



Refreshed and Ready

By Dorsey Nunn

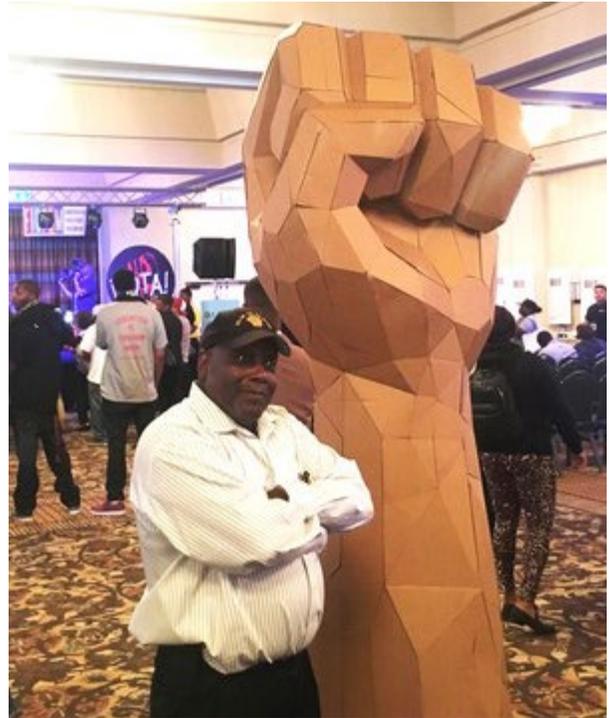
It is my great pleasure to be speaking with you again! For the past 3 months, I have been on a sabbatical from both LSPC and All of Us or None. I am very grateful to the [O2 Foundation](#) for the opportunity to take this much-needed time off, and for the training and support they gave the Management Team in preparation to take over leadership duties in my absence.

While the stipulated total communication blackout from my comrades and coworkers was difficult, I very much appreciated the time and space to check in with myself, and to spend time with family—especially my grandchildren and great-granddaughter.

I have worked non-stop since walking out of San Quentin—first for the Prison Law Office (in San Quentin) and, for the past 24 years, at LSPC as an organizer, co-director, and then as the first formerly incarcerated Executive Director. After the incredibly exciting, exhausting, and energizing experience of hosting the [2016 National Conference of the Formerly Incarcerated & Convicted People & Families Movement](#), the sabbatical provided a welcome rest, and the opportunity to look back at all LSPC has accomplished over the past—and very intense—few years, as well as how all the work we did advanced the movement on a national level.

Given the recent election—in which [over 6 million American citizens were denied the right to vote](#) (and over 1 million in Florida alone) due to felony-disenfranchisement laws—it is worth noting that FICPFM was born out of the ashes of the election in 2000. At the time, the hotly-contested, dangling-by-a-chad vote-counting and subsequent investigation revealed that hundreds of thousands of people had been removed from voting rolls: many because they had a name similar to someone with a felony conviction. [*In Florida, any felony conviction results in [a lifetime revocation of voting rights](#).*—Ed.]

When people started organizing "Felons Against Felony Disenfranchisement" in Florida, national organizations and donors didn't give appropriate attribution and weight to the people whose rights had been impacted,



Dorsey Nunn at the 2016 FICPFM National Conference

and who were already engaged in the fight. Resources poured in, but they went to traditional civil rights organizations that didn't employ formerly incarcerated people centrally in the campaign.



Formerly incarcerated activists, family members, and allies rally on the steps of the Capitol in Sacramento, CA at the conclusion of the 2016 Quest for Democracy Advocacy Day.

They also did not recognize that we would fight longer, even when our issues weren't in the spotlight of the moment. So when you see me engage in the fight, when you see All of Us or None and FICPFM engage in the fight, it's more than just the election at hand—it's about the fundamental rights of people who actually engage in a democracy.

Some of the work over the past couple years that I'm extremely proud of is that we secured the right to vote, in the State of California, for people who are serving their felony sentence in the county jail, and those under community supervision. We had voting rights clarified through litigation, and had them codified and expanded into law through our legislative policy work.

