Rollbacks to state bail reform officially take affect

Newark residents, leaders oppose new youth prison in city's west ward

By: Corey Crockett

NEW YORK CITY — In 2019, state legislators made the decision to enact sweeping bail reform and eliminate all forms of cash bail for the majority of
After months of outcry, bail reform was overhauled in the state budget, which was passed in the spring and signed by the governor in early April.

Though the City of New York voted on its budget just this week, the state fiscal year ends in March.

Now, those changes are taking affect about 90 days after the budget's passage.

The budget expanded the list of bail-eligible crimes to include sex trafficking, money laundering in support of terrorism in the third and fourth degree, and child pornography, among other offenses. Bail is also back on the table as an option for repeat offenders and those who commit crimes resulting in death.

The changes came after law enforcement agencies, bail bond suppliers, politicians and citizens said 2019 bail reform went too far and allowed for the release of repeat offenders, saying it'd result in a rise in crime.

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who supported bail reform, lauded the rollbacks as well.

But Thursday, activists said re-instituting these bail measures is a slap in the face to Black and Brown Americans that are currently calling for changes to the nation's criminal justice system.

"For too long, Black people and people of color and our communities have been under attack from an enemy that disguised itself as law and order," Marvin Mayfield, with the Center for Community Alternatives, said in a remote news conference. "[Today,] New York takes a step backward into this abyss of fear and hatred and racism."

Initial bail reform was intended to reduce the number of people in New York jails and prevent thousands from pre-trial detention, Mayfield said, "because they couldn't pay their way out of hell."
first place.

"We were up against the police unions, up against the district attorneys and people who invested and reap the benefits of bail," said Assembly Member Latrice Walker. "Now that seeing the social and civil unrest based on Black Lives Matter and saying that mass incarceration has no place in our just society anymore, we need for our colleagues to halt these rollbacks."

Activists and legislators Thursday called for Albany to pass a new set of bills to reduce the incarcerated population and end what they called state violence.

Back in April, though, Police Benevolent Association President Pat Lynch, who leads one of the city's police unions, said even the rollbacks didn't go far enough.
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