

Freedom Delayed, Justice Denied: Racial Disparities in New York State's Parole Release Decision



Update May 2025

In November 2024, the Center on Race, Inequality, and the Law at New York University School of Law released a [new report](#) on worsening racial disparities in parole releases in New York State. That report, entitled *Freedom Delayed, Justice Denied: Increasing Racial Disparities in New York State's Parole Release Decisions*, as well as an [update to the report in January 2025](#), found such racial disparities during the most recent three years were the worst since the state began tracking this data in 2016, which were already egregious. Our report garnered significant media attention, including in features by [The City](#) and [Spectrum News](#). The November 2024 report and the January 2025 update were based on the New York State's Parole Board's own data on release rates through September 2024, which was obtained by the Vera Institute of Justice.

This present update **includes newly released data for a subsequent six month period ending in March 2025. In short, including data for all of 2024 and the first three months of 2025, this latest update finds that the vast racial disparities in parole release rates have only worsened in recent years.** The last three years of data, from January 2022 through March 2025, show the widest gap in release rate racial disparities since this data began to be collected in 2016. Not coincidentally, this three and a quarter year period coincides with Governor Hochul's time in office.

Specifically, from January 2022 through March 2025, the Parole Board was 32.38% less likely to release a person of color than a white person. This level of racial disparity in the last three years is 72.21% worse than the already existing racial disparities of the previous six years. If people of color had been released at the same rates as white people, **there would have been over 4,150 more grants of parole release for people of color since 2016; and just since 2022, there would have been over 1,800 more grants of parole release for people of color.** To be clear, these denials are not just numbers—they represent real people who remained incarcerated in a New York prison rather than being at home with their families and communities. **Moreover, despite all of the increased scrutiny of these racial disparities in parole release decisions, the last six months show that these egregious racial disparities have remained, and even slightly worsened.**

With this update, the Center renews its recommendation to amend the statute governing parole determinations (Executive Law 259-i) to require the Parole Board to focus its attention on a person's current readiness for release from prison, rather than solely their crime of conviction. In doing so, the Board should be required to use more objective criteria rather than subjective and racially-biased assessments. We also recommend amending the statute governing the

powers of the Parole Board (Executive Law 259-c) to allow all people aged 55 or older, who have served 15 years or more in prison, to be considered for parole.

CHART 1: Racial Disparities in Parole Board Releases by Year 2016-2025

Year	Releases for People of Color	Total Hearings for People of Color	Release Rate for People of Color	Releases for White People	Total Hearings for White People	Release Rate for White People	% Difference Release Rate by Race
2025	438	1288	34.01%	319	670	47.61%	33.34%
2024	1667	4723	35.30%	1140	2314	49.27%	33.04%
2023	1467	4352	33.71%	1059	2221	47.68%	34.33%
2022	1139	3826	29.77%	804	2012	39.96%	29.23%
2021	1499	4296	34.89%	781	1993	39.19%	11.59%
2020	1721	4597	37.44%	1041	2192	47.49%	23.68%
2019	2377	6363	37.36%	1421	3230	43.99%	16.32%
2018	2613	6571	39.77%	1571	3313	47.42%	17.56%
2017	2066	7500	27.55%	1262	3642	34.65%	22.85%
2016	958	4258	22.50%	581	2111	27.52%	20.09%
2022-2025	4711	14189	33.20%	3322	7217	46.03%	32.38%
2016-2021	11234	33585	33.45%	6657	16481	40.39%	18.80%
2016-2025	15945	47774	33.38%	9979	23698	42.11%	23.14%

CHART 2: Worsening Racial Disparities in Parole Board Releases 2022-2025

Year	Release Rate for People of Color	Release Rate for White People	% Difference Release Rate by Race
2022-2025	33.20%	46.03%	32.38%
2016-2021	33.45%	40.39%	18.80%
Release Rate Difference by Race Over Time			72.21%

CHART 3: Racial Disparities in Parole Board Releases 2016-March 2025

Release Rate for People of Color	33.38%
Release Rate for White People	42.11%
% Difference in Release Rate	23.14%

CHART 4: Grants of Release for People of Color if Released at the Same Rates as White People

Year	Total Hearings for People of Color	Release Rate for White People	Total Grants of Release for People of Color if Released at Rates for White People	Actual Grants of Release for People of Color	Additional Grants of Release for People of Color if Released at Rates for White People
2025	438	47.61%	613	438	175
2024	1667	49.27%	2327	1667	660
2023	1467	47.68%	2075	1467	608
2022	1139	39.96%	1529	1139	390
2021	1499	39.19%	1683	1499	184
2020	1721	47.49%	2183	1721	462
2019	2377	43.99%	2799	2377	422
2018	2613	47.42%	3116	2613	503
2017	2066	34.65%	2599	2066	533
2016	958	27.52%	1172	958	214

CHART 5: Grants of Release for People of Color if Released at the Same Rates as White People 2016-2025 & 2022-2025

2016-2025	4,152 more grants of release for people of color
2022-2025	1,833 more grants of release for people of color