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**DEMOCRACYNYC: MAYOR DE BLASIO ANNOUNCES THAT NEARLY 900
INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS AND DOC FACILITY VISITORS HAVE
REGISTERED TO VOTE**

More than 500 incarcerated individuals submitted absentee ballot request forms

NEW YORK—Mayor Bill de Blasio today announced that the City has registered 897 incarcerated individuals and jail facility visitors for the upcoming General Election. The City also submitted absentee ballot request forms for a total of 547 incarcerated individuals.

Since this initiative began this past August, 624 incarcerated individuals and 273 jail facility visitors were registered in time to vote in Tuesday's election. These efforts will continue after Election Day so that incarcerated individuals are registered for future elections. The City will have the final number of absentee ballots submitted to the Board of Elections after Election Day.

"Voting gives people a chance to have their voices heard and weigh in on important issues that affect all of our lives," said **Mayor Bill de Blasio**. "With this initiative, we're helping many more incarcerated individuals participate in our democracy and have their voices heard."

"Each election represents an important opportunity to directly shape the future of our community and democracy," said **Deputy Mayor for Strategic Policy Initiatives J. Phillip Thompson**. "This administration is committed to making our elections more inclusive of all New Yorkers and simplifying the voting process, which is especially important for communities that have been historically underrepresented."

"Our goal is to give every New Yorker a voice, including individuals who are or have been involved in the justice system. We look forward to continuing to work together to strengthen the participatory democracy in our city, for justice-involved people and all of NYC's diverse communities," said **Chief Democracy Officer Ayirini Fonseca-Sabune**.

"This is a powerful way of reminding those in our custody that their vote matters, and that they still have a stake and a say in their communities," said **Department of Correction Commissioner Cynthia Brann**. "Thanks to this initiative, it is now easier for those in our custody to exercise their democratic rights."

This past August, the Mayor launched a robust voter registration and information campaign to help incarcerated individuals exercise their right to vote. For the first time ever, the City facilitated the direct pick-up and delivery of voter registration forms and absentee ballots, expediting the registration and mail-in process. The effort is being led in partnership with the Department of Correction, the Legal Aid Society and the Campaign Finance Board.

Volunteers from the Mayor's Public Engagement Unit, the Campaign Finance Board and the Legal Aid Society launched voter registration and Get-Out-the-Vote campaigns within DOC facilities. This included displaying more than 1,200 posters throughout facilities encouraging people who are incarcerated to vote and eventually stocking libraries with non-partisan information about candidates published by CFB's NYC Votes. Additionally, incarcerated individuals have the opportunity to attend regular, voluntary discussions with DOC program counselors to learn more about the voting process. The Mayor's Public Engagement Unit also engaged City jail visitors and encouraged them to register to vote.

Before this initiative, registration forms and absentee ballots were processed with other outgoing mail in jail facilities, which is subject to security procedures that may have inadvertently caused missed deadlines. Incarcerated individuals will now fill out and submit forms directly to staff who will ensure registration forms and absentee ballots are delivered to the Board of Elections in a timely manner. There are currently many incarcerated individuals in City jails who are eligible to vote.

This campaign will continue through Election Day to ensure the timely delivery of absentee ballots.

Increasing voting access is part of Mayor de Blasio's DemocracyNYC initiative, which aims to increase civic engagement and strengthen democracy locally and nationally.

Assembly Member Latrice M. Walker said, "I applaud Mayor de Blasio for launching DemocracyNYC which led to over 800 New Yorkers registering to vote. This initiative proved how necessary it was to extend voter registration efforts to individuals who believed the myth that their incarceration removed their ability to exercise their right to vote."

"Voting is a fundamental right of all Americans. Making it easier for those in our city jails to vote shows that every voice counts, because they do. The significant participation in this year's election from those in the justice system proves that, and I thank the Mayor's Office and Department of Correction for honoring this democratic right," said **Council Member Keith Powers**.

"Every New Yorker who is eligible to vote – including incarcerated persons – should be encouraged to make their voice heard at the ballot box. Voter participation here in New York and across the country has never been more important. I am overjoyed that through DemocracyNYC, the City is continuing its efforts to support and expand democratic engagement across the five boroughs," said **Council Member Helen Rosenthal**.

"Innocent until proven guilty means every person awaiting trial is entitled to vote with a specific right to request absentee ballots. Thank you to Mayor de Blasio for protecting the vital right to vote and enfranchising 900 detainees," said **Council Member Ben Kallos**.

"Justice-involved individuals who are eligible to vote should have the opportunity to participate in our Democracy, and we should make it easy for them to do so. It is good news for our City that more individuals are able to make their voices heard in shaping the future of their communities," said **Council Member Rory I. Lancman**

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