



ALL OF US OR NONE

NEWSPAPER

Vol. 6 #5 • Published by Legal Services for Prisoners with Children, Founded in 1978 • prisonerswithchildren.org/newspaper **MAY 2025**

DREAM PRISON

by Leo Cardez

I had a dream I woke up and went out into the prison Yard for child’s pose and downward-facing dog with a group of other inmates and officers. We all stretched on our rubber mats as our yogi guided us through a thirty-minute yoga session.

I had a dream I went for a job around the prison grounds as an officer followed me on a micro-scooter. They called it dynamic security, and it meant officers and inmates ate together, played volleyball together, did everything but sleep and shower together. Officers talked to me like a human, they even encouraged me.

I had a dream US recidivism rates dropped from 70-80% to 20-25%.

I had a dream the officers were role models, coaches and mentors. They were paid twice their current salary. They went through two to three years of intensive training in a highly competitive selection process where only the best, most ethical, most professional, most mentally balanced were hired. Trainees needed to pass rigorous physical, emotional, and mental tests while studying law, ethics, criminology, reintegration and social work. They did hands-on training for one year, proving themselves worthy, before returning to school for their final exams.

I had a dream my prison’s architecture was award-winning minimalist chic. It was strategically built to bring in nature and harmonize with the natural surroundings. The living accommodations were airy and clean and gave the sense of an upscale



liberal arts college campus. There was a wall, but no barbed wire. The security cameras were hidden. Back in my single man cell I had my own private toilet, sink, shower, fridge, desk, flat TV screen, and a forest view. The Dayroom had comfy sofas, well-equipped kitchenettes, and was peaceful. Quiet even.

I had a dream I was convicted and sent to prison as my punishment, but not for punishment. I could still do everything a regular citizen could do. I could

vote, access quality healthcare and education, in brief I was treated like a human being.

I had a dream America did not have life sentences, that our maximum sentence was capped at 21 years. That America believed in true rehabilitation and science and not simply revenge and punishment.

I had a dream I was taught how to become a

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ON THE QUEST FOR DEMOCRACY



On May 19, 2025, LSPC held its 13th Annual Quest for Democracy day of advocacy at the California State Capitol in Sacramento. This event brought together hundreds of formerly incarcerated leaders, system-impacted family members, and partner organizations from across the state to advocate for legislation that directly impacts us. The day included a program of speakers and performers, a march to show the power of our numbers, a panel discussion on involuntary servitude as a vestige of slavery, and visits to legislators.

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Pastor Brian K. Woodson, Sr., addresses the Board.

REPLACE WELLPATH AT SANTA RITA JAIL!

Reprinted with permission from Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails
from the ICJJ Newsletter No. 15 (May 2025)

A successful campaign to present urgent concerns about poor medical care in Alameda County Jail was led by The Stop Deaths and Harm group, an offshoot of the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails. Our concerns were voiced on March 27, 2025, at the Board of Supervisors’ Public Protection Committee meeting chaired by Supervisor Marquez, with Supervisor Miley attending.

Wellpath has been the medical care provider in Santa Rita jail since 2016. The company is owned by a global investment firm and provides healthcare in 34 of California’s 56 county jails, as well as other jails and prisons across the country. Over 1500 lawsuits have been filed nationwide against

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ALL OF US OR NONE
NEWSPAPER

Our All of Us or None newspaper serves to link those of us who have been locked up, those who are locked up, as well as our families and allies in this struggle.

We want to ensure that the voices of our people inside are heard and that inside artists are recognized for their contributions to this movement. **Your stories matter!**

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Inside News Articles. Opinion Pieces. Reviews. Features:
Creative or exploratory. News Analysis. Poetry. Art. Comics
We can't wait to hear from you!



SELF DETERMINATION PLEDGE

As members of All of Us or None, we pledge

To demand the right to speak in our own voices

To treat each other with respect and not allow differences to divide us

To accept responsibility for any acts that may have caused harm to our families, our communities or ourselves

To fight all forms of discrimination

To help build the economic stability of formerly-incarcerated people

To claim and take care of our own children and our families

To support community struggles to stop using prisons as the answer to social problems

To play an active role in making our communities safe for everyone

CONVICTED GRAPHICS
© 2025 BY JUAN G. HERNANDEZ

Presenting: Convict Chronicles #1 - MAIL CALL

Introducing: Anarchist Andy

@instagram.com/jch_convictedart

www.jchconvictedart.com

CONTROL BOOTH

MAIL CALL!

Any mail for Anarchist Andy?

Just the usual.

CHY

CCJ

NOTIFICATION OF UNAUTHORIZED MAIL

NAME: THE ABOLITIONIST NEWSPAPER ISSUE #43

Censorship and Repression

REASON: Safety and Security to Prison

JxLxHx

Sure. Thanks for keeping our Grievance Officer's job secure.

This some bullshit! Give me 3 grievance forms.

CHY

CCJ

Sentencing Reform will reach me... I just gotta be Patient!

Jessie Milo

Last Words of Hopeful Pete

At 83, you're doing great, But we're gonna need more groups from you. Parole denied 3 years!

BPH

LIVE

CDER

Blind-ADA-Deaf

Hello, is anyone there? I'm late for my Dialysis treatment!

Jessie Milo

The Struggle is Real!

