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To: wamchair@nyassembly.gov
Cc: financechair@nysenate.gov



January 25, 2024

Members, 2024 Joint Legislative Budget Hearing:

Thank you for the opportunity to present testimony on behalf of the Governor's Public Safety budget proposal to "Expand transitional housing opportunities ~ \$2 million in additional State funding to expand the existing program,...and expand eligibility to include women."

A NYS DOCCS June 2023 report indicates trends on upstate incarceration of women, then released, at an 11% rate for suburban shared releases, in Nassau, Suffolk, and Westchester. This trend matches a demographic of increased incarceration of women in NY upstate communities, in past years, while New York City incarceration rates for women have decreased, as well, at a decreasing rate of their return to New York City boroughs.

While the Governor's proposal is specific on funding, it does not address the "expanded eligibility" requirements as they relate specifically to women.

For over twenty-five years Providence House and Hour Children, Inc. have provided such housing, with eligibility protocols that they begin while women are incarcerated and are in their reentry stage of returning to their communities.

These organization's established protocols have proven, that once met, result in a recidivism rate of less than 5%, (Hour Children) compared to state-wide rates for women of 29% that is achieved.

However, this success can only be achieved when proper pre- and post release established trauma-informed wrap-around services, with expanded criteria that may be added, are provided, working in collaboration with New York State Departments, such as OMH, and the NYS Department of Parole.

Please note that New York State has provided millions of dollars for the 143 bed yet unopened repurposed men's Fulton Correctional Facility in the Bronx.

It is time to provide equity on behalf of eligible women, as Governor Hochul recognizes, and, I hope you agree, by increasing funding women's' needs to where they will return after incarceration, to expanded transitional housing. That need is in Westchester County.

Very truly yours,
Kathaleen Linares
Member, Prison Relations Advisory Committee
Town of Bedford, NY