



**Statement in Support of the Treatment Court Expansion Act
Submitted by College Way**

Founded in 2015, College Way is a nonprofit organization that brings CUNY faculty and students into the community, particularly to those who have been historically excluded from higher education. Our programs deliver trauma-informed, sensory, motivational, and educational workshops to system-impacted youth and adults, creating pathways to education, training, and opportunity. We have provided education and programming in carceral settings including Crossroads Juvenile Center, Horizons Juvenile Center, and Rikers Island, working directly with people whose potential is too often overlooked because of their incarceration.

Through this work, we have seen firsthand how individuals experiencing mental health challenges can stabilize, grow, and thrive when given access to consistent education, care, and purpose-driven programming. Conversely, we have also witnessed the devastating impact of lengthy pretrial detention in traditional New York State courts. People with mental illness often languish in jail for years while their cases are delayed by repeated CPL 730 motions, cycling through evaluation, crisis, and return to punitive environments that worsen their condition. Many of these individuals' charges stem more from untreated mental health needs and trauma than from true criminal intent.

As educators working in correctional settings, we know that treatment works—and that education, structure, and care can transform lives. Jail does not. The current system fails both the individuals caught within it and the broader goals of public safety and justice.

College Way stands firmly in support of the Treatment Court Expansion Act and all efforts that promote treatment rather than incarceration for people with mental illness. We urge our state leadership to address the ongoing crisis in our courts by expanding access to treatment alternatives, investing in community-based care, and ending the revolving door that traps our most vulnerable neighbors in cycles of punishment rather than healing.

Signed,

College Way