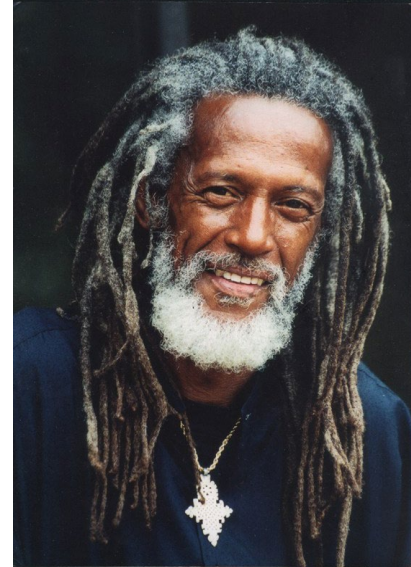




LSPC Newsletter March 2017

## Announcing the Ronald "Elder" Freeman Memorial Policy Fellows

Legal Services for Prisoners with Children is excited to announce the launch of The Ronald "Elder" Freeman Memorial Policy Fellowship for formerly incarcerated people. Ronald "Elder" Freeman was a legendary revolutionary pillar in the Bay Area, a lifelong Freedom Fighter in the Black Liberation Struggle, and an original member of the Southern California chapter of the Black Panther Party. This fellowship honors his work and legacy.



*Ronald "Elder" Freeman*

LSPC launched this fellowship to develop formerly-incarcerated leadership. We believe that criminal policy reform led by people who are not directly impacted will always lead to reformation rather than transformation, and perpetuates cycles of oppression that we are, ultimately, seeking to undo. Decisions and laws made for people, and not by them, lack empathy, humanity, and justice.

Our two inaugural fellows, Sandra Johnson and Joseph Johnson (no relation), will use their experience, insight, and skills to advocate for sentencing reform and reentry support.



*Sandra Johnson*

Before joining LSPC, Sandra studied at City College of San Francisco towards a degree in Health Education and Social Science. She has done about 15 years in and out of the system, and her oldest brother is currently on Year 31 of a 17-to-life sentence. She is a proud member of AOUON and is committed to ending mass incarceration. Sandra will be leading LSPC's advocacy efforts to end drug felony sentencing enhancements with [SB 180: The Rise Act](#).

Joseph Johnson was imprisoned for twenty-seven years (1982-2009) throughout the state of California. He has over twenty years experience as a civil and criminal litigation paralegal. He will be leading our work on [AB 1008: The Fair Chance Act](#) to expand California's Ban the Box law to private employers. Learn more about LSPC's bills below.



*Joseph Johnson*

Please join us in welcoming them!

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## 2017 Legislative Advocacy

Support LSPC's advocacy to shorten sentences and the criminalizing cycle of fines and fees, expand ban the box, and restore the right for people with felony convictions to serve on juries.

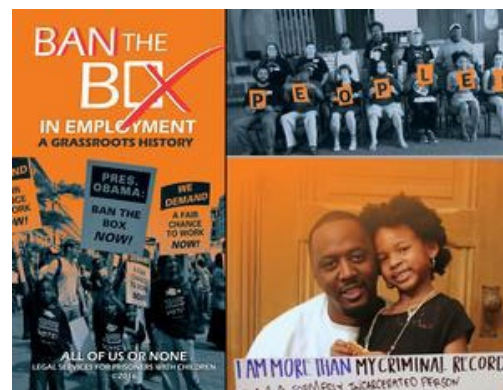
LSPC is proudly co-sponsoring the following bills this year in California:

[AB 412: Courts: civil assessments.](#) Requires courts to vacate a civil penalty if the defendant certifies that he or she had good cause to not appear or not pay a fine, or is unable to pay the assessment. See our Fines and Fees update (below) for more information.

[AB 535: Jury Service:](#) Ends the prohibition against people with felony convictions from serving on juries, except for people who have been convicted of certain crimes while in office.

