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LSPC Newsletter, May 2018

Creating Legacy Through Crafting Legislation, Engaging Community, and Developing Leaders

By Dorsey Nunn



LSPC Executive Director Dorsey Nunn, standing before jars of dirt collected from lynching sites across the country, at The Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama - April 27, 2018.

I recently had the honor of being invited to attend the opening of the [National Memorial for Peace and Justice](#) in Montgomery, Alabama. Standing among and below the massive steel blocks—hanging from the ceiling and inscribed with the names of Black men and women who were lynched in counties across the country—hit my heart with a powerful weight that I'm still grappling with now. The legacy of white supremacy is long and powerful—from slavery to Jim Crow to lynching to its current manifestation in mass incarceration. But the

brighter the light we shine on it, the more everyone can see the corrosive and dehumanizing poison that infects our society—and the better we can create just systems and communities to replace it.

But in Alabama I was also reminded of another legacy—one of resistance, of individuals throwing the weight of their bodies, hearts, and minds against the machinery of oppression and then sharing both the fruits of victories and the lessons learned with the next generation of leaders.

I saw this legacy in person, meeting [Elizabeth Eckford of the Little Rock 9](#) and many other nationally-known comrades who did the heavy lifting to move our country from the era of Jim Crow into one that, ostensibly, respected our civil rights. But I was able to see the legacy manifest at a personal level when I met

up with Jennifer Taylor, [Equal Justice Initiative Staff Attorney](#). I've known Jennifer since she interned at LSPC in the early 2000's. After earning her law degree at Yale, she joined EJI. She brought her LSPC experiences with her—her work on conditions of confinement springs directly out of her work here in San Francisco.



Former LSPC Intern and current EJI Staff Attorney Jennifer Taylor and child - Montgomery, AL.

Seeing Jennifer (and her young child) revealed to me a different way we create a legacy of work—not only from person to person individually but also from our relationships and experiences from organization to organization. The [LSPC Intern Program](#)—the same in which Jennifer participated in 15 years ago—engages 6-8 people each spring, summer, and fall session. These students are an integral part of LSPC for an intense (and too-brief) term, and then go on to finish degrees, join public service organizations, policy advocacy groups, and government as staff or elected officials. Two timely examples: former LSPC Intern Pamela Price is running for District Attorney of Alameda County this upcoming election, and several former interns are mobilizing student groups to Ban the Box on their university's student and employment applications.



Former Interns, then Fellows, and now current LSPC Staff Attorneys Eva DeLair (left) and Brittany Stonesifer at the 2018 Quest for Democracy Advocacy Day in Sacramento, CA.

But this legacy is not limited to interns: two of four current LSPC full-time attorneys (and some former), as well as our Development Director, first came through our intern / fellowship programs. If/when they move on to other challenges with other organizations, they'll bring all their experiences with them and pass them on to others. The program name might be different, but the DNA is the same—we are the sum

of our experiences and learning.

LSPC is honored that our experience, our work, is worthy enough to be replicated in various forms throughout the country. Our work in organizing the 1st National Conference of the [Formerly Incarcerated & Convicted People & Families Movement](#) in 2016

established a blueprint for the 2nd National Conference happening this September in Orlando, Florida. And our annual advocacy day at the Capitol in Sacramento inspired the name for the conference, located in the heart of the campaign to [restore voting rights in Florida](#): Quest for Democracy.

People pick up our work because it recognizes the past and resonates far into the future. Thank you for all YOUR work to continue the legacy of crafting social justice at the national, state, local, and community level. The movement truly is All of Us or None.

Hundreds Rally at the Capitol for AOUON's Quest for Democracy Advocacy Day



The 6th Annual Quest for Democracy Advocacy Day rocked the California Capitol in Sacramento on April 29-30, 2018. All of Us or None, working with many social justice organizations, organized over 500 formerly-incarcerated and convicted people, family members, and allies to rally at the Capitol—first for advocacy training, then for teams to make office visits to speak directly to legislators and their staff.

Q4D is about more than just advocating for our sponsored and supported bills—although speaking to lawmakers puts a directly-impacted human face to them. Q4D is also about bringing people together, building the movement, and training and empowering future leaders. Many Q4D participants return to their communities inspired to organize their neighbors and to speak out to their elected officials.

A full [photo gallery of the event is available here](#).



Dorsey Nunn opens the morning legislative advocacy training session.



The late-morning rally included music, spoken word, and personal testimonials.