Life is Like
by Brittany Patterson
Female Community Reentry Program, Sacramento

Life is like a ripple in a river, and the salmon swimming upstream, just like that we've got to be free.

As I lay here in the night I contemplate all my past dreams of you and me. Of all the things I'd say to make you see... If I could speak the words, to help you understand that my actions were not done with deceit. My plans were never to become the one you'd meet... The one to cause your defeat.

Oh how I hate how you've grown to resent me, for the things I've caused that I'd never thought could now consume me.

In the night you'd hold the light, from the depths of

my pain, you've shown me light, you've shone so bright. To come alive from these sleepless nights... Yet I lay awake and contemplate all your new found hate. But I will not lay down and die tonight, no not I, no not tonight.

There is no forgiveness for things done that go unjustified, yet I am here again and I won't deny, the things I've done in my life, and why I cry.

Now it's just you and I... and the static of all the hidden things that went unseen by you and me! I now realize why you've hated me so...

But life is like a ripple in a river, and the salmon swimming up stream and like taht, we've got to get free!

From me...to you...love "B."

Please forgive me

Wellpath continued from page 1

Wellpath, and the company’s recent bankruptcy filing will prevent affected families from receiving justice.

Every report card on Wellpath’s care at Santa Rita has come back with devastatingly low marks. Perhaps most egregious was the death of Maurice Monk, who in 2021 lay dying for three days in Santa Rita Jail before a Wellpath nurse and Sheriff’s deputies recognized his death. Three days of prescription medication and food had been thrown through the slot of his door and accumulated on the floor of Mr. Monk’s cell. Alameda County was sued by the family, and the County settled the case for \$7 million. Wellpath has not settled.

Over the past several months, we have met with Supervisor Marquez’s staff and secured the March 27th Public Protection committee meeting to present our opposition to Wellpath. Both Supervisor Marquez, who has been supportive throughout this process, and Supervisor Miley stated that they will support the Board of Supervisors taking action to explore alternatives to Wellpath. Their contract is up in 2027, and it is important to start the lengthy process of exploring alternatives.

Dream Prison continued from page 1

certified mechanic who worked in an auto shop on the prison grounds, or as a graphic designer, or carpenter, or I received my Bachelor's degree or PhD. I was allowed out of my cell at daybreak and not locked up again until 8:30p.m. I spent my day working, learning, eating healthy, exercising, and socializing. In other words, I was becoming my best self and preparing myself to become a positive and contributing member of society upon my release.

I had a dream all the officers were treated with respect. They would all feel safe, even the female officers. Especially them. There were no officer assaults. Violence overall was so rare it was barely an afterthought.

I had a dream I was able to stay in contact with my family and even allowed weekend visits where I would stay in a hotel-style room on the prison grounds with my wife and kids. There was a playground for the kids and a big bed for my wife and I.

I had a dream the counselors only had three inmates to supervise, and they did everything in their power to help us. They got us into programs and life skills courses as needed. They were trained in psychology and sociology and more importantly, they lead with their hearts.

I had a dream my prison had multiple arts related programs like a prison choir, band, even a recording studio. There were band performances, theatre performances and even cooking demos.

All this to say I had a dream my prison made me feel like a human again. What a dream it was...

To me, this pipe dream might as well be on Mars, but in Norway this is the everyday reality of their people in prison. Every single part of my dream is in effect in Norway’s prison system, even in maximum security. And it’s working. Recidivism is down. Violence is down. Crime is down. I have long believed there must be a better way and now I have that proof.

Unfortunately, even as American politicians and prison officials have traveled to Norway and seen firsthand the success of their prison system, we have yet to see any significant changes in that direction to our own prison systems. They have the data and witnessed how Norway’s approach benefits all stakeholders, the public, the inmates, the prison staff, the whole country benefits from safer communities. (Note, Norway instilled these changes in the 1990s which is also around the same time they started topping the World's Happiest Country list. America doesn't even crack the top

One alternative is to develop a robust Request for Proposals process to receive bids from multiple healthcare providers bidding on providing well-defined levels of care. Another alternative is for the county to provide the services directly. This is already being done successfully at local jails in San Francisco, Santa Clara, Marin, and Contra Costa Counties.

Supervisor Miley stated on the record that he supports ending the contract with Wellpath and finding an alternative.

Over 30 advocates and concerned residents spoke at the Public Protection meeting. None who spoke was more passionate than Elvira Monk, Maurice Monk’s sister: “I feel Wellpath needs to leave,” Monk said, choking back tears as she spoke. “I called up there multiple times trying to get his prescribed medication into his body. And they kept giving me a runaround.”

Have you experienced less-than-adequate medical care in prison or jail? Do you know someone at Santa Rita Jail? We want to hear from you. Send stories about your personal experience seeking and receiving medical treatment to our In-Custody Coordinator attn: Robert Bowden. In your letter, please mark whether you would like us to keep your story private or anonymous, consider your story for publication, and/or share your story with the ICJJ.

20. Coincidence?) Why then has America not adopted similar policies? The long-term savings are clear, so it's not about the money. The prison staff are better trained and paid. They are safer, happier, and healthier so it's not them. It's pretty clear the inmates are better off as are their families. Is it simply because it goes against America's tough on crime (Justice for victims) ethos? Can we not see past our anger? Are we not better than our worst instincts? Do two wrongs make a right? Is this the mercy the Bible preaches? The Christian values our country is supposedly built upon?