### [AB 1008: The Fair Chance Act.](#)

Expands California's Ban the Box law to include **private** employers. Specifies that employers may not inquire into a person's conviction history until after a conditional offer of employment has been made. Clarifies the standards by which an employer may reject an applicant based on his or her conviction history.



[Click here for our 2016 report "Ban the Box in Employment: A Grassroots History".](#)

[SB 180: The RISE Act.](#) The Repeal Ineffective Sentencing Enhancements (RISE) Act repeals

sentence enhancements that add additional three-year terms of incarceration for certain prior drug convictions. It will not repeal sentence enhancements for some prior drug convictions involving minors.

[SB 185: Driver's License Suspensions](#). Prohibits license suspensions for failure to pay or appear in court for minor traffic tickets. Provides numerous remedies for low-income Californians to make amends for non-safety related driving convictions. See our Fines and Fees update (below) for more information.

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## Driving the Conversation on Fines & Fees Reform

Co-author of [Not Just a Ferguson Problem](#) and [Stopped, Fined, Arrested](#), LSPC has long been conscious of the ways in which unaffordable court-ordered debt continues historical patterns of oppression for people of color and low income people. Excessive ticketing can lead not only to unemployment and incarceration, but also in some cases to [deportation](#) or even [deadly police encounters](#).



That's why we're continuing our fight to reform California's traffic court system. In 2015, we helped pass the Traffic Court Amnesty Program. But with Amnesty ending this March 31—[sign up soon!](#)—the work certainly isn't done yet.

### Legislating Economic Justice in CA Traffic Courts:

#### *Senate Bill 185*

LSPC, as part of the Back on the Road Coalition, is proud to co-sponsor [SB 185](#) – a 2017 bill overhauling the court debt and license suspension system for indigent traffic defendants. The bill will:

- Provide an 80% reduction of all traffic fines and fees, and allow for \$0 per month payment plans, for people on public benefits or who earn less than 250% of the federal poverty level,
- Allow traffic courts to order fines only according to a person's ability to pay,

- End license suspensions, misdemeanor convictions, and bench warrants for failing to appear in traffic court, and
- Improve notice requirements and community service options in traffic court.

The bill will be heard in the Senate Transportation Committee at the end of this month! Contact Brittany Stonesifer, [brittany@prisonerswithchildren.org](mailto:brittany@prisonerswithchildren.org), if you'd like to [send a support letter](#), testify in Sacramento, or share your traffic court story. #DrivingFinesDown

### *Governor's Budget and Assembly Bill 412*

LSPC is also excited to support two other 2017 state legislative reforms to the traffic court system. First, [Governor Brown's budget proposal](#) calls for an end to license suspensions for people who fail to pay for traffic infractions. Second, LSPC is co-sponsoring [AB 412](#), a bill to stop courts from imposing \$300 civil assessments on people who can't afford to pay tickets in traffic court.

### *Advocating for a Statewide "Ability to Pay" Process:*

After several years of advocacy, the [California Judicial Council has just adopted new rules](#) that require all county traffic courts to develop processes by which people may show their inability to pay and to make alternatives to payment available for individuals. To assist the courts as they launch their new "ability to pay" processes by May 1, LSPC and our partner organizations presented in February our vision of a model traffic court system to a Judicial Council workgroup of judges and court staff.

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## **Community Education and Empowerment**

On February 21, LSPC and Bay Area Legal Incubator hosted the **2017 Criminal Justice Proposition Town Hall: Tools for Movement Building** in Oakland, California.

This event brought 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.

Click on the following to watch the panels and discussion in full:



**[Proposition 57: What is the Impact for Incarcerated People?](#)**

How Prop 57 may impact parole hearings and juvenile hearings.

Featuring Frankie Guzman (National Center for Youth Law) and John Jones (Communities United for Restorative Youth Justice).



**[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?

Featuring Eunisses Hernandez (Drug Policy Alliance) and Cyndi Tyler (Law Office of Cynthia Tyler).



### [Where do we go from here?](#)

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

Host: Endria Richardson (LSPC)

Featuring: Darris Young (Ella Baker Center), Tania Vargas-Edmond (Essie Justice Group, Mar Velez (CURYJ), and manuel la fontaine (LSPC / All of Us or None).

