

Press Release  
\*\*\*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE\*\*\*  
February 13, 2020

## **LGBTQ DEMOCRATS SUPPORT BAIL REFORM**

*New York State's LGBTQ Democratic Clubs Stand United  
in Urging State Legislators to Not Be Swayed by Fear-Mongers*

Pre-trial detention puts lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer and gender non-conforming people at risk. Like other marginalized populations, LGBTQ individuals often are disproportionately criminalized, and unable to pay bail, forcing them to face jail time. In jail, they face horrific abuse, assault, and even death. LGBTQ people are also held in immigration detention due to low-level criminal convictions. To avoid jail time LGBTQ people make plea agreements which further entrap them into further arrests and incarceration, and for LGBTQ immigrants, even deportation.

In 2019 New York State eliminated cash bail for the vast majority of charges, which keeps LGBTQ people accused of crimes in their community with better access to competent resources for legal aid, health care, and social services. This was an important step forward towards equal justice. True community safety can be realized by instituting supportive services in the community, instead of putting people in jail. Municipalities that have not fully instituted supportive services must take action immediately.

New York is leading the way on bail reform and taking important steps forward towards a more equitable and just pretrial process for all. We cannot allow fear-mongering and discrimination to roll back the progress that New York has made for those most impacted by the criminal legal system: black and brown communities, transgender communities, immigrant communities and people in the sex trade.

We call on the New York State legislature to recognize the intersection of advancing a more just legal system with our broader LGBT rights movement. During this heightened political moment, we need our elected leaders to stay the course and we remind them that the Stonewall rebellion was resistance to a carceral state, which attempted to over-police our communities. The nation is watching as this transformative bail and pretrial justice vision is put into practice. The LGBTQ community nationwide will benefit from New York's bold action if it is sustained.

**Stonewall Democratic Club of New York City  
Jim Owles Liberal Democratic Club  
New York City Pride and Power  
Hudson Valley Stonewall Democrats  
Stonewall Democrats of Western New York  
Lambda Independent Democrats of Brooklyn  
Lesbian & Gay Democratic Club of Queens**