

Cumberbatch joins national organization focused on enhancing safety and justice

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NEW YORK, NY – Khalil A. Cumberbatch, a nationally recognized formerly incarcerated advocate for criminal justice policy reform, has been named a Senior Fellow by the [Council on Criminal Justice](#) (CCJ), a nonpartisan invitational membership organization and think tank.

Cumberbatch will play a lead role in helping direct CCJ's membership, engagement, and policy initiatives. He will begin his tenure in August 2020.

Cumberbatch's advocacy, focused in New York, has sought to shrink the footprint of the criminal justice system by expanding the use of alternatives to incarceration and pretrial diversion programs, shuttering jail beds (including those used for immigration cases), expanding the use of clemency to remove people from correctional supervision, and increasing the use of accelerated and compassionate release.

In 2010, Cumberbatch was released after serving almost seven years in the New York state prison system. Four years later, he was one of two recipients of an executive pardon from New York Governor Andrew Cuomo that prevented his deportation from the United States.

Cumberbatch comes to CCJ from New Yorkers United for Justice, where he was Chief Strategist. He previously served as Associate Vice President of Policy at the Fortune Society. He is also a lecturer at Columbia University School of Social Work and earned a master's degree in social work from the CUNY Herbert Lehman College, where he received the Urban Justice Award.

"Khalil has a decade of success working on behalf of marginalized people in disadvantaged communities, on the ground and in the policy arena," said [Adam Gelb](#), CCJ's president and CEO. "In this tumultuous time, Khalil's professional and life experiences will make him an extraordinarily effective partner with Council members working across the country for safety and justice."

"Given the current state of our country, a tremendous amount of work is needed to

dramatically change the criminal justice system as we know it – a system so deeply entrenched that it will take multiple stakeholders to make change a reality,” Cumberbatch said. “The time is now, the need for change is clear, and the political winds have shifted to favor criminal justice reform. The Council is poised to become the platform where these stakeholders gather to push forth and support leading policy ideas, which will help to ultimately end mass incarceration as we know it in this country. I am excited and eager to join the Council and look forward to working with its many prestigious members.”

“The experience of formerly incarcerated people is an essential perspective as we work together to fix our nation’s criminal justice system,” said [Louis Reed](#), a CCJ Trustee and #cut50 national organizer. “Khalil is the right partner at the right time, and I’m thrilled to welcome him to the Council.”

CCJ is a nonpartisan membership organization and think tank created to advance understanding of the criminal justice policy challenges facing the nation and build consensus for solutions based on facts, evidence, and fundamental principles of justice. To learn more, visit counciloncj.org.