

# Amicus Brief Filed Opposing Mayor Adams's Emergency Orders Against Suspending Solitary Confinement

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Selendy Gay attorneys Corey Stoughton, Drake Reed, and Danny Shokry filed an amicus brief in support of the New York City Council and Public Advocate Jumaane D. Williams's joint lawsuit in the New York State Supreme Court to invalidate Mayor Eric Adams's emergency executive orders that suspend Local Law 42 of 2024, which bans solitary confinement in city jails. The lawsuit argues that Mayor Adams's use of emergency executive authority to block the law, despite its passage by the City Council and subsequent veto override, is an unlawful abuse of authority. Local Law 42 was designed to end the harmful use of solitary confinement, spurred by the deaths of several people who are incarcerated who died after prolonged confinement. The brief was filed on behalf of The Bronx Defenders, Brooklyn Defender Services, Neighborhood Defender Services of Harlem, New York County Defender Services, and Queens Defenders.

The Mayor's orders, issued just one day before the law was set to take effect, declared a "state of emergency" based on the impending implementation of the law, which the petitioners argue does not constitute an actual emergency under state law. The petitioners contend that Mayor Adams's actions are "arbitrary, capricious, and beyond his lawful authority" and could set a dangerous precedent for future administrations to use emergency powers to overturn democratic decisions. Amici, along with the New York City Council and Public Advocate, plan to push for the full implementation of Local Law 42 to protect the human rights of incarcerated New Yorkers and end the practice of solitary confinement, which research shows exacerbates mental health issues and increases the risk of self-harm and death.

The amicus brief filed in support of the petitioners' claims presents firsthand stories that demonstrate how the Department of Correction presently abuses solitary confinement and other practices banned by Local Law 42 in ways that traumatize people who are incarcerated in the city's jails. The passage of Local Law 42 represented a rare moment in which incarcerated New Yorkers spoke up about the horrors they experienced, and the democratic system responded. But with a single, undemocratic stroke of the Mayor's pen, their voices have now been silenced – and the violence against them perpetuated.

[Read the amicus brief here.](#)

**Attorneys**

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**Practice**

- Public Interest and Pro Bono