

# #LessIsMoreNY

## MEMBER PROFILE: CHARLIE GROSSO



New York reincarcerates more people for noncriminal technical violations of parole—like being late for curfew or testing positive for alcohol use—than every other state in the country. Approximately 35,000 people are on parole in New York and they are all daily subject to re-incarceration for technical violations. Today, thousands of people are currently incarcerated in New York State prisons and local jails for technical violations of parole. The vast majority of those re-incarcerated for technical violations of parole are Black and Latino. The #LessIsMoreNY Act will fix this problem once it is fully implemented.

Thousands of New Yorkers have been harmed by the problems in parole. Now they are sharing their stories.

Charlie Grosso, a husband and 68 year old resident of Albany, is a member of the Katal Center for Equity, Health, and Justice. Mr. Grosso served 40 years in prison before he was released on August 10, 2020 and given a lifetime sentence on parole. While incarcerated, Mr. Grosso worked at the law library and supported incarcerated individuals fighting against the unjust conditions in the facilities. Currently, he works in a homeless shelter in Albany giving back to community members in need, he is a student at John Jay College, and he is currently pursuing his passion for acting as a cast member of “Kinship” in this year’s Ensemble Pi’s production. Even after serving decades in prison and supporting his community upon release, due to being on parole, Mr. Grosso has to live in constant fear of being reincarcerated for a technical parole violation.

Since being released from prison in 2020, Mr. Grosso has had three different parole officers. And each time he is assigned a new parole officer, he worries about the sudden change in expectations or requirements which could result in arbitrary violations. The parole system currently gives parole officers wide discretion to incarcerate people for noncriminal technical violations of parole, even though there is no evidence that this practice increases public safety.

Mr. Grosso’s experience is unfortunately all too common. New York imprisons more people for non-criminal “technical”

violations of parole like missing an appointment with a parole officer, being late for curfew, or testing positive for alcohol and other drugs than any state in the country. In 2019, 40% of people admitted to state prisons were locked up not for a new felony conviction but for a non-criminal technical violation of parole.

Mr. Grosso is deeply concerned about the racial disparities in parole and throughout the entire criminal legal system. Black and Latinx people are far more likely than white people to be reincarcerated for a technical violation of parole. This practice creates unfair outcomes as people of color are continuously cycled in and out of the jails and prisons. Mr. Grosso has personally experienced many parole officers who are “overtly and dangerously racist.”

With the effective implementation of the Less is More Act, this should change. #LessIsMoreNY limits the use of incarceration for technical violations and focuses on keeping people in their community while they complete their parole.

As a member, Charlie is working on the full implementation of Less Is More because it would help eliminate the arbitrary and, too often, racist tactics used to reincarcerate people on parole. As someone on parole he understands the daily fear that a simple human mistake can cost you your freedom. He has raised awareness and advocated for the Less Is More because of the relief it will provide for himself and the thousands of others New Yorkers currently on parole.

## More details about the #LessIsMoreNY Act

Developed by people on parole, people currently incarcerated, family members, and community and legal groups, the #LessIsMoreNY Act will:

- Restrict the use of incarceration for technical violations of parole
- Bolster due process
- Provide speedy hearings when someone is charged with an alleged violation of parole
- Provide earned time credits to most people on parole so they get off parole faster

#LessIsMoreNY brings sensible reform to parole practices, advancing justice, supporting people in reentry and strengthening public safety. That’s why it’s supported by more than 300 community, legal, and faith groups, law enforcement leaders, city councils, the NY State Association of Counties, survivor groups, and more. For a full list of supporters, please see the #LessIsMoreNY Support Letter.

For more information, please contact  
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