The Pelican Bay lawsuit was settled—of which we were plaintiffs—and CDCR was mandated to stop using long-term solitary confinement. As a result, hundreds have been moved from SHU (Special Housing Units) to general population at other prisons. A few weeks ago Dolores Canales, during a trip she organized for families to visit loved ones currently in Pelican Bay—had the remarkable experience of standing outside the empty cell that used to hold her son!



AOUON Organizer Dolores Canales and National Center for Youth Law lawyer Frankie Guzman talk to families while busing up to visit loved ones in Pelican Bay.

I'm proud of our legal team who, in addition to their policy work, put on Clean Slate clinics throughout the state, work to prevent the suspension of driver licenses due to failure to pay, and organize prison letter-writing trainings. They also organized our 2016 Re-Entry Law Conference in San Jose, and the Justice Fair at the FICPFM National Conference, where people received legal information and services, and were able to see the cutting-edge work coming out of the State of California, hopefully to replicate in other places.

I'm proud that we hosted the FICPFM National Conference, the largest gathering of formerly incarcerated people and families in history! We didn't just organize the space and



"All of us—or none!" Activists show solidarity at the 2016 FICPFM National Conference September 9-10 in Oakland, CA.

put on the panels, we also flew participants in from across the country and provided hotel rooms for many who otherwise would not have been able to attend.

One of the main reasons for our success—beyond an amazing staff—is that LSPC has the financial solidity and infrastructure to be the fiscal sponsor, not only for FICPFM, but to support and incubate other programs, some of which became independent organizations. We were extremely supportive in the development of [Critical Resistance](#) and [Prison Activist Resource Center](#), and the [California Coalition for Women Prisoners](#) is still under our umbrella.

LSPC's combination of activism and legal work is unique in the Movement. Ending long-term solitary confinement at Pelican Bay, stopping gang injunctions in Oakland, and all the work we do includes activist attorneys and policy-strong grassroots organizers working together, all with the people who are directly impacted front and center.

2017 presents many challenges, but we have the opportunity to really move. LSPC and AOUON will continue to work as part of the FICPFM leadership council—we already have funding and a retreat organized to develop infrastructure at a national level. In addition to expanding voting rights, we need to organize more formerly incarcerated people to get out and vote. There's 70 million of us across the country, and while over 6 million are denied the right to vote, that still leaves a powerful population of people—many of whom aren't registered or don't get to the polling places. And we know that every vote counts—not only to win elections, but also as primary proof that a person is a true citizen.

I look forward to working with you towards justice.



Dorsey as spokesperson for the ACLU's "Let Me Vote" campaign. LSPC continues to partner with the ACLU and other civil rights organizations to expand voting rights for current and formerly incarcerated people.

Training Incarcerated Leaders

On Saturday, January 21—the day of the now-historic Women's March on Washington—LSPC taught its first ever Lifelines Advanced Family Law Class at the California Institution for Women (CIW) in Corona. LSPC staff Harriette Davis, Brittany Stonesifer, and Carol Strickman, along with Holly Leonard from the Harriett Buhai Center for Family Law, worked with incarcerated leaders on skills like completing family law petitions and drafting declarations.



LSPC Staff Attorney Brittany Stonesifer, Senior Staff Attorney Carol Strickman, and Family Unity Project Coordinator Harriette Davis.

LSPC has taught Lifelines Family Law Classes at San Francisco County Jail, the former Valley State Prison for Women, and is currently in the middle of a four-class series at Federal Correctional Institution, Dublin. While LSPC has taught Lifelines classes in CIW before, January's Advanced Family Law Class was designed specifically to train women to assist other incarcerated women with the legal information and forms provided

in our manuals.

"Women do not have a lot of resources inside," said Family Unity Project Coordinator Harriette Davis, herself formerly incarcerated at CIW. "Not many are able to attend our classes, and, while we leave many manuals to distribute, just because you have a manual doesn't mean you know what to do with the information."



