

Vera Institute of Justice

Criminal Justice Issues and Prisoners' Rights

<https://www.vera.org/blog/supporting-bail-reform-is-good-business>

Public Facing Advocacy Writing

There is no doubt that New York's bail system is broken.

Over 16,000 New Yorkers across the state are incarcerated because they cannot afford to post bail, at a cost of over \$350 million a year to taxpayers to hold them in jail.

Advocates, reformers, policymakers, and legislators have long been calling for bail reform in Albany. Yesterday, another group joined the call: a group of 40 business leaders who purchased a full-page ad in the *New York Times* encouraging New York lawmakers to act before the end of the state legislative session on June 20. The signatories included Ursula Burns, executive chairman of VEON Ltd., Ronald Perelman of MacAndrews and Forbes, and Bill Lauder, executive chairman of the Estée Lauder Companies, along with many others from both sides of the political aisle.

These business leaders said that bail reform is in the best interest of the individuals, families, and businesses that make up our communities.

They're right.

Using money as the key determinant of a person's liberty is unjust. Earlier this year, [a report by the New York City Comptroller](#) found that people in custody lose about \$28 million in annual wages because they cannot afford to make bail. The *lucky ones*—those able to pay a bail bondsman to get out of jail—collectively forfeit between \$16 million and \$27 million a year in nonrefundable fees to the commercial bail industry.

The cost of our broken bail system to incarcerated people, family members, and taxpayers is unconscionable, especially in the face of research that shows that people don't need money at stake to show up to court. For the vast majority of people arrested, a reminder of their next court date, transportation to court, and access to pretrial services is all they need to safely be at home, in their jobs, and with their families pending trial. The bipartisan group of business leaders who signed onto bail reform yesterday recognized that it simply makes good sense to take money out of the equation when it comes to bail. Now Albany should too.

Transformative change, sent to your inbox.

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