Norway's approach is predicated on something I mentioned earlier: treating inmates like humans. As Hoidal, Haldel's maximum security prison governor (warden), is quoted in the BBC piece I based this essay on as responding to questions about the prison's "cushy" conditions, "Because inmates are human beings. They have done wrong, they must be punished [removing their freedom], but they are still human beings ... So we are releasing your neighbor [Norway does not have life sentences]. If we treat inmates like animals in prison, then we will release animals onto your street." But this has been a lengthy process.

In the 1990s, as America cracked down on crime by passing harsh punitive laws which led to overincarceration and ballooned costs, Norway underwent a rigorous series of criminal justice reforms to pull the focus away from revenge and redirect it toward the rehabilitation of convicted individuals. People in custody were offered daily training and educational programming, furthermore, the role of guard was completely overhauled. In short, their new strategy was to rehumanize people in custody.

I believe rehumanizing people in prison is the solution to America's broken criminal justice system (not to mention a heap of other issues). Social sciences expert, Professor Michelle Maiese, explains dehumanization this way, "The psychological process of demonizing the enemy, making them seem less than human and hence not worthy of human treatment." Dehumanization starts with language and imagery like felon, convict, killer, rapist, thief, druggie, etc. Labels reduce people to images and can metastasize into loss of empathy, which leads to anger, even hate. Bestselling author and renown speaker, Professor Brene Brown, says most people's moral code subscribes to the idea that torture is wrong and that all people should be treated with dignity and respect, but when people are perceived or portrayed as less than, as criminal or evil, it gives others the right to treat them outside their moral code. Brown

The Stop Deaths and Harm Group includes representatives of the American Friends Service Committee, Families Advocating for the Seriously Mentally Ill (FASMI), the Interfaith Coalition for Justice in our Jails, and other individuals. The next step will be a joint Public Health and Public Protection meeting currently set for 2 p.m. on May 16th, where the Stop Deaths and Harm Group will push for a resolution to explore alternatives to Wellpath to be presented to the entire Board of Supervisors.



The Interfaith Coalition for Justice In our Jails (ICJJ), a table of Faith in Action East Bay, is dedicated to bringing members of diverse faith communities together to achieve transformative change within the Alameda County justice system. This and previous newsletters can be found at www.icjjalamedacounty.org.

explains that this process is often involuntary and subconscious as it is human nature, we are hardwired into finding meaning to language. When prison guards are trained to call our meal times "feeds" and shove slop through chuckholes into cages long enough, seeing inmates as animals isn't that far a leap. But Norway has offered American people in custody a ray of hope to our otherwise dreary existence.

First, we must remove all dehumanizing language for people in custody in prisons, in public, in private, and in the media/Hollywood. Remove all inmate numbers and dehumanizing language from all internal and external training materials and communication. Train and ingrain people working in prisons with a new vocabulary and encourage them to question and call out any attempts to reduce someone's humanity because we know this is the first step to human rights violations. Dehumanization is at the root of all genocides and atrocities throughout human history (think slavery and the Holocaust e.g.). I think a line from Brown's book, Braving the Wilderness, says it this way:

Dehumanizing and holding people accountable are mutually exclusive. Humiliation and dehumanization are not accountability or social justice tools, they're emotional offloading at best, emotional self-indulgence at worst. In Norway, everything evolved from the simple premise that when you treat people like people good things happen. Once you uproot hate and plant kindness in the rich soil of respect the only thing left to do is give the flowers time to bloom (to complete the cliché).

The rehumanization of Americans convicted of crimes is my new dream. I have long been searching for something I could hold up as proof to say we're doing it wrong and there's a better way to say: Here, this is how and this is why. (I can't thank Norway enough.) Which is not to say I believe it will be easy for America, making dreams come true rarely is. I expect significant pushback and vitriol from our deeply fractioned country, but we are at a critical juncture where we can either push towards creating a better, more humane, fair system or lower our sights, continue to compromise our humanity, and fall deeper into the darkness. For all of America's faults, I do not believe we as a nation should ever compromise or settle for anything less than our full potential. Investing in this large-scale initiative to rehumanize the inmate population may not be the most expected path, will it be the easiest or cheapest—some discomfort is to be expected. But not all pain is bad; freedom and a certain type of beauty can often be found on the other side of pain if only we muster the courage to try.

CLEAN SLATE

by Nedric Miller
Robert "Elder" Freeman Policy Fellow

The goal of Clean Slate is to get prior offenders or those formerly incarcerated to make efforts to expunge their records, so each individual can move on in their lives. Those that qualify for this expungement can, after removal, apply for jobs or opportunities that previously would have not been allowed due to past history. In this framework, lawyers provide their clients assistance by supporting and leading the administrative process of filing for expungement.

LSPC hosted this Clean Slate event at Sacramento State University in partnership with Project Rebound, Northern California Lawyers, and Tribal Lawyers representing Native Americans. With the help of live-scan, fingerprint technology which allows users to receive their rap sheet, we were able to offer support to 25 attendees—all with hope of removing the carceral system's hold on their lives.



From left to right: Jason Golfinos with California Indian Legal Services; Michael Love with Project Rebound; Nedric Miller, Eliza Patten, & Errol Vernon from LSPC; Julie Aguilar Rogado and Jennifer Anders-Gable from Legal Services of Northern California; and Noe Gudino (LSPC) at the Clean Slate Clinic event on April 11, 2025.

