

For Immediate Release

August 20, 2019

Community Members Converge on Broome County Jail in Response to Frequent Deaths and Rampant Abuse

BINGHAMTON—Advocates and organizations throughout Upstate New York are taking action against the inhumane and deadly conditions of the Broome County Jail. At least 10 individuals have died since 2011—a rate over 4 times the state average—as a direct result of abuse and misconduct within the facility.

Broome County is a national outlier in discriminatory jailing—boasting the highest incarceration rate in New York State. Black residents in Broome County are currently incarcerated at a rate more than ten times that of their white counterparts.

The vast majority of individuals held in the jail are unconvicted, with most experiencing mental illness and/or substance use disorders. Basic hygiene supplies are routinely denied, and are woefully inadequate—especially for incarcerated women, who are watched by male guards while using exposed toilets and showers. Broome County Jail also serves as a Federal and ICE detention center, regularly holding undocumented immigrants awaiting processing by U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement.

Most urgently, rampant abuse and denial of basic medical care are an everyday occurrence, leading to multiple deaths and permanent disabilities—and often resulting in civil litigation and/or settlement.

In response to these and other human rights violations existing within the Broome County Jail; community members, constituents, and survivors hereby issue the following demands to State and local arbiters of the facility:

- Reduce the jail population by at least 70%, by implementing fully the new state law effectively ending cash bail, providing ample community treatment facilities and other substantive alternatives to incarceration, and prioritizing the release of individuals requiring treatment for substance use and/or mental health issues
- Immediately end the use of punitive solitary and isolated confinement, including confinement in medical solitary, for all incarcerated individuals
- End all profit-driven practices exploiting incarcerated individuals and their loved ones. These practices include—but are not limited to—charging exorbitant fees for telecommunications; generating illegal profits on commissary purchases, haircuts, and hygiene supplies; and charging individuals for their own solitary confinement

- End the practice of importing incarcerated persons from neighboring counties, and detaining undocumented immigrants and asylum seekers on behalf of the Federal government—including and especially the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE)
- Terminate the services of Correctional Medical Care (CMC), who have consistently and fatally failed to administer adequate medical treatment to incarcerated individuals
- Ensure assistive medical equipment is available to disabled individuals housed in the facility, including glasses, hearing aid batteries, walkers, prosthetic devices, wheelchairs, etc., immediately upon admission
- Ensure that humane, medically assisted detox is readily available to all incarcerated individuals
- Immediately provide new and/or sanitary clothing and undergarments to all incarcerated individuals, to reduce the spread of infectious diseases prevalent in the facility, and subsequently impacting our community
- Provide incarcerated persons with applications for public services at least 45 days before their release, to allow for assisted re-entry and reduce recidivism
- Cease the use of Trinity Services Group, and all privatized food service providers, and the distribution of food products unfit for human consumption to incarcerated individuals
- Implement weekend visitation, and increase hours of visitation allotted for all incarcerated individuals
- Provide all voting-eligible individuals held in the facility access to voter registration and absentee ballots, affording them their constitutional right to vote
- Implement public hearings on the medical and health concerns in the jail, with the aim of creating a public oversight body comprised of independent medical experts, the formerly incarcerated, and impacted community members

In solidarity,

Binghamton Food Rescue
Binghamton University Progressives
Black Lives Matter Syracuse New York
Broome County Veterans for Peace - Chapter 90
Buffalo Anti-Racism Coalition Official
Citizen Action of New York - Southern Tier Chapter
DSA Binghamton
Frances Beal Society
Indivisible Binghamton
JUST: Justice and Unity for the Southern Tier
Justice & Peace Resource Center
PLOT: Progressive Leaders of Tomorrow
Truth Pharm