

Unity Democratic Club
Membership Meeting
May 18, 2023
Location: 3875 Waldo Avenue, Community Room-5th floor

Betsey Knapp called the meeting to order at 6:40.

Madeline Ritter introduced the **first speakers of the evening, all representing the RAPP Campaign (Release Aging People in Prison): Jose Saldana, Executive Director; Anisah Sabur Mumin, NYC Organizer; and Jeannie Colon, Community Leader.**

Jose, a Norwood resident, related the story of his experience with the parole system in NYS. After four unsuccessful Parole Board hearings, he was released at the age of 65 by finally convincing a commissioner that he needed to be judged on who he had become while incarcerated rather than on the basis of his original crime. That insight is the basis for two bills being advocated: Elder Parole (which stipulates that any incarcerated individual over the age of 55, who has already served 15 years of their sentence shall have an interview with the Parole Board) and Fair and Timely Parole (provides that the Board of Parole shall release incarcerated persons who are eligible for release on parole unless such person presents a current and unreasonable risk or such risk cannot be mitigated by parole supervision).

As of this date, there is a majority sponsorship of Elder Parole and close to that of Fair and Timely Parole. There has been progress in the Assembly as well.

Anisah made a request for our members to contact their Assembly and Senate representatives and to contact Speaker Heastie and Leader Stewart-Cousins. The tool for doing so can be found [here](#).

Brent Schneider, aide to Sen. Gustavo Rivera, spoke to us as a member of Unity Dems, rather than in his official capacity. He did announce that Sen. Rivera would be holding satellite office hours on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month at the Riverdale Senior Center at 2600 Netherland Ave. He followed that up with a rousing speech about how despite our recent setback of the successful challenge to our slate of judicial delegates appearing on the primary ballot in June, we will prevail and be strengthened by each of these experiences.