I think most never think about the outcomes of those impacted by a curved history, the results of a never ending cycle due to the mistakes many make at a time of desperation or immaturity. The Clean Slate event allowed me to view the consequences of those imprisoned by a carceral system that really does not believe in change, forgiveness and hope, opening the gates to physical freedom while

knowing the barriers of stigma won't allow many to move forward. One after another, each attenddee revealed their story of wanting opportunity. When those chances arrived, society stripped them of their dignity and barred reconciliation with who they once were. Through this event, LSPC and Project Rebound offered hope and a chance to succeed by merit. This offering was motivated through the wisdom of lived experience.

At the event, I got to see hope in many attendees' eyes. I imagine that for each of them, it was self realization

with understanding and the solution of finally breaking a cycle. I think the work of LSPC and sister orgs sometimes goes overlooked because many do not realize: opening the door for some, is actually opening the door for the many.

WHEN I WENT TO JAIL, I DIDN'T JUST LOSE MY FREEDOM—I LOST MY DAUGHTER

by Stephanie Jeffcoat, AOUON member
This story was first published by The Imprint, an independent, nonprofit daily news publication dedicated to covering child welfare, juvenile justice, mental health and educational issues faced by vulnerable children and families.

When we talk about incarceration, we often talk about a length of time—how many months or years someone gets, when they'll be released. What we don't talk about enough is the cost of that time: the lost relationships, the missed milestones in our families' lives, and for parents like me, the bond with our children.

In California, there is legislation on the table—AB 1195, introduced by Assemblymember Sharon Quirk-Silva—that would address that last part. According to the author, “When a parent is incarcerated, a child should not be punished with separation. California law recognizes the importance of the parent-child bond, but too often bureaucratic obstacles and a lack of coordination prevent meaningful visitation. AB 1195 ensures that county jails and child welfare agencies uphold the rights of incarcerated parents by requiring regular, in-person visits, unless a court finds, with clear and convincing evidence, that it would harm the child. This bill is about stability, reunification, and

building stronger parent-child relationships.”

I support this as someone who knows what it feels like to lose access to your child, not by court order—but by silence, inaction, and a system that failed to act.

Before I was incarcerated, I had court-ordered visitation with my daughter. I showed up for every visit. I held her, played with her, sang to her, and tried my best to show the system I was fighting for her.

But the moment I entered a county jail, everything stopped. No one notified me of scheduled visit dates with my daughter. And every missed visit was used against me—as if I had simply chosen to disappear. But I didn't disappear. I was in a cell, powerless to reach my child.

My daughter was only 18 months old when she was adopted during my six-month sentence. Six months. That was all it took to permanently sever a bond I had worked so hard to maintain. Not because I posed a danger, and not because a judge said I shouldn't be in her life—but because the people responsible for ensuring those visits happened failed to do so. And the system let that failure stand.

AB 1195 seeks to fix that. It ensures that when an incarcerated parent has court-ordered visits, they happen. It requires communication between child welfare agencies and jails. It demands documentation of missed visits and real efforts to keep the parent-child relationship intact. It's not a promise of reunification—it's a promise of fairness.

This bill is about more than visitation. It's about protecting the possibility of healing and reconnection. It's about ensuring parents who are trying to do the right thing aren't erased by the very institutions meant to support families.

We say we value family, but our systems often act in ways that destroy them—quietly, bureaucratically, and without accountability.

AB 1195 gives parents a fighting chance. It gives children the right to know their parents didn't abandon them—they were just locked out of the process. It gives courts the clarity they need, based on accurate records—not assumptions.

This bill won't bring my daughter back. But it can stop this from happening to someone else. And that's why I'm speaking up.

ADDICTION: A CASE FOR A PUBLIC HEALTH APPROACH

by Arielle Reisman, LSPC Family Defense Social Worker

Because it is National Mental Health Awareness Month, we wanted to take a moment to address a mental health issue impacting millions of people in the United States each year: addiction. The current model of understanding addiction is a disease model. The idea is that a person has a cluster of symptoms that are associated with not being able to control their relationship to something that gives them short-term pleasure such that it negatively, or even catastrophically, affects their long-term goals. If a person has enough of these symptoms related to drugs or alcohol, they can be diagnosed with Substance Use Disorder (SUD), which is the current diagnostic name for this behavior when it is conceived as a mental health disorder.

To be diagnosed with SUD, a person has to meet two or three out of a set of eleven criteria within a specific time frame (usually the past year). The key, though, is that the person has persisted in the use of the substance despite harmful consequences. However, many of the harmful consequences associated with substance use are manufactured by society rather than natural consequences of over-using substances. Incarceration, for example, is an unnecessary consequence of addiction that actually

decreases the likelihood of recovery. So, although thinking of addiction as a disease, similar to asthma or diabetes, rather than as a problem of willpower was intended to combat stigma and also allow for medical treatment, this perspective alone does not account for the social, political, and environmental factors that impact outcomes. Instead, the disease model has reinforced the notion that addiction is an individual problem requiring treatment—or, more likely, punishment—of the individual.

