



The League of Women Voters of New York State  
62 Grand Street, Albany, New York 12207  
Phone: 518-465-4162 Fax: 518-465-0812  
www.lwvny.org E-Mail: lwvny@lwvny.org

THE LEAGUE  
OF WOMEN VOTERS  
*of New York State*

**MEMORANDUM IN SUPPORT OF:**  
**S7514 (Salazar) and S15A (Hoylman)**

**To:** Majority Leader Stewart-Cousins, Speaker Heastie, Assemblymember and Correction Chair Weprin, Senator and Majority Conference Chair Serrano

**Date:** May 24, 2022

**Subject:** The advancement of bills that relate to parole eligibility and the release of incarcerated individuals who demonstrate to the parole board that they have altered their lives during their period of incarceration.

Dear Senate and Assembly Leadership:

The League of Women Voters of New York State, its Criminal Justice Committee, and the League's New York City Chapter urge that the Senate move to the floor and pass two bills that are priorities for this session – Fair and Timely Parole (S. 7514) and Elder Parole (S. 15A). Both of these bills would allow the Parole Board to grant parole to those who have been able to demonstrate by their behavior and actions while incarcerated that they are prepared to lead meaningful and constructive lives.

Neither bill mandates that any individual be released. Fair and Timely Parole instructs the Parole Board to take into account the activities and rehabilitation that can occur during a period of incarceration. The current behaviors and experiences of parole applicants while in prison can and should be used to determine the propriety of granting parole. Too often, the Parole Board focuses solely or primarily on the original crime. This bill would require the Board to consider the person, not just the crime.

Elder Parole would give men and women who have served at least 15 years of their sentence and are over the age of 55 the opportunity to ask for a parole hearing. These individuals would not automatically be released. Rather, they would be entitled to make their case to the Board, with another opportunity after two years should their initial application be denied. The data show that less than 2% of those released from prison between the ages of 50 and 65 are rearrested. By the age of 65, the number drops to almost zero.

We have for too long incarcerated too many people, ignoring the real possibility of rehabilitation while incarcerated. New York State has, for years, engaged in criminal prosecutions that have resulted in mass incarceration of people of color through longer and harsher sentences than those imposed on whites. Racial reconciliation requires that we move forward to revise New York law and policy to rectify these injustices. These bills would move us in this direction.

Despite the unsupported rhetoric, neither of these bills will result in an increase in crime in New York State. They both simply authorize the release of those incarcerated individuals who are to demonstrate to the parole board that they have truly altered their lives during their period of incarceration.

Both bills are extremely important in enabling those who are ready to play a positive role as they rejoin society to avoid having to spend years of continuing to be locked up in prison for no rational purpose.

**For the above reasons, the League of Women Voters of New York State urges your support of S15-A (Hoylman) and S.7514 (Salazar).**

Sincerely,

Laura Ladd Bierman  
Executive Director, League of Women Voters of New York State

Diane Burrows  
Co- President, League of Women Voters of New York City

Lesley Sigall  
Co- President, League of Women Voters of New York City

The League of Women Voters of New York State Committee for Criminal Justice Reform