

To whom it may concern,

After attending today's BOC Public Meeting, I continue to be against the two variances that were discussed today.

First, the frequency of meeting is necessary for public oversight and reducing this would be detrimental to our and incarcerated peoples' democratic rights. We should be able to interact with the board in these type of meetings at the current frequency to ensure our voices are being heard and we are being seen. I believe the frequency for which we are able to meet is correct at this time.

Second, the ban on packages and mail is detrimental to the physical, emotional and mental health of incarcerated members. By disallowing access to physical mail, we are not solving the issue of fentanyl getting in the hands of those incarcerated at Rikers. Rather, as was brought up today, fentanyl is more often coming in from COs. There have been mail bans in other states, including Pennsylvania, yet fentanyl continues to be an issue in these states. The issue is not mails but rather the prison system. As long as people are locked up, those in charge will continue to abuse their power and hurt those locked up in various manners. Physical letters and packages are also some of the only ways families are able to stay in contact. The price of visits and phone calls is steep. At least with packages, folks are able to stay in touch at a much lower cost. I want to remind you that the majority of people in Rikers have not been convicted of a crime, why should they be robbed of their access to their family and friends even further? How can we expect people to leave the system and to never return when we don't allow them access to care?

Thank you for your time,
Sasha