However, if we adopt a public health approach—one that considers what the Center for Disease Control (CDC) refers to as Social Determinants of Health, such as access to quality healthcare, education, community support, economic stability, and safe environments—we can begin to address structural obstacles to prevention and recovery. For example, research shows that one way to address the negative addiction outcomes associated with criminal legal system involvement (short of prison abolition) is to do away with discriminative criminal background checks. Instead, directing resources toward facilitating a smoother reentry into society enables individuals who have been incarcerated to obtain jobs and access healthcare.

This is not to say that individuals lack any agency over their own outcomes. While being formerly incarcerated can increase challenges to recovery for a number of reasons (including traumas endured while in custody, estrangement from family and friends, and barriers to accessing stabilizing resources upon release), a person's chances of recovery can be improved when they seek out and engage with available community supports. Peer support groups, credible re-entry and recovery programs, and skilled mental health professions and recovery counselors, to name a few, can combat isolation and offer valuable encouragement and guidance. These support networks may also provide information and gateways to critical housing and job opportunities. Recovery doesn't happen in a vacuum. By accessing resources tied to social determinants of health whenever possible, individuals coming home can take meaningful steps toward healing. And, it is equally as important that we, as a society, shift the narrative around both the causes and the effective treatment of addiction and continue advocating to remove structural barriers to recovery.

THE FIGHT ISN'T OVER: I Still Believe We Can Abolish Forced Slave Labor

by Angel Garza, Corcoran State Prison

with an introduction by Alissa Moore, LSPC Re-Entry Coordinator

I wanted to insert a short note here preceding the wonderful article and artwork submitted by Mr. Angel Garza. He writes about the measure LSPC worked on over the course of a few years, that changed from ACA 3 to ACA 8 and at the end of 2024, Prop 6. Although it may seem that Prop 6 lost as the results rolled in, I believe we should consider the last election our test run. This was a step in the learning process towards this goal. Our fight to end the practice of slavery in California—and the United States—is far from over. The next time Californians have the chance to vote on the issue of slavery, we will have done everything we can to have abolished it.

- Alissa Moore

It is so wrong to get a CDCR 115 write-up, or disciplinary infraction, for not working. At this very moment in Corcoran, almost all five blocks are on C-Status^o for not wanting to work as slave labor for less than twenty dollars a month.

People in here are willing to get—and are purposely getting—placed on C status rather than be forced to do slave labor for the state to keep the prison running. Why? Think about the alternative: working at minimum 160 hours/month for nearly no pay or a measly \$12/month.

So if you ask “Why?” BECAUSE WE DON'T WANT TO BE SLAVES! I have studied this issue over the years of my incarceration. I have seen the Governor veto many bills that us here inside and our families need passed.

If the California Model[†] is supposed to be the new standard, how can we not ABOLISH

[†] From the Official CDCR website:

”Working with multidisciplinary experts, and building on international best practices and principles, the California Department Of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) is implementing the “CALIFORNIA MODEL.”

The goal? Building safer communities through rehabilitation, education, and reentry.

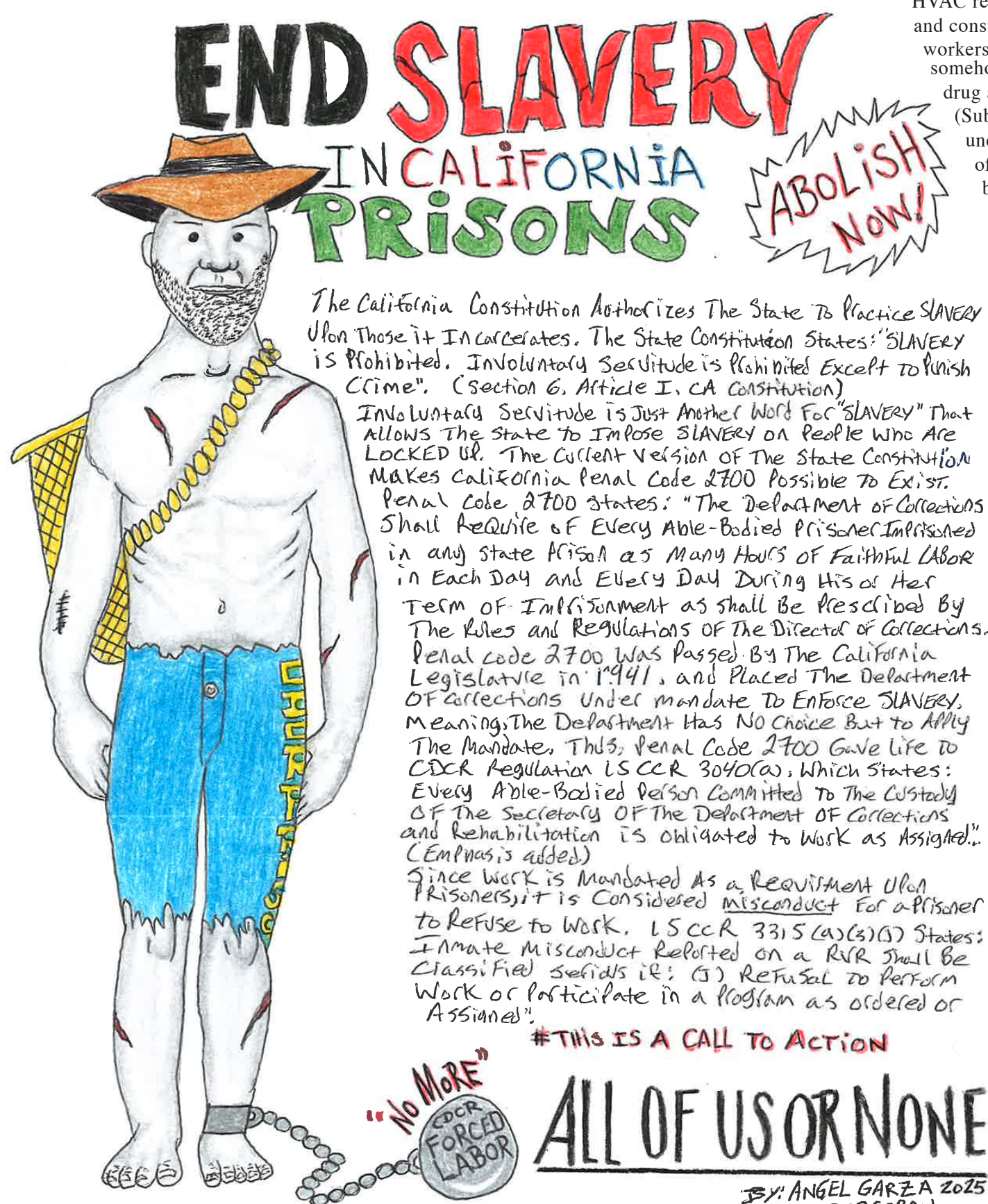
SLAVERY? The half-hearted support we saw of this measure these past two years is and was absolutely disappointing.

