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Res. No. 631

Resolution calling on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.321/A.531, in relation to requiring certain justices and judges to visit the correctional facility with the highest population in the county in which such justice or judge was elected or appointed

By Council Members Williams, Stevens, Riley, Louis and Restler

Whereas, The City of New York is committed to fostering a fair and equitable judicial system that recognizes the importance of understanding the environments in which justice is administered; and

Whereas, The State of New York is home to a diverse population, with correctional facilities that reflect the complex social, economic, and racial issues facing our communities; and

Whereas, Visiting correctional facilities allows judges to observe firsthand the conditions of incarceration, fostering a deeper understanding of the environment in which incarcerated individuals live; and

Whereas, Such visits enable judges to assess the adequacy of resources and services available to inmates, including mental health support, educational opportunities, and rehabilitation programs; and

Whereas, Regular visitation helps judges identify potential issues within the correctional system, such as overcrowding, inadequate medical care, or unsafe living conditions, which can inform judicial decision-making; and

Whereas, These visitation experiences can empower judges to advocate for necessary changes within the correctional system, promoting policies that prioritize rehabilitation and successful reintegration into society; and

Whereas, S.5087/A.2539 sponsored State Senator Cordell Cleare and Assemblymember Khaleel Anderson mandate justices of the supreme court, county court, and court of claims, regularly sitting in a criminal term or in a term with both criminal and civil jurisdiction, must visit the correctional facility with the highest population in their county within two years of their appointment or election; and

Whereas, These visits are to be conducted every two years after the initial visit, ensuring continuous oversight of the conditions of the correctional facility with the highest population; and

Whereas, The conditions of these facilities are to be reported within six months of a visit to the Clerk of the Court of Appeals to improve the judicial understanding of the impact of incarceration; and

Whereas, Firsthand experience in correctional facilities promotes transparency and accountability in the criminal justice system, ensuring that judges are aware of the realities faced by incarcerated individuals; now, therefore, be it

Resolved, That the Council of the City of New York calls on the New York State Legislature to pass, and the Governor to sign, S.321/A.531, in relation to requiring certain justices and judges to visit the correctional facility with the highest population in the county in which such justice or judge was elected or appointed.

CMB
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