polling, and data analytics. The company has a thirteen-year history assessing public opinion and behavior in the telecom, media, and technology industries through syndicated and custom research services. HarrisX runs the Mobile Insights and Total Communication Surveys, the largest syndicated consumer insights trackers in the United States for the TMT space, which include over 60,000 monthly respondents; the Telephia (beta) metering application, which captures behavioral data; and HarrisX Overnight Poll, which delivers results of general population and voter surveys within 24 hours, looking at Americans' opinions on society, politics, technology and the economy. For more information visit: [www.harrisx.com](http://www.harrisx.com).

#### **Full Question Wording on Tested Reforms:**

*Below are some examples of reforms to the criminal justice system passed by the New York state legislature. Please indicate how much you support or oppose each proposal.*

- *[wording for —Discovery Reform\] Require prosecutors to share evidence gathering with the defense no later than 15 days after an indictment, but judges can withhold some evidence if there is a risk of witness intimidation.*
- *[wording for —Right to Speedy Trial\] Require that trials for misdemeanors are resolved in 90 days and felony charges are resolved in 180 days, unless prosecutors have a compelling reason to delay.*
- *[wording for —Ending Cash Bail\] Eliminate cash bail and jailing before trial for people charged with misdemeanors or nonviolent felonies—but leave some exceptions for judges to detain or use bail for obstruction, contempt of court, and charges connected to other cases with violent felonies.*

*Below are some proposals that could be considered by the New York State Legislature to address the criminal justice system in New York. Please indicate how much you support or oppose each proposal.*

- *[wording for —Revised Parole/Probation Terms\] Allow people on parole or probation the chance for revised sentences because of demonstrated good behavior, determined by input from corrections officials and parole/probation officers.*
- *[wording for —Hearing for Technical Parole Violations\] Require a hearing on a technical parole or probation violation before determining whether to incarcerate for a violation.*

*[wording for —Expungement/Sealing Record for Low-Level Offenses\] Seal or expunge criminal records for low-level, non-violent offenders after they have served their sentences and remained crime free for a period of time*