"An army marches on its stomach." Lunch is served! Yummy vegan / veggie options, too!



Assemblymember Kevin McCarty (left) and Senator Nancy Skinner speak / take questions from Q4D participants



An Action Team discusses roles and strategy in the Capitol hallway before meeting with a legislator.



The LSPC / AOUON team celebrates together after organizing another successful Quest for Democracy!

LSPC / All of Us or None thanks Assemblymember Kevin McCarty and Senator Nancy Skinner for joining us at the rally, as well as to the many great organizations that made Q4D possible. See you all next year!

Criminal Justice Reform Includes Economic Justice Policies and Laws

By Sabina Crocette

LSPC is co-sponsoring three Occupational Licensing Bills,

AB 2138, AB 3039 and AB 2293 in the current legislation session. These bills are collectively known as the “Fair Chance in Employment” bills.



Briefly, each bill will open doors previously shut by licensing and certification boards. These boards require background checks and have most often, if not in all instances, used evidence of a conviction to deny licensing and certification to applicants. The bills cover licensing and certifications from the Department of Consumer Affairs and the Department of Health and Human Services, as well as the Emergency Medical Technician certification that is required by most employing entities to work as a firefighter.



Former LSPC Family Unity Project Coordinator Harriette Davis (left), Policy Manager Sabina Crocette (fourth from left), and Staff Attorney Eva DeLair (third from right) stand in support as Assemblymember David Chiu (17th District) announces the Fair Chance Licensing bills in Sacramento, CA.

Research has identified that the primary cause of recidivism is lack of employment opportunities for those coming home from jails and prisons. These bills are particularly important in allowing individuals with conviction histories opportunities to support themselves and their families with a living wage when they return home. Moreover, many individuals who are uniquely qualified to perform the jobs are currently barred from

obtaining licenses and certification due to conviction histories, including those who obtained trade certifications while incarcerated and worked for many years in the same fields that, once they are released, they cannot work within. This is counter-intuitive and supports a false dichotomy of those who are deserving and those who are not. The latter are permanently treated as second-class citizens, despite their willingness and qualifications to work and reintegrate into the communities they return to. This cycle must stop and the Fair Chance in Employment legislation will create the change we need.

Our partnering organizations include Root & Rebound Re-entry Advocates, East Bay Community Law Center, the Anti-Recidivism Coalition, Project Rebound, the San Francisco Public Defender's Office, Ella Baker Center for Human Rights as well as many, many

other supporters. The legislative sponsors for these bills include Assemblymembers Chui and Low (AB 2138), Assemblymember Holden (AB 3039) and Assemblymember Reyes (AB 2293).

For more info contact Policy Manager Sabina Crocette: Sabina@prisonerswithchildren.org

It's Time for an Independent Pardon Board—One that Includes Formerly Incarcerated People And Family Members

By Carol Strickman

Along with Asian Americans Advancing Justice and other organizations, LSPC is co-sponsoring AB 2845, known as the Pardon and Commutation Reform Act bill, authored by Assembly Member Rob Bonta.

Pardons are an important remedy to assist people who have successfully reentered the community and lived a law-abiding life for many years. Some may be facing deportation for an old conviction. Commutations can benefit incarcerated people who are serving excessively long sentences, for instance by advancing their parole eligibility date. Governor Brown has been willing to grant these petitions much more frequently than previous governors.



Policy Manager Sabina Crocette and Senior Staff Attorney Carol Strickman at the Capitol with other supporters following the Public Safety Committee hearing on April 17.

AB 2845 makes important improvements to the process. It creates a Pardon and Commutation Panel under the Governor's Office to review these petitions, instead of the Board of Parole Hearings under CDCR's jurisdiction. It would make the process more transparent, and establish deadlines and an expedited procedure for time-sensitive cases.

On April 17, AB 2845 passed out of the Assembly Public Safety Committee on a 5 – 2 vote. It is currently "in suspense" in the Assembly Appropriations Committee, and will be voted on soon.

San Francisco: Ready to Be the First County to Eliminate Probation Fees!

By Brittany Stonesifer

For the past several months, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children has been fighting to make San Francisco the [first county in the country](#) to eliminate all the criminal fees that the county has the authority to stop charging—the most expensive is probation fees. We know that these fees are high pain for low-income families stuck with debt, and that they are low gain for the county agencies that waste resources trying to collect from people who just don't have the money. The smartest thing to do is to just get rid of these fees once and for all.



