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Father of Robert Brooks speaks to lawmakers at the NYS Capitol building

by WRGB STAFF

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father of Robert Brooks

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building Wednesday.

Robert Brooks' family



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Robert Ricks, Brooks's father, was invited by NYS Senator Julia Salazar.

Family of Robert Brooks speaks on Senate floor



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"I've found that it's the norm that happens all the time, not just regularly, just all so having experienced the trauma, the, the atrocity, of seeing my son in a body bag seeing him beaten to death is sad and it's painful and it's hurtful, but it's also entrusted reporters on Wednesday. "So for me, at this juncture, it's about change. I would tell you that we have about 100-125 kids a year, from the age of five to the age of 17, and the reality is that so many of our kids are going to go to jail, because this system makes it so. The structure of the system is that some of our kids are going to go to jail. So anything that I can do as a father, as a community member, as a man, to assist them in coming home better than they were when they were incarcerated and not in a body bag like my son did. That's the charge. I want to do whatever I can do to help assure the fact that our kids, our fathers, our families can be incarcerated and come home in one piece. So that's where that's where I am and that's where my family is as a family."

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Ricks says he believes Marcy Correctional Facility should close in order to send a message to other facilities and communities. But, he stopped short of saying that Governor Martin P. Grady should resign, instead calling for systemic change. He's backing the legislation introduced by State Senator Julia Salazar of which would provide greater oversight of the state prison system, but also says change needs to go farther.

"One of the things that I would like to see happen on a personal level, is that when something happens to a prisoner, at least when they die, or they meet their demise in prison,

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people that do the autopsy. From what I see is that it's just, it's just a lot of people things that isn't in the best interest of the prisoners, and that isn't bringing the in needs to come out to the public."

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Salazar is the Senate Chair of the Committee on Crime Victims, Crime and Correc she feels confident about the prospects of the legislation she's proposed.

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"Some of the changes as we're talking about would have a fiscal impact, so just ci agency that's truly independent, or expanding the State Commission of Correctic more resources to the Correctional Association, I think it is critical that we have tl conversations in the budget, but these conversations need to continue beyond tl well," Salazar says.

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In 2017, Brooks was sentenced to 12 years in prison for stabbing his girlfriend, m convicted felon. His father says though, Brooks had taken steps to change and re his GED, taking horticulture and sign language classes, with a goal of making a pc when he got out of prison.

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"I saw the opportunity for him to sit back, relax, think about some things, realize Ricks says. "Get prayed up, get centered, start reading, start focusing on the next development. I saw that happen, and I feel like the system denied him the oppor that he could be, for himself, but also for the community. Because I just believe t teach what you don't know, and you can't leave where you don't go. So for a youl to jail, go through the things that he went through, and then come out and be lik you go down that road, down there, no, you ain't got to go down there. I did the l you. You don't have to go down there, but if you go down there, this is what's goi to you.' That has a real impact, because it's not something that he got in a book i something that somebody told him he know it. And I think that has such a profou the young people in our community, having survived some of the things, that if tl straighten up and fly right or decide to do something different, that they're going the same place. And that's what my son was preparing for, to be a voice, to be a and this system denied him that. And not only did it deny him, it denies so many and young women that the reality is because of the way the system is structured going to go to jail. I just want them to come home and be the best that they're ca being."

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On Thursday, Ricks along with DOCCS Commissioner Martuscello are both scheduled at the NYS Legislative Budget Hearing for Public Safety.

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