

CALL TO ACTION

We, members and supporters of the Coalition for Women Prisoners, share a vision for a criminal justice system that treats women and their families with dignity, fairness and justice. We call on all individuals, organizations, and government officials to recognize our struggle as a vital part of the movement to improve the situation and respect the rights of women locally, nationally, and globally. We call on NYS to take a close look at our justice system, to recognize the way it harms women and hurts their children, and to take part in helping us make the system more responsive to the true needs of our communities. We call on our government to stop spending millions of dollars on prison – an inhumane and ineffective response to the social issues that drive crime. We call on our government to expand community-based, gender-specific alternative programs that save taxpayers' money, rebuild lives, and help families and communities to become more healthy, safe and productive. We call on our elected officials to promote criminal justice policies and practices that make sense for women, to provide resources that raise the standard of living for all and strengthen families, to protect women in prison from inhumane treatment, and to make sure that women can make a healthy, safe and productive return to their families and communities after they are released. These are our fundamental rights as formerly incarcerated people, as parents, as advocates, as family members, as women and as humans. Today, and every day, we raise our voices for women in prison, women who have been in prison, and women around the world.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

Abyssinian Baptist Church,
Exodus Project
Alcoholism Council of NY
Amnesty International, USA
Bailey House
Barnard Center for Research on Women
Puerto Rican/Latin American Studies of John Jay College of Criminal Justice
The Bridge, Inc.
Bridge Street AWME Church
Bronx Defenders
Bronx Health Link, Prenatal Info. Network
Bronx HIV Network
Catholic Charities
Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (CASES)
Center for Children of Incarcerated Parents
Center for Community Alternatives
Center for Constitutional Rights
Center for Law and Justice, Inc. Albany, NY
Child Welfare Organizing Project
Children of Alcoholics Foundation
Children of Parents with AIDS
Coalition for Parole Restoration
Consumer Info. & Dispute Resolution, Inc.
College and Community Fellowship
Correctional Association of NY
Councilmember Gale A. Brewer (6th Dist, NYC)
CRADLE in Bedford Stuyvesant
Ebenezer House of Deliverance
Prison Ministry
Exodus Transitional Community
Fifth Avenue Committee
Fortune Society
FREE, Families for Emancipation & Empowerment
Gay Men's Health Crisis
Greenhope: Services for Women Health Force
HIV Law Project, Inc.
Hour Children
Housing + Solutions
Human Rights Watch
In Arms Reach, Inc.
Incarcerated Mothers Program
Inside Out Art, Inc.
Intercommunity Center for Justice and Peace

ICARE, Interfaith Coalition of Advocates for Re-Entry & Employment
Latino Commissions on AIDS
Legal Action Center
Legal Aid Society
Life on the Outside
Lower East Side Harm Reduction Center
MADRE, Women's Human Rights My Sisters' Place
National Council of Negro Women, North Bronx
National H.I.R.E. Network, Legal Action Center
National Organization for Women, New York City
National Organization for Women, New York State
Neighborhood Defender Service of Harlem
New York Mothers of the Disappeared
New York Assoc. for Gender Rights Advocacy (NYAGRA)
New York State Coalition Against Domestic Violence
New York State Coalition Against Sexual Assault
Office of the Appellate Defender
Osborne Association
Palladia, Inc.
Phoenix House Foundation
Prison Education Initiative
Prisoners' Legal Services of NY
Project AFFIRM, S.C.O. Family of Services
Project Path to Recovery Post Graduate Ctr for Mental Health
Providence House
Queers for Economic Justice
Rainbow Horizons
Rural Opportunities, Inc., Albion
Serendipity II/NYTC, Inc.
Sylvia Rivera Law Project
Spiritus Christi Church, Women of Conviction Project
STEPS to End Family Violence
Urban Justice Center
VOCAL - NY
WARM - We All Really Matter
William Moses Kunstler Fund for Racial Justice
Women's HIV Collaborative of NY
Women in Need, Inc.
Women's Advocate Ministry
Women's City Club
Women's Prison Association
WORTH – Women On the Rise
Telling HerStory

The Coalition for Women Prisoners

is a statewide alliance

coordinated by the

Correctional Association of NY's

Women in Prison Project

working to make the

NYS criminal justice system

more responsive to the

needs and rights

of currently and formerly

incarcerated women.

2014





What is the Coalition for Women Prisoners?

We're a statewide alliance of over 1,800 individuals and over 100 organizations dedicated to making the criminal justice system more responsive to the needs and rights of women and their families.

What does the Coalition do?

We educate the public, press, and policy-makers about the issues that currently and formerly incarcerated women face.

We advocate to change criminal justice policies and improve the way the system treats women.

We work together to create a supportive community and a place to network.

Our goals are to:

- ◆ help formerly incarcerated women become participants and leaders in the effort to reform criminal justice policies.
- ◆ stop New York from using incarceration as a response to the social and economic problems that drive crime.
- ◆ strengthen ties between women and families during incarceration and after release.
- ◆ improve conditions inside prison and expand alternatives to prison for women.
- ◆ remove barriers to re-entry and expand re-entry programs that focus on women's specific needs.

Incarcerated Mothers Committee

focuses on helping mothers

Our Committees:

in prison maintain relationships with their children. The Committee advocates to:

- ▶ Support implementation of the Adoption and Safe Families Act Expanded Discretion law so that incarcerated parents and their children in foster care have a better chance to maintain legal bonds to each other.
- ▶ Support implementation of the 2009 anti-shackling law that bans the practice of shackling incarcerated pregnant women during labor, delivery and recovery.

The Violence Against Women Committee

focuses on changing the criminal justice system's response to survivors of abuse. The Committee is advocating for passage of:

- ▶ the DV Survivors Justice Act, which would reduce sentence lengths and increase the use of alternatives to incarceration for survivors of domestic violence who are convicted of crimes related to abuse, and allow survivors in prison to apply to the courts for resentencing.

2014

We are determined to fight for positive change by drawing on the collective resources and expertise of all of our members. We are committed to working for and with currently and formerly incarcerated people, regardless of race, age, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, faith, disability, or marital or immigration status. We are not affiliated with any denomination or religion. We are resolved to work together to promote criminal justice policies and practices that make sense for women, that raise the standard of living for all, and that strengthen families and communities.

Women in NYS Prison: Statistics

- ◆ Over 2,300 women are in NY's prisons - 4% of the state's total prison population of about 55,000.
- ◆ From 1973 to 2014, the number of women in NY's prisons increased by 510%.
- ◆ From 2000 to 2013, NY's female prison population has decreased by about 23%.
- ◆ Over 60% are African-American or Latina even though women of color make up only 32% of NY's female population.
- ◆ About 48% are from the NYC area, most from a handful of low-income communities.
- ◆ 70% report a history of alcohol or substance abuse
- ◆ 9 out of 10 have experienced severe physical and/or sexual abuse in their lifetimes.
- ◆ 39% have been diagnosed with a serious mental illness.
- ◆ Approximately 70% are mothers, many were the primary caretakers of their children before prison.
- ◆ Roughly 43% do not have a high school diploma.
- ◆ 12% are HIV+ and 17% have Hepatitis C.

For more information contact:

Women in Prison Project

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