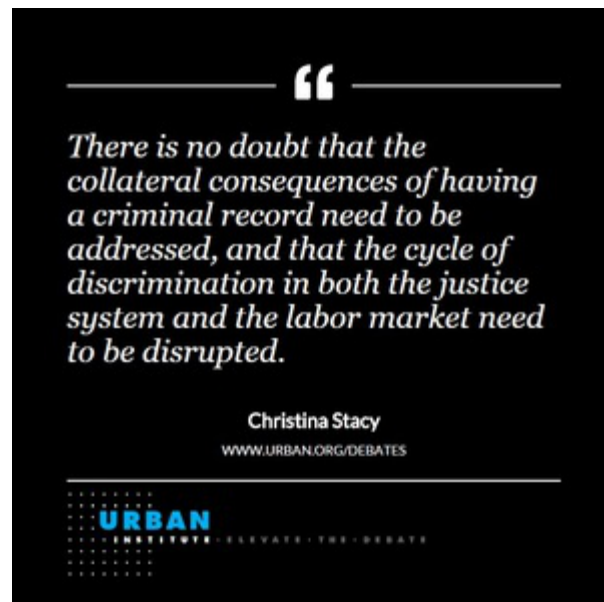
Thanks to all the panelists and activists who participated, and to [Lucas Guilkey](#) for filming the event.

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## Ban the Box Policy Debate

From February 21–24, LSPC participated in an online debate hosted by the Urban Institute: "[How Can We Improve Ban the Box Policies?](#)"

The debate featured sociologists, public policy experts, a private employer rep, DOJ Second Chance Fellow Daryl Atkinson, and LSPC Executive Director Dorsey Nunn (assisted by LSPC Staff Attorney Eva DeLair and Communications Coordinator Mark Fujiwara).



[View the debate and videos here.](#)

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## LSPC Calendar

### Clean Slate Clinics

Over the next week, LSPC will offer two opportunities for people to obtain their RAP sheets and then, a few weeks later, meet with attorneys to discuss expungement possibilities.

#### DAY ONE: RAP Sheet Day

Get a Free copy of your RAP sheet!  
Bring photo ID, drop in anytime before 3:30 pm (first come, first served).

#### DAY TWO: Clean Slate Clinic

Review your RAP sheet with an attorney or legal worker and get assistance in filling out record clearance forms.



*LSPC staff and All of Us or None members after a Clean Slate Clinic in East Palo Alto, CA.*

### Sacramento

[RAP sheet day](#): March 11, 1-4pm

[Clean Slate Clinic](#): April 8, 10:30am-4pm

Free lunch provided at the Clinic April 8.

Event co-sponsored with U.C. Davis School of Law.

### East Palo Alto

[RAP sheet day](#): March 18, 1-4pm

[Clean Slate Clinic](#): April 15, 1-4:45pm

Free hotdogs and soda served both afternoons.

Event co-sponsored with Community Legal Services of East Palo Alto and Free at Last.

For more information contact Eva:

[eva@prisonerswithchildren.org](mailto:eva@prisonerswithchildren.org) or 415-625-7049.

### Letter-Writing Night:

**When:** Monday, March 27 — 5:30-8:30 pm

**Where:** LSPC Offices — 1540 Market St. Suite 490  
SF, CA 94102

Please join us this year to write letters to people in prison requesting information! Letter writing nights will be the Fourth Monday of each month (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](mailto:eva@prisonerswithchildren.org) or 415-625-7049.

## **2017 Quest for Democracy Advocacy Day**

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

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

**Location:** Sacramento, CA

**[REGISTER HERE!](#)**



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

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 who 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 are organizing buses from Southern and Northern California locations, as well as lodging for Sunday night.

**[REGISTER HERE](#)** (It's free!)

For more info contact Aaliyah Muhammad:  
[aaliyah@prisonerswithchildren.org](mailto:aaliyah@prisonerswithchildren.org)

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