



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery submits comments to the NYC Department of Corrections in regards to the current proposal to expand the Brooklyn House of Detention as part of the City's plan to close Rikers Island Correctional Facility

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY October 30, 2018

| ISSUE: **BROOKLYN HOUSE OF DETENTION, CLOSE RIKERS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, END MASS INCARCERATION, REVISIONING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**

Senator Velmanette Montgomery submits comment to the New York City Department of Corrections in regards to the current proposal to expand the Brooklyn House of Detention as part of the City's plan to close Rikers Island Correctional Facility.

In her comments, Senator Montgomery notes:

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I agree with my colleagues that the draft scope should be withdrawn in consideration for fulfilling the mission of smaller, safer, fairer jails. This proposal more than doubles the height and bulk of the current building from 20 stories (216 feet) to 40 stories (430 feet). This considerable expansion is to accommodate an increase in housing for people in detention from an 810-bed to a 1,510-bed facility. This is completely unacceptable and contradicts the spirit of the City's Borough-Based Jail System plan for smaller, safer, fairer jails. I also reject a universal ULURP process, which does not take each community's concerns into account.

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The Lipmann Commission states that the closure of Rikers Island, which necessitates reducing the City's jail population, involves the active participation of city government, state government, the courts, District Attorneys and other stakeholders in the criminal justice system. It is unfortunate and a direct insult to my constituents that there was not a Brooklyn Town Hall meeting held to gather feedback and present the plan to the community in its entirety.

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Furthermore, the City's plan lacks details regarding how to specifically use criminal justice stakeholders to achieve systemic criminal justice reforms that reduce mass incarceration. Along with state reforms addressing pre-trial detention including speedy trial, discovery, and bail reform, we are in desperate need of significant tangible resources in our most underserved communities. The implementation of employment, education, mental health and other services should be included in the City's plan to close Rikers island. In addition, expanding the successful model of community courts created by The Center for Court Innovation and implementing neighborhood policing in conjunction with the NYPD will help create more alternatives to incarceration.

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The Brooklyn House of Detention has been a part of the Boerum Hill community since 1957. Along with the Brooklyn House of Detention, the community has accepted the presence of the Brooklyn parole office on 2nd Avenue. Boerum Hill and the neighboring communities represent a substantial part of the City's criminal justice system. They deserve every consideration for transparency and participation moving forward throughout this planning process.

To read the full letter, download the PDF.

To learn more about Senator Montgomery's work on this issue, visit:

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/articles/2018/velmanette-montgomery/senator-montgomery-senator-kavanagh-and-assemblywoman>

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/articles/velmanette-montgomery/senator-montgomerys-statement-new-york-city-borough-based>

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/in-the-news/velmanette-montgomery/brooklynites-fume-over-lack-community-input-jail-planning>

<https://www.nysenate.gov/newsroom/in-the-news/velmanette-montgomery/shut-down-rikers-and-mayors-jail-plan-community-demands>