



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

## State Senators To Sponsor Criminal Justice Briefing On The Disenfranchisement Of Communities Of Color

VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY

Date: Saturday, February 19, 2005

**Time:** 11:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

**Place:** Meeting Room 5, Concourse, Empire State Plaza, Albany, New York

A major topic of discussion during this year's Black and Puerto Rican Legislative Caucus Weekend will be the diminished voting strength of persons and communities of color due to New York's felony disenfranchisement law and redistricting practices that have disturbing parallels to the "Three-Fifths" clause of the U.S. Constitution.

To help address this controversial topic and other criminal justice issues, an informational briefing, *Renewing Rights for the Disenfranchised*, will be presented by **prison rights advocates**, a **celebrated author**, **legal experts**, and **formerly incarcerated professionals**.

Sponsored by **Senator Velmanette Montgomery** (D-Brooklyn), **Assemblywoman Crystal Peoples** (D-Buffalo), and **Senator John Sampson** (D-Brooklyn), the goal of the briefing is to help close the information gap for people seeking answers to questions about crime and justice in New York. **The event is free of charge and open to the public.**

Among the guest presenters are: Deborah Small, Esq., executive director, Break the Chain; **Joseph "Jazz" Hayden**, lead plaintiff in Hayden v. Pataki and director of NYC Unlock the Block Campaign; Esmeralda Simmons, Esq., director, Medgar Evers Center for Law and Social Justice; **John V. Elmore, Esq.**, Author, *Fighting For Your Life - The African American Criminal Justice Guide*; **Divine Pryor, Ph.D.**, national co-chair and executive director, NuLeadership Policy Group The Center for Law and Social Justice; and **Eddie Ellis**, chairman and president, NuLeadership Policy Group The Center for Law and Social Justice.

Topics to be addressed, include:

- Why and how to restore the right to vote for the over 2 million formerly incarcerated New Yorkers who are not registered;
- Innovative solutions to reducing crime and recidivism in urban centers;
- The *Nu Urban Marshall Plan*, a community development approach to reducing recidivism rates and reuniting families;
- Breaking the rising cycle of *black on black* crime, increasing prison populations, and cases of deaths occurring while being arrested, as presented in *Fighting For Your Life - The African American Criminal Justice Guide* by John V. Elmore, Esq. (This is the only book written for African Americans about how to survive the criminal justice system); and
- Re-entry/transitional services for formerly incarcerated individuals returning to their communities.
- The relationship between drug policies, the child welfare system, treatment and sentencing on women and families.

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