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## **NEW LATEST DATA SHOWS ONCE AGAIN: NEW YORK STATE STILL DANGEROUSLY LAGS ON COVID-19 TESTS IN PRISONS; NYUJ URGES NYS TO ADOPT COVID SAFETY PLAN**

*New York's prison testing rate (22.66%) is far below other states*

***NYUJ to New York State: Test Every Individual In The Prison System; Reduce the Existing Prison Population; Limit Incoming Detainees***

**NEW YORK** – New Yorkers United for Justice (NYUJ) today one again called on New York State to implement new COVID-19 principles to safeguard the state's criminal justice system during the pandemic. Despite administering nearly 3,000 additional COVID-19 tests of incarcerated New Yorkers in the last two weeks, [data collected by NYUJ from the past week](#) shows New York continues to test its incarcerated population at limited rates (22.66%) when stacked up to other high-populations states. New York's testing of its incarcerated population trail states like Ohio, Michigan, California, Texas, New Jersey, Wisconsin, and Missouri. The alarming data details an underwhelming approach to prison safety during this global pandemic. New Yorkers United for Justice has called for such a policy change since March.

COVID-19 cannot be contained within state prisons; the spread of the virus behind bars threatens all communities. The lack of routine and consistent testing in New York state prisons remains a large blind spot that not only puts those who are incarcerated and work in corrections in danger – it threatens the success of New York's reopening.

*“In the last two weeks, New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision has tested around 3,000 incarcerated New Yorkers. Increased testing is a step in the right direction, but 5 months into this crisis, it is a late and lukewarm response. New York State and health officials across the world have spent half a year developing strategies to curb the spread of COVID-19 and testing is at the core of nearly all plans,” said **Khalil A. Cumberbatch, Senior Advisor at New Yorkers United for Justice.** “Before we reach the 6 month mark, DOCCS needs to implement a full scale COVID-19 plan that includes testing all incarcerated populations and corrections staff throughout the state. Governor Gretchen Whitmer of Michigan signed [an executive order that established coronavirus safety and testing protocols](#) inside Michigan correctional facilities. Not only has New Yorkers United for Justice called for similar coronavirus safety measures, we have provided the state with COVID-19 principles over four weeks ago to develop a framework to safeguard all New Yorkers from the virus. Additionally, more than five months ago our coalition [called for a comprehensive and transparent statewide plan to address COVID-19 that includes correctional facilities, staff and incarcerated populations.](#)”*

New York developed precautions for safely returning to restaurants, shops, and businesses throughout the state – we must be sure that the same precautions are taken in our entire criminal justice system to mitigate the [spread of this deadly virus](#). Crowded courtrooms can contribute to virus transmission and can present enormous risks for all court personnel, lawyers, witnesses, accused persons, and the general public. The reopening of courts should be guided by independent medical advice. The [recommended principles](#) that NYUJ is urging the state to adopt to minimize the risk of renewed outbreaks by relying on post COVID practices in policing, sentencing, incarceration, and supervision.

**COVID Cases Among Incarcerated Individuals and Correctional Staff**  
**Updated on August 17, 2020**

Prison System (Accessed Aug. 17, 2020)	Incarcerated Positive	Staff Positive	Incarcerated Individual to Staff COVID ratio	# of Tests for incarcerated population
<a href="#">Alabama</a>	300	346	0.87	1,316
<a href="#">California</a>	9,570	2,284	4.19	79,191
<a href="#">Delaware</a>	529	168	3.15	N/A
<a href="#">Federal BOP</a>	11,262	1,405	8.02	43,872
<a href="#">Florida</a>	14,759	1,750	8.43	79,921
<a href="#">Georgia</a>	1,208	633	1.91	N/A
<a href="#">Illinois</a>	609	378	1.61	N/A

<a href="#">Indiana</a>	917	376	2.44	3,207
<a href="#">Iowa</a>	400	83	4.82	7,364
<a href="#">Kansas</a>	1,072	173	6.20	N/A
<a href="#">Louisiana</a>	997	360	2.77	3,284
<a href="#">Michigan</a>	4,351	435	10.00	60,309
<a href="#">Missouri</a>	687	212	3.24	26,260
<a href="#">Nevada</a>	22	86	0.26	N/A
<a href="#">New Jersey</a>	2,976	781	3.81	Phase 2 testing, testing all individuals who tested negative in Phase 1.
<a href="#">New York</a>	755	1314	0.57	8,511
<a href="#">Ohio</a>	5,654	1,022	5.53	22,717
<a href="#">Oregon</a>	530	146	3.63	3,032
<a href="#">Pennsylvania</a>	312	235	1.33	10,334
<a href="#">South Carolina</a>	1,244	353	3.52	N/A
<a href="#">Texas</a>	18,544	3,878	4.78	179,688
<a href="#">Vermont</a>	132	22	6.00	1,588
<a href="#">Wisconsin</a>	344	147	2.34	26,759

Connecticut and Massachusetts removed from analysis due to inconsistent availability of data.

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**About New Yorkers 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.