LSPC Youth Policy Fellow Noe Gaudiño testifies on the debilitating effect reentry fees have to the SF Board of Supervisors.

Earlier this month, Supervisor London Breed's [Criminal Fees and Penalties Ordinance](#) passed both the Rules Committee and the Budget Committee unanimously, picking up additional co-sponsors in each committee. A broad cross-section of the community turned out at both hearings to support the ordinance, including [dozens of directly-impacted individuals and social justice advocates](#). With the legislation's strong backing – and

much of the rest of the country watching – we know the time is right for the Board to pass this exciting legislation into law and to support the economic justice rights of the county's reentering population and their families!

UPDATE: The ordinance passed the BOS's 1st reading UNANIMOUSLY! For more info, contact Staff Attorney Brittany Stonesifer: brittany@prisonerswithchildren.org or 415.625.7046

Does Shackling of Incarcerated Pregnant Women Still Occur in San Diego?

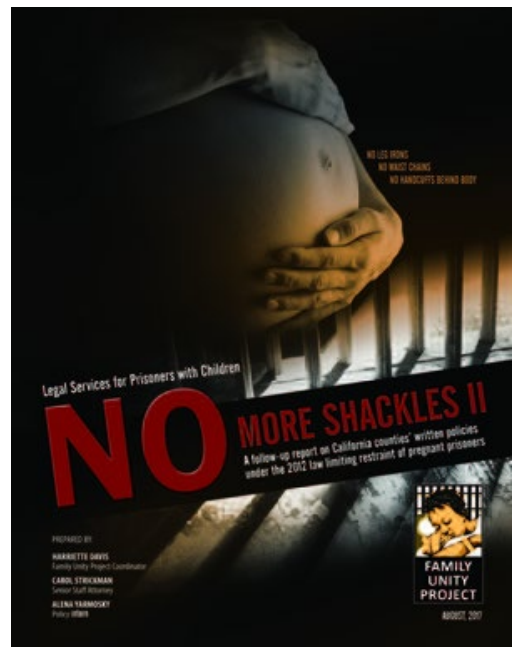
By Carol Strickman

On April 10, San Diego reporter Kelly Davis broke the story that [the San Diego County Sheriff's Department routinely restrains pregnant prisoners who are in labor](#). According to the sheriff's "Pregnant Patient's Rights" document, a pregnant woman is told at booking that she "will be chained and handcuffed" when she delivers her baby. The reporter based the story on that document and on a letter from the Sheriff's Department to the Citizens' Law Enforcement Review Board. The article quoted LSPC Senior Staff Attorney Carol Strickman as condemning this procedure as "illegal" and "completely wrong."

Astonishingly, the Sheriff issued a statement that day that its earlier

letter had “misspoke,” made a “factual error,” and “the mistake...is ours.” Further, he explained, the language from the “Pregnant Patient’s Rights” document was “obsolete,” “did not match our current policy, procedures or practices and has been revised.”

Given the Sheriff Department’s conflicting statements, LSPC is joining with the ACLU in submitting a new Public Records Act request to obtain documentation of the county’s current practices. The Sheriff himself is running for re-election, and this subject has become a campaign issue.



[Click here to read LSPC's 2017 "No More Shackles II" report](#), which details which CA counties are in compliance with shackling ban policies.

Clean Slate Clinics

By Eva DeLair

Last year, LSPC supported several bills to eliminate or reduce the burden and discrimination to which convictions subject millions of Californians. But our work to change the law is wasted if impacted people don’t know or don’t have the opportunity to take advantage of it. In order to make that goal—and the law—a reality, LSPC is traveling and hosting clean slate clinics and Know Your Rights presentations.

We are partnering with Drug Policy Alliance, Starting Over Strong, and Assembly Member Reyes’ office to help people get free copies of their RAP sheets in San Bernardino. Our RAP sheet day was Saturday, May 19th at the Akoma Unity Center in San Bernardino. Getting a copy of one’s conviction history is a necessary prerequisite to clearing one’s record. We cover the cost of each RAP sheet, which can cost an individual between \$20-50 per person.

Please [donate at least \\$20](#) to cover the cost of one person’s RAP sheet.

We then work with volunteers to review people’s records for eligibility for clean slate remedies and to assist in drafting petitions
rd

and declarations at our one-day clinic on Saturday, June 23 .

If you are in the San Francisco Bay area and want to help review RAP sheets email Eva for volunteer opportunities. Any person who is detail-oriented can review a RAP sheet; you do not need to be an attorney.