To me, being enslaved is not rehabilitation—nor is it in alignment with the California Model. I was told at sentencing I was going to prison to pay my debt. So far, with things the way they are, little to none of the restitution has been or could be paid. The court sentenced me to time in prison, not SLAVE LABOR. Californians I’m sure would have a cow if they knew we aren’t actually able to pay our restitution while incarcerated.

The cold hard reality is that incarcerated people do all of the work to keep the prison functioning.

”We are responsible for the laundry, kitchen, yard work, landscaping, welding, electrical work, HVAC repair, clerk services, janitorial services, and construction. We are librarians, canteen workers, receiving and release workers, and somehow we are also able to become certified drug and alcohol counselors within the SAP (Substance Abuse Program). However unethical it seems, yes we are treating some of our peers. We are generally supervised by a Correctional Officer or other staff who are paid significantly more—for just standing around watching us do the work. The wage disparity is unbelievable between us, THE SLAVE FORCE who are actually doing the work, and those tasked with watching us. If this practice is to end it surely will take ALL OF US OR NONE.

LSPC and AOUON are advocating for bills that address involuntary servitude as slavery, and are working on a national scale with the Abolishing Bondage Collectively (ABC) Coalition state by state to work towards removing the exception clause at the federal level. Read more about the state-level work on page 6.



^o C-Status is a classification that allows only necessary movement and severely restricts the privileges and time/range of movement an incarcerated individual may have access to.

Quest for Democracy continued from page 1

At Quest for Democracy (Q4D), we facilitate direct access to State Legislators and provide close engagement with the democratic process for hundreds of community members, nonprofit organizations, and formerly incarcerated individuals. We speak to the devastating realities of the criminal legal system and challenge assumptions of incarceration and rehabilitation.

Q4D is a powerful platform for the movement of directly impacted individuals to build and lead the movement to release incarcerated people, to restore human and civil rights, to reunify families and communities, and to provide relief to families and those on the inside. Participants who had registered for legislative advocacy training learned about the California legislative process and the deep intricacies of each of the bills on this year's policy platform. People were split into small teams based on their interests. On the event day, these teams made various visits to different legislators in the California State Assembly and Senate to speak to their personal experiences addressed by this platform.

The policy platform uplifted at at this year's Q4D followed the three R's of LSPC's mission: LSPC organizes communities impacted by the criminal justice system and advocates to **release** incarcerated people, to **restore** human and civil rights, and to **reunify** families and communities. Below are the bills from the Q4D platform that LSPC and AOUON co-sponsored in 2025's CA legislative process.

RELEASE (FROM BONDAGE & SLAVERY)
Assembly Bill 475 • End Slavery in CA Statute
Author: Wilson
Position: Support

Existing law requires the CDCR to require each able-bodied inmate to work as prescribed by CDCR regulations, AND to participate in 8 hours a day of programming, including labor, education, counseling, physical fitness, and other programs, 5 days per week; anyone who fails to participate as required is subject to a loss of privileges, including the earning of good conduct credit. This bill would no longer require CDCR to require each able-bodied inmate to work and would instead require CDCR to develop a voluntary work program and to prescribe rules and regulations regarding voluntary work assignments for CDCR inmates, including the wages for work assignments, and would require wages for work assignments in county and city jail programs to be set by local ordinance. However it does not explicitly prohibit discipline for declining a work assignment or any labor. This bill also fails to ensure that ALL labor in CDCR MUST be voluntary, therefore leaving loopholes to CDCR to exploit to continue forced labor practices.

Assembly Bill 1279 • Juvenile 3 Strikes
Author: Sharp-Collins
Position: Support

Existing law (Prop 184, 1994; Three Strikes Reform Act, 2012, and Prop 6, 2012), commonly known as the Three Strikes Law, imposes additional years of imprisonment in state prison on a person who commits a serious or violent felony and has been convicted of, or who has a prior conviction for, a serious or violent felony. A prior juvenile adjudication constitutes a prior serious or violent felony conviction for purposes of this sentence enhancement if the juvenile was 16 years of age at the time and other requirements are met. This bill would prohibit a prior juvenile adjudication from being considered a prior serious or violent felony conviction for purposes of sentence enhancement.

