



2023 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Chief Defenders Association of New York (CDANY) is a membership organization of appointed Public Defenders, Conflict Defenders, Executive Directors of non-profit public defense offices and Administrators of Assigned Counsel Panels throughout New York State. Our organizations collectively provide the mandated service of indigent representation to close to 400,000 people annually in New York's criminal, family and appellate courts. We are the voice of the defender organizations that are the fulcrum upon which the integrity of the criminal justice system rests.

FUNDING

CDANY supports funding to increase the statutory rate for 18b Assigned Counsel. It is imperative that defense organizations stay competitive in an evolving market and have the ability to offer salaries to compete with firms in an employees' market. This is a quality issue, a retention issue, a racial equity issue.

FAMILY REGULATION SYSTEM

CDANY supports legislation that protects basic human rights and reduces the number of families who end up in the family regulation system. Including legislation that works to limit the reach of a punitive system.

ALTERNATIVES TO INCARCERATION

CDANY supports legislation like Treatment Not Jails that would expand eligibility for treatment for court-involved individuals and shifts the presumption from incarceration to community support.

PROTECTING REFORMS

CDANY remains committed to landmark Bail, Discovery, Speedy Trial, and Raise the Age reform legislation. We resist any rollbacks to these laws and ask the legislature to increase implementation funding and direct funds to community-based organizations.

FAIR & JUST TRIALS

New York can and must take steps to ensure more fair and just trials for people accused of crimes, which will require reform of arrest procedures, criminal laws and expanding access to jury service to diverse New Yorkers.

POST CONVICTION FAIRNESS

CDANY supports legislation would amend current law and make it consistent with the legislature's original intent regarding the right to seek post-conviction relief.

ENDING STIGMATIZATION

CDANY supports legislation like Clean Slate, that will help ensure that New Yorkers are not punished in perpetuity by establishing a unique two-step process of first automatically sealing and later automatically expunging conviction records once a person has served their sentence.

DIGNITY FOR THE INCARCERATED

Too many incarcerated New Yorkers endure conditions that threaten their health, safety, and human dignity. CDANY supports legislation to improve the conditions in which incarcerated must people live.

PRISON TO HOME

For too long, New York's parole system has had a framework of punishment, rather than a framework of care. CDANY advocates for legislation that supports those who are leaving prison and their families..

PROTECTING YOUTH RIGHTS

Currently, policy does not reflect current scientific knowledge about brain development in young people. CDANY supports legislation that provides additional safeguards to protect the Constitutional rights of children.