



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Velmanette Montgomery

Senator Montgomery's Statement on the New York City Borough-Based Jail System Draft Scope of Work for the Brooklyn House of Detention

SENATOR VELMANETTE MONTGOMERY September 20, 2018

| ISSUE: **BROOKLYN HOUSE OF DETENTION, CLOSE RIKERS, CRIMINAL JUSTICE REFORM, END MASS INCARCERATION, REVISIONING THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM**



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As part of Mayor de Blasio's plan to close Rikers Island, the administration announced plans for building or rebuilding four modern, "community-based" jails throughout the city. One of

the sites is located in Downtown Brooklyn. Under the proposal, the 11-story Brooklyn House of Detention at 275 Atlantic Avenue will be gutted and replaced with a new detention center that could soar roughly 40 stories. The facility would total about 1.4 million square feet and include a ground-floor shopping strip and as-yet-unspecified community space. It would house up to 1,510 detainees, nearly double the existing jail's 800-inmate capacity.

On Thursday, September 20th, Senator Montgomery joined community members at the Environmental Scoping Hearing for the Brooklyn House of Detention and commented:

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I represent the 25th Senate District, which includes the neighborhoods of Bedford-Stuyvesant, Clinton Hill, Fort Greene, Ocean Hill, Red Hook, Downtown Brooklyn, the Gowanus, Crown Heights, and Boerum Hill.

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Let me begin by saying that I am unequivocally against increasing the Floor Area Ratio (FAR) of the Brooklyn House of Detention from 3.5 to a FAR of 20.0. This proposal more than doubles the height of the current building from 216 feet to 430 feet to accommodate an increase in housing for people in detention from 810 to a 1,510-bed facility. This is completely unacceptable and contradicts the City's Borough-Based Jail System plan for smaller, safer, fairer jails.

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The Brooklyn House of Detention has been a part of the Boerum Hill community since 1957. Along with the Brooklyn House of Detention, the community has accepted the presence of the Brooklyn parole office on 2nd Avenue. Boerum Hill and the neighboring communities

represent a substantial part of the City's criminal justice system.

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Civic engagement is the backbone of our democracy. It is unfortunate and a direct insult to my constituents that there was not a Brooklyn Town Hall meeting held to gather feedback and present the plan to the community in its entirety. I also reject a universal ULURP process, which does not take each communities concerns into account.

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I am very much for modernizing the Brooklyn House of Detention to allow for the support services needed to help incarcerated individuals. I am adamant about implementing tailored programming, mental health facilities and providing an environment that truly ensures a productive re-entry back into society. However, I agree with my colleagues that the draft scope should be withdrawn in consideration for fulfilling the mission of smaller, safer, fairer jails.

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The NYC Department of Correction (DOC) has released documents related to the environmental assessment for the to the Brooklyn House of Detention proposal. The public comment period for all four sites has begun, kicking off the Uniform Land Use Review Procedure (ULURP) process. To learn more about the proposal and the ULURP timeline, download the PDFs or visit <https://a002-ceqraccess.nyc.gov/ceqr/ProjectInformation/ProjectDetail/13546-18DOC001Y#b>

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The deadline to submit comments on the Draft Scope of Work is October 15th, 2018. Comments can be emailed to boroughplan@doc.nyc.gov or submitted to:

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Senator Montgomery encourages her constituents and community stakeholders to submit comments and remain engaged as the ULURP process moves forward.