Assembly Constitutional Amendment 6 • Remove Slavery from CA Constitution
Position: Oppose Unless Amended

The California Constitution prohibits slavery and prohibits involuntary servitude, except as punishment for a crime. This measure would instead prohibit slavery in all forms. This measure would clarify that its provisions do not prohibit the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation from awarding credits to an incarcerated person who voluntarily accepts a work assignment.

We oppose this amendment because as it is currently worded, involuntary servitude would still exist for incarcerated people if the California Constitution were amended to say, "Slavery in all forms is prohibited" because slavery is technically already prohibited; that prohibition does not extend to forced prison labor because under constitutional law, forced prison labor is considered a form of punishment, not slavery.



RESTORE (HUMAN & CIVIL RIGHTS)
Assembly Bill 247 • Incarcerated Firefighters Wages
Author: Bryan
Position: Support

Existing law makes an inmate of a county jail who has completed training for assignment to a state or county facility as an inmate firefighter, or who is assigned to a state or county facility as an inmate firefighter, and who is eligible to earn one day of credit for every one day of incarceration, instead eligible to earn 2 days of credit to reduce their term for every one day served in that assignment or after completing that training. This bill would maintain this credit provision and additionally mandate that incarcerated hand crew members receive an hourly wage of \$19 when engaged in an active fire incident. This bill would require that wage to be updated annually.

Assembly Bill 248 • Living Wage for All
Author: Bryan
Position: Support

Existing law authorizes incarcerated workers to be paid no more than \$2 for each 8 hours of work performed in jail. This bill would remove this cap and instead put the wage determination on the county board of supervisors This bill challenges exploitative labor practices within jails, which have been criticized for perpetuating economic disparities.

Assembly Bill 1424 • Climate Justice and Emergency Response Act
Author: Rodriguez
Position: Support

This bill would require the Division of Occupational Safety and Health to submit a rulemaking proposal for the Occupational Safety and Health Standards Board’s review and adoption that is specifically applicable to workers in any prison or institution under the jurisdiction of the CDCR, and would require the CDCR to take various actions relating to climate control and working conditions in prisons, including ensuring that facilities are equipped with adequate cooling systems, adding shade structures, ensuring that facilities install temperature monitoring systems, and establishing and regularly updating an emergency response and evacuation plan for each correctional facility to protect the safety of incarcerated individuals during extreme weather events. The bill would require the department to implement an annual training for all staff on preventing, identifying, and managing heat-related illnesses, and would require the creation of a working group to ensure regular maintenance, upkeep, accessibility of use, and implementation of these actions related to climate control and working conditions.

Senate Bill 423 • Incarcerated Firefighters Workforce Development
Author: Smallwood-Cuevas
Position: Support

This bill would require the CDCR and the office of the Chancellor of the California Community Colleges to expand access to community college courses that lead to degrees and certificates in specified subjects including fire science for individuals serving in California Conservation Corps handcrews or institutional firehouses. Existing law establishes in the Natural Resources Agency the Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, and requires the department to be responsible fire protection and prevention. This bill would require that the department, CCC, and CDCR operate an enhanced firefighter training and certification program at the Ventura Training Center and would also require the operation of an enhanced firefighter training and certification program at a facility in the northern region of the state.



images by Ipyani Lockert, 2025

REUNIFY (FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES)
Assembly Bill 651 • Access to Justice
Author: Bryan
Position: Support

Existing law requires notice of and the opportunity for an incarcerated parent to be physically present in proceedings terminating their parental rights or seeking to adjudicate the child of a prisoner a dependent child of the court. This bill would also require notice of, and the opportunity for an incarcerated parent to be physically present in, specified additional dependency hearings relating to their child. Existing law authorizes a parent to waive their right to be physically present, or a person in charge of the incarcerating institution to submit an affidavit that the prisoner does not intend to appear at the proceeding. The bill would additionally require an incarcerated parent who has waived the right to be physically present to be given the opportunity to participate in those proceedings by videoconference or teleconferencing.

Assembly Bill 800 • Vending Machines in CDCR Visiting Rooms
Author: Ortega
Position: Support

Existing law establishes the CDCR's powers and duties regarding the administration of correctional facilities and the care and custody of inmates. This bill would require the department to price all food items sold in prison vending machines at the same average market retail price as in the community in which the prison is located. The bill would also require the department to take into consideration research that exists on junk foods and snacks as a cause of obesity in children and families when providing food in the state prison, and to encourage the provision of affordable, fresh, and nutritious food items in prison vending machines and the sourcing of food items from local farmers and producers.

Assembly Bill 923 • Detention and Incarceration of Pregnant and Postpartum Defendants
Author: Quirk-Silva
Position: Support

This bill would authorize a pregnant or postpartum defendant to request a stay of execution of their sentence if the pregnant or postpartum defendant is detained or incarcerated in a county jail for any period of time through the end of the pregnancy or the postpartum period. When a court is exercising discretion regarding matters such as releasing a defendant on their own recognizance or accepting a diversion or deferred entry of judgment agreement, this bill would make a rebuttable presumption against detention and incarceration of a pregnant or postpartum defendant when given sufficient notice of pregnant or postpartum status, and would require a court that decides to detain or incarcerate a defendant after this consideration to make specific findings on the record that the risk to public safety is substantial enough to outweigh the risk of incarceration.