If you are in the San Bernardino area and want to volunteer at the clinic on June 23rd, email Rodney Holcombe at rholcombe@drugpolicy.org to find out when the next training is.

We are also partnering with California Rural Legal Assistance to host a RAP sheet day in Grover Beach, San Luis Obispo County on Saturday, June 2nd.

If you, or someone you know, needs criminal record expungement services, please come to the clinic near you or contact us for a referral to a criminal record clinic nearer to you. Eva DeLair: eva@prisonerswithchildren.org or 415.625.7049.

From Prison to College Bound

By Aminah Colbert

I grew up a young black girl in a low-income home in East Oakland. I was able to attend Piedmont High School—a predominantly white and affluent school up in the hills—but felt ill-equipped and ill-prepared to thrive there. Every day, I would travel across prominent cultural and financial divides that sharply contrasted my own poverty-stricken status with my peers' upper-class privilege. I began to crave my fair share of this country's wealth and privileges, but I didn't have the faintest clue of how to obtain it.

Later, when I was behind bars, I had even more unanswered questions. Languishing away in prison for life was an unacceptable prospect, so I sought the spiritual guidance and support of an education. I began to read such autobiographies as Frida Kahlo, the Black Panthers, Malcolm X, and Marcus Garvey. I siphoned strength and courage from each to fuel my journey.

Determined to no longer play into the white-reinforced stereotypes of people of color, I enrolled in the Incarcerated Student Program, and began to flourish as a student and writer. I would eagerly wait in anticipation for the constructive criticism of my professors' comments regarding my assignments, hungry for their direction and feedback so I could continue my transformation into a woman of letters.

I've contributed articles to the San Quentin News and E-books-by-

crooks, and I've submitted, published, and recited several of my works of poetry discussing the inequalities and injustice in America today.

Being found suitable for parole turned my previously deferred dreams into realities—last month I was accepted into four University of California colleges, and this fall I will begin working towards a degree in Legal Studies at UC Berkeley.

But I will not be experiencing higher education alone: My son, whom I hadn't seen in over 15 years, has recently reunited with me and this fall will be attending Morehouse College in Atlanta. Despite growing up with two parents serving life terms, he has succeeded well beyond the statistics and societal expectations for black and brown children of incarcerated parents.

My unique and personal life struggles are unfortunate; however, I no longer regret them because they have shaped me into the woman I am today. My son and I will be attending college together, albeit on opposite sides of the country. A friend once expressed to me: "It is not success that brings happiness; rather, happiness is derived from one's ability to overcome the challenges in their pursuit of success."



LSPC Policy Fellow Aminah Colbert (right) and her son, Titus Dorsey. Both will begin their university studies—although on opposite sides of the country—this fall.

All of Us or None is proud to support the [Underground Scholars Initiative](#)—a campus organization of and for formerly incarcerated students. Originating at UC Berkeley—where it successfully campaigned to Ban the Box on both student and employment applications—USI now has chapters at most UC campuses. For students attending Cal State Universities, contact [Project Rebound](#) for support and resources.

Confronting a Legacy of Lyching

On April 26, the [Equal Justice Initiative](#) opened both [The National](#)

[Memorial for Peace and Justice](#) and [The Legacy Museum: From Enslavement to Mass Incarceration](#) in Montgomery, Alabama. Several LSPC staff were invited to attend the week-long ceremony and celebration, which also included the [Peace and Justice Summit](#) and concluded with a concert featuring The Roots, Usher, Common, Brittany Howards, and many others.

Hamdiya, Azadeh, and Dorsey reflect on their experience:

The Legacy Museum is a visual work of art that everyone needs to witness. Friends and foe need to see for themselves, and then share their experience with all who have the heart to listen. The museum gives you an eerie sense of authenticity as you walk into the darkness of the space seeing life size holograms talk about their slavery experiences. Newspaper articles and images of people attending the “events” litter the walls, depicting the human suffering our people went through. Images of angry whites refusing to allow “colored” people the basic freedoms granted every human being were difficult to accept.

I was blessed to meet Elizabeth Eckford, one of the members of the Little Rock Nine who was bullied while trying to desegregate Central High School in Arkansas in 1957. I took a picture with her and asked for a hug realizing I was experiencing a once in a lifetime event. Ms. Eckford told me she liked hugs, that they made her feel good.