California Institution for Women is located between Los Angeles and Riverside in Corona, CA. Opened in 1952 with the capacity to imprison 1,398 people, CIW's 2013 incarcerated population was 2,155.

"This advanced class helps women realize themselves as leaders, so they can give other incarcerated women hope and tools to maintain their connections to their children and partners. At the start of the class, I asked, 'How many of you see yourself as a leader?' About half raised their hands. At the end of the class I asked the same question: 'How many see yourself as a leader?' They all raised their hands."

For more information on the Lifelines Family Law classes, contact Harriette Davis at harriette@prisonerswithchildren.org or 415-625-7048.

Building Connections, Training Activists

In January, LSPC joined ally organizations to present a panel on "Violence Against People in Detention, Institutions, and Prisons" during Legal Aid Association of California's *Civil Rights for People & Families Impacted By Incarceration* legal training at Compass Point in Oakland, CA. on January 31, 2017.



LSPC Development Director Ellen Barry (right) discusses violence in detention across all aspects of the prison industrial complex following the panel presentation at the LAAC Civil Rights legal training.

The panel, featuring Angie Junck (Immigrant Legal Resource Center), Frankie Guzman (National Center for Youth Law), Anoop Presad (Asian Americans Advancing Justice), and Ellen Barry (LSPC), illuminated the intersectionality of many aspects of the prison-industrial complex and the commonality of violence inherent in immigration detention, youth / juvenile facilities, county jails, and state and federal prisons.

Anoop Presad reminds us that the prison-industrial complex is the modern Octopus: "Think of immigration and incarceration as part of the same system, as state and local laws impact immigration law by becoming the excuse to deport."

Private prisons are not the only ones to profit by increased immigration crackdowns: many local jails have contracts with ICE. For example, [Contra Costa County has a \\$6,000,000 annual contract with ICE](#) to house people while awaiting deportation hearings.

The second panel, "Finding Housing with a Record or in Reentry: Cutting Edge Legal Issues & Advocacy," illuminated issues and best practices when advocating for formerly incarcerated people with ADA- and PC 290-related issues, as well as challenging denials to government-sponsored housing due to conviction history.



Adam Poe (Bay Area Legal Aid), Deborah Thrope (National Housing Law Project), and Emily Juneau (Root & Rebound) discuss reentry and housing issues.

"No matter what happens at the Federal level with HUD, there's still much we can do at the local level," said Deborah Thrope, staff attorney for the National Housing Law Project. "For example, we just helped to pass the Fair Chance Housing policy in Richmond, CA. Gathering local information is key to moving policies like these forward."

While trainings we conduct offer CLE credit for lawyers, the information we provide also empowers activists, organizers, social workers, clinicians, and

legislators.

Phone justice lawsuits move forward

LSPC is dedicated to supporting and strengthening the relationships between prisoners and their families. The ability to be in contact with each other by telephone is one important way to keep families together. Unfortunately, many California county jails charge excessive rates for these phone calls. Families have to give up other necessities of life in order to pay for calls with their loved ones. LSPC has joined forces with two Southern California law firms to change these fee practices.



Kaye, McLane, Bednarski & Litt of Pasadena, and Rapkin & Associates of Venice, have launched a series of class action lawsuits in state and federal courts against a total of nine counties throughout the state. LSPC is providing assistance in the Northern California suits (particularly Alameda, San Mateo and Contra Costa Counties). The Northern California suits were filed

last year and are in the early stages of litigation. Currently pending is our motion to coordinate the nine state court lawsuits in Los Angeles County.

Welcome 2017 Spring Interns!



Left to Right: Spring 2017 Interns Qing, Bethlehem, Alyssa, and Meghan.

LSPC is honored to have four new interns for the Spring 2016 session: Qing, Bethlehem, Alyssa, and Meghan. All are current UC Berkeley undergraduates, though Bethlehem, a Bay Area native, is on a "semester abroad" from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island.