Assembly Bill 1195: Incarcerated Parent Visitation
Author: Quirk-Silva
Position: Support

Existing law establishes that the incarceration or institutionalization of a parent or guardian can be grounds for removal of a dependent child from their custody if the child’s parents or guardian cannot arrange for the care of the minor. In this case, existing law requires the court to order reasonable services, including visitation, unless the court determines those services would be detrimental to the child. This bill would require any order placing a child in foster care, and ordering reunification services, to include specified provisions if the parent of the dependent child is incarcerated in a county jail, including, among others, that the incarcerated parent is entitled to regularly scheduled, in-person visitation, that the county jail is required to ensure that the incarcerated parent is made available to attend regularly scheduled, in-person visits with their dependent child, and that the child welfare agency and county jail are required to document all scheduled visits and submit that documentation to the court at each hearing in the dependency action. The bill would also authorize the use of videoconferencing technology or telephonic communication in lieu of in-person visits.

California residents, send a letter to your State Assembly Member and Senator! Fill out the "postcards" below in support or opposition of the bills on the opposite page. Send them back to LSPC/AOUON at 4400 Market Street, Oakland, CA 94608 and we will mail them to your legislators so that your voice is heard in the policymaking process.



I support / oppose Bill #(s)_____ because:

ALL OF US OR NONE

Slave, who is it that shall free you?
Those in deepest darkness lying.
Comrade, only these can see you
Only they can hear you crying.
Comrade, only slaves can free you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone our lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

You who hunger, who shall feed you?
If it's bread you would be carving,
Come to us, we too are starving.
Come to us and let us lead you.
Only hungry ones can feed you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone her lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Beaten one, who shall avenge you?
You, on whom the blows are falling,
Hear your wounded comrades calling.
Weakness gives us strength to lend you.
Come to us, we shall avenge you.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone his lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Who, oh wretched one, shall dare it?
We who can no longer bear it.
Counts the blows that arm our spirit.
Taught the time by need and sorrow,
Strikes today and not tomorrow.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.
One alone our lot can't better.
Either gun or fetter.
Everything or nothing. All of us or none.

Bertolt Brecht (1898–1956)

RECOGNIZE & REQUEST

IN REMEMBRANCE: MADONNA WATSON

by Alissa Moore, LSPC Re-Entry Coordinator

Madonna Watson died while incarcerated at the California Institute for Women on June 9, 2020 from complications due to COVID-19 and untreated metastized cancer. Five years later, we remember her life and legacy and commit to continue the fight for adequate healthcare in prisons.

Madonna Watson was a cherished friend and a resilient woman whose life was tragically cut short while incarcerated at the California Institution for Women (CIW) in Chino, California. At CIW, Madonna faced systemic challenges that many incarcerated women endure, including delayed medical attention and inadequate healthcare services. Her passing is a stark reminder of the ongoing issues within the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation (CDCR) regarding the treatment of incarcerated individuals' health needs.

Madonna was a close personal friend and her memory lives on through the stories of those of us blessed to have known her. For me, what stood out about Madonna is that she was always there to remind me of what I had to lose. Even though I had no clue at the time, her calm demeanor and kindness always gave me the strength to think twice about whatever I had done, was doing, or was thinking about doing.

Her untimely death underscores the urgent need for widespread health care access and reforms within the California Department Of Corrections healthcare system to ensure that no other individual suffers the same fate of withering away from a disease that could have been treated were she not constantly have been waiting on this referral or told time and time again to take a motrin and see if it goes away.

As we remember Madonna, let us honor her life by fiercely advocating for justice and improved healthcare for all incarcerated individuals. Her legacy serves as a call to action for systemic change and a reminder that every incarcerated life matters.



Madonna (left) and her son Greg. Image courtesy of CCWP.

Request: What do you want to see in this newspaper? Send requests to AOUON Newspaper Editor 4400 Market Street, Oakland, CA 94608 or uma@prisonerswithchildren.org.

Recognition: Thank you for sending letters in support of Assembly Bill 1195, which would ensure that parents who are in jail facilities will be able to maintain visitation with their children despite being incarcerated.

ALL OF US OR NONE CHAPTER CONTACTS



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www.allofusornone.org

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Need Help Starting Over?

Starting Over provides dignified and supportive reentry housing to people in Los Angeles and Riverside Counties.

If you're being released to one of these counties and you need support, get in touch with us!

Programs include:

- Employment
- Family Reunification
- Case Management
- Peer Support

Starting Over is founded and led by formerly incarcerated people to provide direct services while working to end systemic harm.

Phone: (951) 898-0862
www.startingoverinc.org

All of Us or None Membership Form | Yes, I want to become a member of ALL OF US OR NONE!

Name & Number: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

Country of Origin: _____

Do you have children? YES / NO. Do you need support with family issues? YES / NO

Earliest Parole/Release Date: _____ County of Parole/Probation: _____

- o I can organize & facilitate group meeting
- o I can help with membership outreach
- o I can distribute materials & resources
- o I can address & pass along feedback

Mail this form & any questions to:
AOUON
4400 Market Street
Oakland, CA 94608

