



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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For more information contact: Melissa Mansfield mmansfield@skdknick.com

AS NJ & PA GOVERNORS ANNOUNCE EMERGENCY PROTECTIONS FOR PRISON POPULATIONS, NEW YORK ADVOCATES REDOUBLE CALL ON GOVERNOR CUOMO TO IMMEDIATELY RELEASE A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN TO PROTECT NY'S CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM IN MIDST OF PANDEMIC

New Yorkers United for Justice Has Called on Gov. Cuomo for Four Weeks to Produce & Implement a 360-Degree Plan – as Infections Spread Throughout the System

(New York, NY) Please credit the following statement to Khalil A. Cumberbatch, Chief Strategist, New Yorkers United for Justice, and a formerly incarcerated New Yorker:

“Today, in two neighboring states, Governors Murphy and Wolf have announced that they’ll swiftly implement solutions to safely reduce the prison population as COVID-19 starts to ravage the criminal justice system. Both governors are moving quickly to remove the elderly, ill and people who pose no threat to public safety from facilities into expanded home detention. We can do that here in New York – the question is – why aren’t we?

“I know from personal experience that you can’t socially distance inside. It has been more than four weeks since COVID-19 started to bear down on New York’s criminal justice system – and it’s been more than a month since New Yorkers United for Justice called on Governor Cuomo to release a comprehensive plan to protect the incarcerated at risk amid this pandemic.

“Every day in his briefing, Governor Cuomo announces the deaths of hundreds of New Yorkers over the previous 24 hours. Yet the incarcerated, including many who per the Centers for Disease Control guidelines are at grave risk of death, remain locked in a tinderbox, dangerously vulnerable to the contagion. The governor has the ability to change that with a stroke of his pen through his broad powers of clemency. Providing relief to these individuals will not only potentially save their lives, it will also reduce the population density, which in turn will lower the risk for prison personnel and vendors. New York State must urgently act to prevent a catastrophe in facilities throughout the state.”

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About New Yorker United for Justice (NYUJ):

New Yorkers United for Justice is a statewide coalition comprised of local and national non-profit organizations committed to supporting a movement that will bring much-needed criminal justice reform to New York State and ensure that policies promote safety and fairness. NYUJ aims for legislative urgency to fix a broken criminal justice system that punishes the poor and communities of color, tears families apart, and makes New Yorkers less safe. NYUJ believes that a system that ensures equal access to justice for anyone accused in New York State, regardless of age, race,

ethnicity or social economic status, disability, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, national origin or religion, must be the standard.