



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Brian Benjamin

Senator Benjamin Passes Bill to Restore Jury Rights to New Yorkers with Felony Convictions

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| ISSUE: **CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM**



(New York, NY) Today, Senator Benjamin's bill to restore the rights of New Yorkers with felony convictions to serve on juries passed the State Senate. If this bill is signed into law, after an individual with a felony conviction has served their time (including any probation or parole) that individual will be able to serve on a jury again, helping to fully re-integrate them as full-citizens in society and democracy.

"When people have made mistakes and served their time, they've been rehabilitated. When they reenter society they should be able to participate fully in our democracy. Serving on juries and being able to vote are both part of being equal, full citizens in a free democracy," said **aid bill sponsor State Senator Brian Benjamin.**

"JustLeadershipUSA congratulates Senator Brian Benjamin on the passage of S221-A in the New York Senate. The legislation will remove the lifetime ban on jury duty for people who were convicted of a felony and have completed their sentence. This is a positive step forward in the fight for rights restoration. However, we must restore a person's right to serve on a jury even when they are under community supervision. JLUSA believes that all people impacted by the carceral system should never lose basic civil and human rights and we will continue demanding full restoration of rights until we achieve this demand. Stripping away what should be an inalienable right only reinforces racial oppression and further erodes human dignity," said **DeAnna Hoskins, President & CEO, JustLeadershipUSA.**

Donna Hylton, Director of the Women and Girl's Project at the Katal Center for Health, Equity, and Justice, said: "For decades, the criminal justice system in New York State has been deeply broken, marginalizing formerly incarcerated people, even after they've completed their sentences. I know this personally, from my own experience as a woman who served 27 years in prison, to then rejoin a community permeated with regulations and unjust laws that constricted my reentry process, continued to dehumanize me, reminding me that although I had completed my sentence I am still 'not deserving' of basic human rights. Jury duty may be something minor to a person without criminal history, something to cringe at and hope you can get out of quickly, but for me, and people like me, a lifetime ban on any aspect of civic participation is degrading. I want to recognize and thank our criminal justice reform partner, Senator Brian Benjamin, and his committed staff, for their relentless work getting this bill passed and for their commitment to a more equitable and just New York for all."

"Once someone has committed a crime and has served the time for having committed that crime, they should be able to return fully to the community and serve on juries, fully participate in the voting process and become a viable part of the community. Thanks, Senator Benjamin for supporting the formerly incarcerated in giving them their full rights as citizens," **said Iesha Sekou of Street Corner Resources.**

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RELATED LEGISLATION

2019-S221A

- Introduced

- - In Committee Assembly
 - In Committee Senate

- - On Floor Calendar Assembly
 - On Floor Calendar Senate

- - Passed Assembly
 - Passed Senate

- Delivered to Governor
- Signed By Governor
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Relates to removing the lifetime ban on jury duty for convicted felons who have completed their sentencing

January 02, 2019

In Senate Committee [Judiciary](#)

Sponsored by [Brian Benjamin](#)

Do you support this bill?