



Tuesday May 4, 2021

### Immediate Release

Contact: J. Hill, [WeRisettoLegalize@gmail.com](mailto:WeRisettoLegalize@gmail.com)

### **We Rise To Legalize (We Rise) calls for independent oversight to monitor the conviction review of an investigation, arrest, and indictment brought by the Manhattan District Attorney's Office against We Rise To Legalize founder & trustee Attorney LaMon Bland.**

We are also calling on all 2021 NY County District Attorney candidates join in solidarity for independent oversight and a release of all evidence. Justice and fairness cannot wait until after the upcoming Democratic Primary election.

After a full year investigation then a bench trial in 2019, Mr. Bland was convicted of crime(s) by the NY County Criminal Court. He was sentenced to three years non-custodial supervision with extensive restrictions. As with all convicted persons Mr. Bland, his family, and various interests have suffered irreparable collateral consequences due to this conviction.

In February, 2021 it was revealed that the Manhattan District Attorney recommended an excessive sentence. It was then revealed in April 2021 that the Manhattan DA's office withheld exculpatory evidence favorable to Mr. Bland.

In addition to the aforementioned, an investigation will show the District Attorney used unfair tactics to intentionally lessen charges in order to deny Mr. Bland jury trial. We believe that was done intentionally to punish Mr. Bland for not taking a plea and as a diversion to deflect the attention from misconduct from within government.

### **We Rise stands with the Bland family calling for:**

- (1) an immediate 'impartial' hearing with third party oversight;*
- (2) the release of all evidence to include video recordings of the detention in 1 Hogan Place and 100 Centre Street that will show two separate assaults of Mr. Bland while restrained in custody; and*
- (3) production of any and all evidence to determine if a full dismissal and/or a new jury trial is appropriate.*

We believe these investigations and all subsequent interactions are in retaliation for the Cannabis activism and community reinvestment policies Mr. Bland and the WeRise organization(s) were implementing across the state of New York since 2017.

Therefore we are asking family, friends, supporters, and **current 2021 NY County District Attorney candidates** to join in our calling for **NY Governor Andrew Cuomo, NY State Attorney General Letisha James and/or the US Department of Justice** to provide independent oversight to assure a fair resolution.

It is not our intent to see any person(s) receive a criminal prosecution for their misconduct. On the contrary, Mr. Bland has consistently requested this be resolved privately and encouraged amnesty opportunities to bad actors recognizing the importance of internal reform within the office. He believes, and we agree, that a more measured approach will encourage a swift resolution, offer full transparency and assure no other victims suffer similar misconduct by the District Attorney's office.

We therefore request you join in our call for an independent investigation and oversight of this matter. Continue to lift up Mr. Bland's family and the We Rise organization in prayer as we continue our work ending the War on Drugs in America and ensuring communities of color across America are restored.

**Sign the petition at** <https://www.change.org/LamonBland>

#WERISETOLEGALIZE New York, New York #WeRiseNY #WeRiseDC #WeRiseGA...and growing