After leaving the museum we boarded a shuttle bus taking us to the Peace & Justice Memorial. As I walked through the rows of steel columns that represent documented lynchings, I was struck by the fact that so many were from Arkansas and Tennessee—the birthplaces of my parents. The reality of the brutal history my parents had to have known—but never discussed—was heart wrenching. No wonder they both fled to California in the early 40’s, searching for a better life. I left feeling that if we refuse to reckon with the reality of our past, we are bound to repeat it. Take time to visit this historic site—you’ll never regret it.

—Hamdiya Cooks-Abdula, Administrative Director

Hamdiya (right) with Civil Rights shero Elizabeth Eckford.



Our trip to visit the Legacy Museum and Memorial in Montgomery was an incredibly moving and memorable experience. To be with generations of leaders in the movement for liberation, to hear their stories, and to bear witness to the names of those whose stories have not been told until now is something I will never forget.

—Azadeh Zohrabi, Development Director

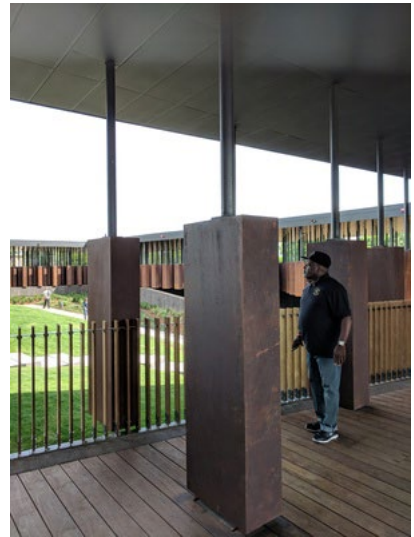
Left to right: Hamdiya, Michelle Alexander (Author of The New Jim Crow), Azadeh, Dorsey

Growing up as a child, every time we stopped at a gas station I would eagerly search all the names on the keychains on the counter for mine. I never found my name hanging there on the rack, but I did find it etched on a steel column hanging at the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. Dorsey Grier and his wife Prue were lynched on August 18, 1880 in Newberry County, South Carolina.

So I really felt the connection through history, standing there, seeing my name on the memorial. Then I felt the

connection again at the museum, seeing the direct dehumanizing relationship between slavery, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration. But I saw positive connections too: many of the people who have been doing civil rights work since the 40's and 50's were at the celebration in person, along with many of the younger generations who have continued that massive work. When you go to the museum store and see Michelle Alexander's name on her book, when you see Susan Burton's name on her own book—just two of the people you've been working with so many years—then you know you are creating a power legacy right here and now.

—Dorsey Nunn, Executive Director



Dorsey stands among the hanging steel monuments etched with the names of people lynched in each county.

Calendar

WEBINAR: *Supervising Interns and Volunteers: Professional Responsibility & Best Practices*

When: Thursday, May 31, 12:00 P.M.-1:15 P.M.

[Register here.](#)

Summer internship time is nearly upon us. Have you wondered what your professional responsibilities are in regards to supervising non-attorney interns and volunteers? Do you want to learn how to use volunteer power more effectively in order to serve your clients better? Do you need Ethics CLE credit? If so, attend this webinar in which presenters will describe the ABA and California Rules of Professional Responsibility as they relate to common challenges with volunteers (including the duty to supervise, the unlawful practice of law, and the duty of confidentiality). Presenters will also discuss challenges and successful strategies for hiring, supervising, managing, and wrapping up the term for volunteers and interns.

One Hour: CA Ethics CLE credit

Presenters:

Margaret (Peggy) Stevenson, Record Clearance Project at San Jose State University

Brittany Stonesifer, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children
Eva DeLair, Legal Services for Prisoners with Children and the Prisoner Advocacy Network

First Friday in Oakland

When: Friday, June 1 — 5-9 P.M.

Where: Telegraph Ave. (West Grand to 27th St.), Oakland, CA.

Join us in Oakland for [First Friday](#)—a meet and greet in the streets featuring great food, music, art, and social activism.

AOUON will be tabling on Telegraph Ave. near 24th St.—stop on by to check out all our know-your-right / informational brochures, pick up some AOUON apparel and swag, and talk with organizers about our campaigns and current bills we're moving through the California State Legislature.



It's a great night to enjoy the incredibly diverse Oakland community—hope to see you there!

For more information about First Friday, contact Dauras Cyprian at dauras@prisonerswithchildren.org or 415.625.7051



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