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**The City of New York  
Community Board 8 Manhattan  
Social Justice Committee  
Monday, March 28, 2022 – 6:30PM  
*This meeting was conducted via Zoom***

*Please note: The resolutions contained in the committee minutes are recommendations submitted by the committee chair to the Community Board. At the monthly full board meeting, the resolutions are discussed and voted upon by all members of Community Board 8 Manhattan.*

**MINUTES**

**CB8 Members Present:** Vanessa Aronson, Sarah Chu, Saundra I. Coleman, Wendy Machaver\*, Rita Popper

\*Public Member

**1. CleanslateNY Presenter - Marvin Mayfield, Director of Organizing Center for Community Alternatives**

- Mr. Mayfield joined us from a bus on the way home from Albany where he was unexpectedly called to work on a range of criminal legal system issues. He is a directly impacted person who has experienced the difficulties of rejoining his community.
- Clean Slate NY advocates for the elimination of barriers for people with previous convictions to participate as engaged members of society. Prior convictions prevent people from obtaining housing, jobs, and bank loans among many obstacles.
- The Clean Slate Act (S.1553C/A.6399B) seals a person's conviction record so employers, landlords, and other entities don't have access to them and therefore can't discriminate against them.
  - A person with a prior conviction is eligible for Clean Slate after completing time served and 2 years after returning to their communities for a misdemeanor and 7 years for a felony,
  - Clean Slate NY advocates for the version of the bill that was introduced in the legislature. There is a second version - the "government" version - being circulated which would delay Clean Slate eligibility until 3 and 7 years after completion of parole or probation. The "legislative" version, (S.1553C/A.6399B), provides the quickest relief.
- This issue is not just criminal legal reform, but it is also an economic issue. In a time when we need more workers to bring businesses back from COVID, individuals willing to join the workforce are being blocked from doing so.
- It is a form of perpetual punishment. Mr. Mayfield shared that he had been so discouraged about not being able to get a job, he contemplated doing things that would have sent him back to prison. When people are incarcerated for long periods of time, how do we expect them to navigate the world?
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**Questions & Answers (Paraphrased and summarized)**

Q: Given the difficulties of rejoining the workforce and finding housing, how do we get returning residents to that 3 or 7 year point?

MM: Pre-trial status is concentrated in Black and brown communities. Getting people to these milestones requires community investments. We need investments into mental health instead of carceral activities. This is our responsibility for one another. I'm a foster parent for at risk youth who have come out of detention, group homes,

teens between 15-21. It's on us to support people coming out of prison. I came home and didn't have a Metrocard to get around to my appointments. I spoke at a rally and couldn't buy a hotdog. They need our support - they need lunch, transportation, direction. These barriers create a sense of discouragement. One of our senators went to a prison - saw the conditions - saw they were inhumane, but that is what we have to change.

Q: It's bad business not to do it this way because it guarantees recidivism. People who are pushed down don't get up, and there's racial disparities in how bail is administered. What can we do to help?

MM: We may not share the same level of melanin in our skin, we share the same values. A lot of privileged people don't understand what's happening in our communities. What you can do is to acknowledge that and let people know. The more mainstream society knows, the better. Call our legislators and let them know what we stand for. It gives them more ammunition when constituents call in.

Q: Where is opposition to the Clean Slate Act coming from?

MM: The opposition is concentrated in Long Island, Westchester, Upstate, and conservative communities.

Rita Popper made a motion to form a resolution and send a letter to support the Clean Slate bill. It was seconded by Saundrea I. Coleman.

### **Resolution:**

**Whereas**, people who have experienced incarceration continue to experience discrimination in housing and employment sectors even after they have served their time;

**Whereas**, research has shown that housing and employment support people's ability to continue their contributions to society and prevent recidivism;

**Whereas**, we believe that the stigma of incarceration should not be a perpetual punishment for people who are rejoining their communities;

**Whereas**, we believe, as a community, that we are more successful when we support one another and set our returning community members up for success;

**Therefore be it resolved**, CB8 supports the Clean Slate Act (S.1553C/A.6399B) as proposed by advocates and policymakers to ensure our communities grow stronger together.

Vote: 4-0-0 [Sarah Chu, Saundrea I. Coleman, Rita Popper, and Wendy Machever (public member)]

2. Old Business

3. New Business

○ Ideas for future meetings:

- Florida just passed the "Don't say gay bill" and Texas passed a bill criminalizing parents who allow their children to seek gender affirming care. A future meeting can focus on LGBTQ social justice issues.
  - A suggestion was made to consider [Dr. Julian Watkins](#), a health equity advisor, as a potential panelist.

Meeting adjourned at approximately 8:05pm.

***Saundrea I. Coleman and Sarah Chu, Co-Chairs***