Interning at LSPC presents a unique experience, as interns are immediately involved with assisting specific projects (like Family Unity and All of Us or None), campaigns (Ban the Box, Prison Visitation), and events (Quest for Democracy) as well as responding to the many letters we receive every week from people incarcerated all over the country.

LSPC interns are an integral part of the organization. We're proud that many continue to fight for social justice both on campus and at other legal service organizations across the country—more than a few of LSPC's current staff started as interns themselves!

[Click here for more information about LSPC's Intern Program.](#)

Letter-Writing Night Is Now A Monthly Happening!

In 2016, LSPC received over 2,000 letters from incarcerated people across the country. We strive to answer each letter that we receive individually and with compassion. While we cannot represent the vast majority of people writing to us, or provide legal advice, we sent out 1,500 LSPC manuals with legal information and uncounted referrals for services and more information. To perform this huge labor of love, volunteers and staff at LSPC spend countless hours reading and responding to these letters.

This November, LSPC began hosting a letter-writing night to allow folks who cannot regularly volunteer during 9-5 hours but are still interested in getting more involved in our work. In November volunteers were trained in the newly passed Proposition 57 and then responded to incarcerated people asking for information about the new law. In December, we read letters from people preparing to come home and looking for resources and referrals for re-entry.



Letter Writing Night is fun, informative, empowering, and helps real people in real prisons. Above: LSPC Summer 2016 Interns respond to incarcerated people's requests for legal information.

Please join us this year to write a few letters! Letter writing nights will be the Fourth Monday of each month (Feb 27, March 27, April 24, May 22, June 26, July 24, August 28 to begin) at 5:30-8:30 pm. We start with a light dinner, training, and conversation about the types of issues we will be addressing in the letters, and then we respond to some letters.

We hope you can join us for this educational and important work! For more information contact Eva: eva@prisonerswithchildren.org or 415-625-7049.

Next Letter-Writing Night:

Monday, February 27
5:30-8:30 pm
1540 Market St. Suite 490
SF, CA 94102
Dinner and training provided

LSPC Calendar

2017 Criminal Justice Propositions: Tools for Movement Building

Date: Tuesday February 21, 2017 @5pm-8:30pm

Location: Bay Area Legal Incubator, 125 12th St., Oakland, CA

RSVP: [RIGHT HERE!](#)

1.5 CLE Credits available.

This event will bring together organizers, activists and attorneys to answer questions and present information on the changes to the law that took effect after the 2017 election through Propositions 57 and 64. The event will conclude with a panel and discussion on the larger movement question: *where do we go from here?*



Presentations

Proposition 64: *Nuts + Bolts of Legal Marijuana*

How can people with marijuana convictions clear their records? What did we learn from Prop 47 about this process?

Proposition 57: *What is the Impact for Incarcerated People?*

How Prop 57 may impact parole hearings and juvenile hearings.

Where do we go from here?

This moderated audience discussion will ask how we can use the new tools Props 64 and 57 have given us to move our criminal justice work forward.

2017 Quest for Democracy Advocacy Day

Expected Dates:

Training Workshops: Sunday May 7th from 2-6pm

Legislative Visits: Monday May 8th from 9-5pm

Location: Sacramento, CA



Every spring, LSPC / All of Us or None organize a large-scale statewide advocacy day in Sacramento for formerly-incarcerated people, our family members, and allied community leaders and activists. We gather to show our support for pending legislation that affects people that are impacted by incarceration, and to assert ourselves as leaders, experts, and contributing members of our communities.

We are asking that all organizations, particularly with members who have been previously incarcerated, join us on May 7-8, 2017. Sunday will be an education and training workshop on our sponsored bills and on effective legislative advocacy. Monday will feature Action Teams visiting each legislator's office to advocate in person, followed by a rally on the Capitol steps.

We're still awaiting confirmation on Capitol hearing room reservations, so **look for an official announcement with registration link soon!** For more info contact Aalyah Muhammad: aalyah@prisonerswithchildren.org

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